

Email Best Practices



**Email is liking kissing -
you think you are good at it, but
it might be a good idea to ask around.**

- Merlin Man

Disclaimer

Writing is hard, really hard.

People are at different ability levels.

I want everyone to improve.

Everyone should be at least competent.

Agenda

1. Email best practices
2. Writing best practices
3. Practice revising

What are the worst practices for email?

Reply All

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"Do it. Reply all."

Email Worst Practices

NEVER EVER send email:

1. Intoxicated (Whatever your drug of choice is)
2. Emotion (Rage 🤬, Anger 😡, sad 😭, manic 😈, ...)

What are the best practices for email?

Email Best Practices

1. Keep it short
2. Use Bullets
3. Formality, Round-up
4. Ask for Clarification
5. Revise, Revise, Revise
6. Order of operations

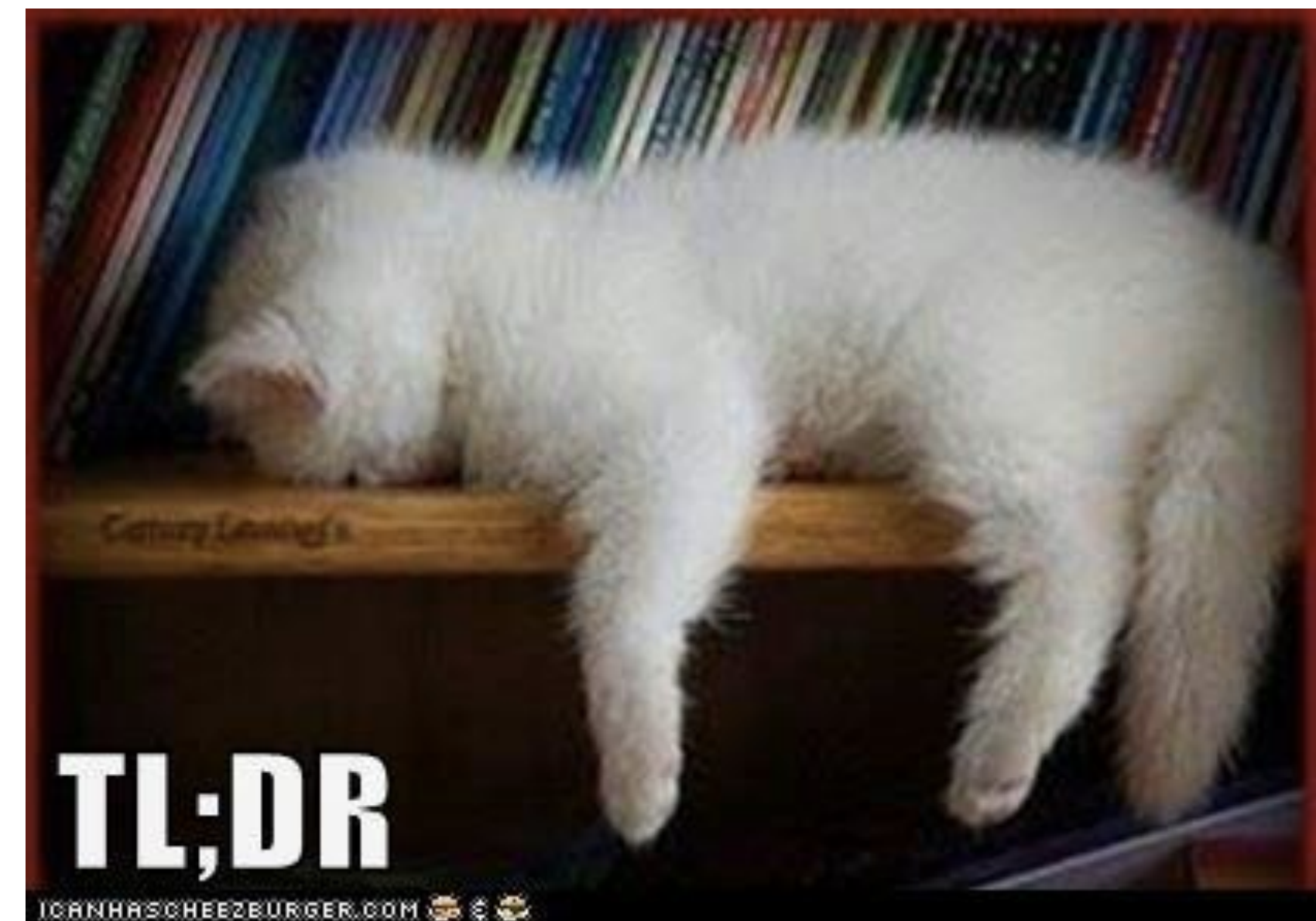
Everyone Short Emails

All pertinent information should be on 1 screen.

Many people check email on mobile, thus ideally should be on 1 mobile screen.

Length

- 1 word is fine
- 1 sentence makes for a great email
- 3-5 sentences could be useful
- > 2 paragraphs = tl;dr



Let's rewrite this email

"At this point in time, I think it would make a lot of sense for us all to regroup on the issue and come up with a few key points for discussion at our meeting in two weeks that will help us get closer to finding a solution that works for all parties."

“Let's each come up with 2-3 discussion points on the issue before our next meeting.”

