

Writing Technical Prose/Fundamentals of Effective Writing

- While preparing any sort of writing the basic fundamentals should be applied to make the writing effective.
- There are some fundamentals of effective writing which are mentioned below.

a. Unity:-

- In order to convey an effective message, there should be unity of thought in writing.
- Unity is ensured if the focus is on one point.
- Smooth flow of thoughts with no break in continuity also gives the writing the distinct quality of unity.
- The unity of the writing is destroyed if it contains repetitions and redundant/unnecessary words.

- The paragraph should have a sense of completeness and satisfaction. To maintain the unity:
 - ✓ Introduce only the main idea
 - ✓ Provide adequate supporting details
 - ✓ Remove the irrelevancies and useless expressions.

b. Cohesion (Logical order)

- Sentences in the paragraph should be related to one another to maintain the coherence.
- There should be logical development of thoughts and ideas should be linked together.
- Discursive and rambling(confusing) thoughts destroy the coherence of the paragraph, so, these matters should not be introduced.

- The following are the factors that contribute to the coherence of writing.
- i. **Chronological order:-** To maintain the chronological order facts are presented in the order of occurrence—the earliest event first and the last event at the end. The order of importance can also be followed---the most important idea can be presented first and then less important ones.
- ii. **Spatial order:-** It is the method of ordering facts as per their positions. In this order we describe what we see as it appears in space-left to right, top to bottom, inside to outside, clockwise or near to far. If you describe a machine, you begin from one extreme and gradually move on to the other extreme, either horizontally or vertically.

iii. Logical order:- A statement is made and supported by examples. Cause and effect relationship also comes under logical order. All the sentences used in the paragraph are directed to the main idea.

iv. Cohesive devices:- one of the means of achieving coherence is to use certain linguistic devices to connect one sentence with the other so that there is smooth transition of ideas. These devices are called connectives or transitional words. Their function is to establish the relationship between two sentences. E.g. Similar, whereas, but, although etc.

John is coming now. I will complete my office work.

The two sentences without the use of transition words look disjointed/disorganized and the meaning is not clear. Now combine them with suitable and see how meaning changes.

John is coming now. Meanwhile I will complete my office work

John is coming now. However, I will complete my office work

John is coming now. Therefore, I will complete my office work

C. Conciseness:-

- The next fundamental of effective writing is conciseness i.e use of the fewer words as far as possible.
- Concisely written text can help in comprehension.

- If we pile up only the words on the readers, they may give up/skip reading the text. As a result they can miss the main points.
- The concisely written text can save the writer's and reader's time.
- Short sentences having great ideas are supposed to be more effective than the long sentences having no ideas.
- Conciseness makes the writing more appealing to the readers. To maintain conciseness:
 - limit the length of the paragraph
 - limit the words and length of sentences
 - omit redundancies/unnecessary ideas
 - Avoid long clauses, idioms and phrases

D. Clarity

- Clarity is the next important feature of good writing.
- The sentences written in a paragraph should be clear both semantically and grammatically.
- Ambiguous/vague sentences should not be introduced in writing.
- If your writing expresses unclear information to the readers, either they won't understand the information or their understanding becomes beyond the expectation.
- As a result there is waste of time of the both reader's and the writer's.

- Clarity can be maintained in the following ways:
 - provide the specific details
 - use easily understandable words
 - minimize the use of abbreviations and jargons
 - write to communicate not to confuse
 - avoid the use of obscure words

E. Accuracy

- Our writing should be correct and sensible in terms of grammar and meaning.

- Errors in our writing can create negative impression to the reader and that ultimately destroys our credibility.
- Not only this the data, figures, and other information that we provide in our writing should be factual otherwise that may lead to disaster.
- So, our writing must be accurate if we want to earn credibility from the readers.

F. Parallelism

- Ensure that similar ideas or elements in a sentence or paragraph are presented with a consistent grammatical structure. This consistency improves readability and clarity.

Example

- ❖ The goals of the project include reducing costs, improving efficiency, and to increase customer satisfaction. (Incorrect and unparallel structure)
- ❖ The goals of the project include reducing costs, improving efficiency, and increasing customer satisfaction. (Correct and parallel structure)