

The 7 C's

Lecture # 1

by

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The 7 C's

- completeness
- clearness
- concreteness
- correctness
- conciseness
- courtesy
- character

Completeness

Ask yourself the following questions as you draft a document:

- who?
- what?
- why?
- where?
- when?
- how?

Clearness—use familiar words

Don't Say

- prior to
- advantageous
- cognizant
- necessitate
- transmit
- reimburse

Say

- before
- helpful
- aware
- require
- send
- pay

Cleanness—avoid technical jargon

Technical Jargon

- interface
- per diem
- user-friendly
- viable
- firewall

Concreteness

a few

many

several

low

quick

soon

nice

small

slow

high

most

a small number

more

short

very

large

Correctness-avoid disagreeable mental pictures

- You are wrong.
- You failed to pay.
- You can not return.

Concreteness-avoid biased writing

Biased

- A employee will be promoted base on his ability and seniority.

Unbiased

- Employees will be promoted based on their ability and seniority.

Correctness—grammatical usage

Incorrect

- Loudly protesting, the puppy was taken from the man.

Correct

- The man protested loudly when his puppy was taken from him.

Correctness—parallel structure

Incorrect

- Bob has both experienced the sweet taste of success and the bitterness of defeat.

Correct

- Bob has tasted both the sweetness of success and the bitterness of defeat.

Correctness—subject/verb agreement

Incorrect

- Pakistan International Airlines serve only customer in the southeast.

Correct

- Pakistan International Airlines serves only customers in the southeast.

Correctness—subject-verb agreement

Incorrect

- Neither of the two were present.
- Five nails or one large screw provide sufficient support.
- The researchers, as well as their sponsor, thinks a breakthrough is very near.

Correct

- Neither of the two was present.
- Five nails or one large screw provides sufficient support.
- The researchers, as well as their sponsor, think a breakthrough is very near.

Correctness—active writing

Usually you put the subject or doer upfront and then the verb tells what happens. It

- Decreases wordiness
- Brightens the action

Correctness—passive writing

You should use passive when you want to

- Deemphasise the doer of the action.
- Stress the receiver of the action.
- Avoid personal, blunt accusations.
- Present bad news.
- Make a smooth transition from one sentence to another.

Conciseness

Don't Say

- There are three fine restaurants on University Road.
- This is important that all employees read the handbook.

Say

- University Road has three fine restaurants.
- All employees should read the handbook.

Conciseness

We Say

- in the amount of
- in the neighbourhood
- costs the sum of
- due to the fact that
- we would ask that
you

Rather Say

- for
- near
- costs
- because
- please

Conciseness—Useless Repetitions

- absolutely free
- finish up
- true facts
- human volunteer
- cancel out
- reduce down
- first began
- visible to the eye
- hope and trust
- rectangular in shape
- if and when
- full and complete

Conciseness—trite phrases

- Trité

- Kindly advise
- This writer
- Enclosed please find
- Copy of said report
- Per your request /
pursuant to your
request

Preferable

- Please tell us
- I
- Enclosed
- Copy of the report
- As you requested

Conciseness

The following examples show some commonly used expressions and how the receiver might react

Saying

- I wish to state
- We beg to state
- Kindly place your order
- We would like to thank you for

Reaction

- Why wish? Just say it
- Get off your knees
- Must I be kind?
- Just do it!

Courtesy—you attitude

This card motivated only
3% response

- Since we haven't written you in some time, please help us bring our records up to date by filling in and returning the other half of this card.

This card generated 90%
response

- So that your dividend checks, premium notices, and other messages of importance may reach you promptly, please fill out and return the other half of this card

Courtesy—positive words

You should avoid using the following negative words.

- delay
- trouble
- hesitate
- unfortunate
- never
- regret
- difficult
- blamed
- impossible
- fault
- failure
- unable
- inconvenience
- prejudiced

Courtesy

The following examples show how to turn negative sentences around

Negative

- You neglected to give the size so it is impossible to fill your order.
- Please do not hesitate to call me when you arrive in town.

Positive

- Please send us the size you need and we will promptly fill your order.
- Please call me when you arrive in town.

Character

Your document contains character when

- It holds no stereotyped words or clichés.
- It uses concrete language.
- It has courtesy shining through the text.
- It shows consideration for your audience's needs, wants and interests.