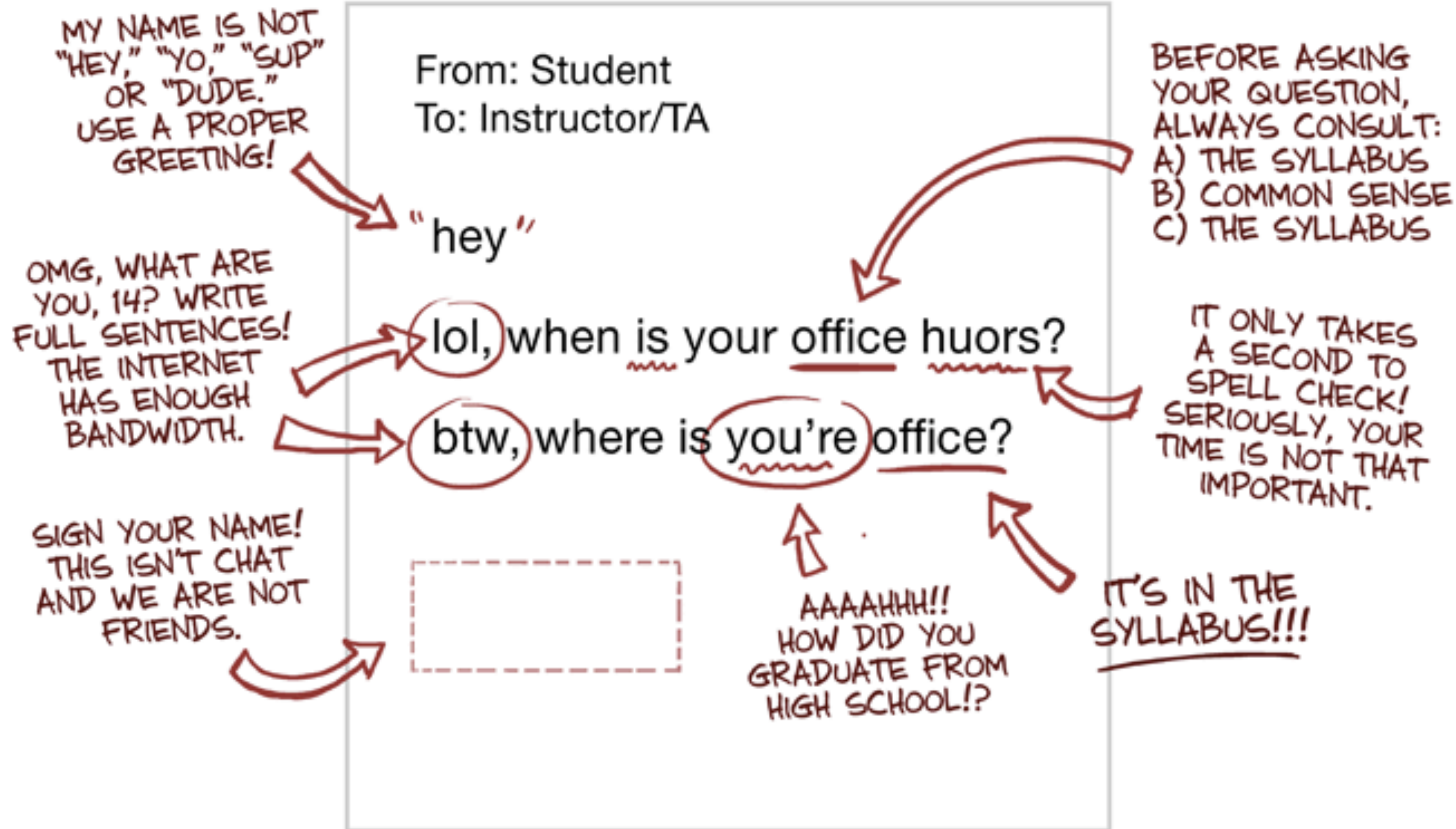
Bullets

- Bullets are great!
- In fact, here is another bullet.
- See bullets are so easy to read, I'll add another one.
- Bullets make it easier for the reader to find and follow the flow of information.

Formality

- David's Rule - Always start by erring on the side of formality.
- Later, you can be less formal.

HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR OR T.A.



Clarification

Ask for clarification when in any doubt.
There are no non-verbal signals in email.

“I’m interpreting this as XXX. If this isn’t correct, let me know.”

A majority of coding is refactoring.

A majority of writing is revisioning.

A memo posted by a manager
that was corrected by employees 🙌

Please, don't leave you^l dishes in the
sink.

Please, don't scrap^e you^l excess food into
The Sink.

Dishes found in the sink at closing will ^{be}
Placed in the trash for disposal.

Every Sunday^{the} fridge will be clean^{ed} out.

You cannot have any food in lockers
overnight^I its policy.

^{space}
Thankyou.

D

Please Revise

Let's rewrite this email

"In light of the pervasive problem of overcrowding at UC Truckee, providing another coffeehouse on campus would offer the university's growing population some kind of compensatory convenience."

“Overcrowded UC Truckee needs another coffeeshop.”

Order of Operations

1. Construct email outside of email editor.
2. Subject line
 1. Most important part
 2. Make senses in the context
3. Write
4. Revise - Clarify. Is there a clear, easy-to-understand point to this email?
5. Revise - Shorten. Is there anything I can take out that doesn't add to the main point?
6. Revise - Check spelling & grammar!
7. Add the recipients' address **last**.

Tools to Improve Writing

- Sublime Text 3 (or any plain text editor). Use the word count feature.
- TextExpander
- Grammarly
- Hemingway app

Other Email Tips

No one remembers a great email.

Everyone remembers a bad email.

Never send an email you don't want public

- CEO
- Tech news
- Judge

General Writing Tips

Focus on Nouns & Verbs

- Who is doing what?
- Minimize adjectives (perfect, winning, many)
- No Adverbs (very, so, actually, quickly)
- No superlatives (the best day ever, he is the worst)

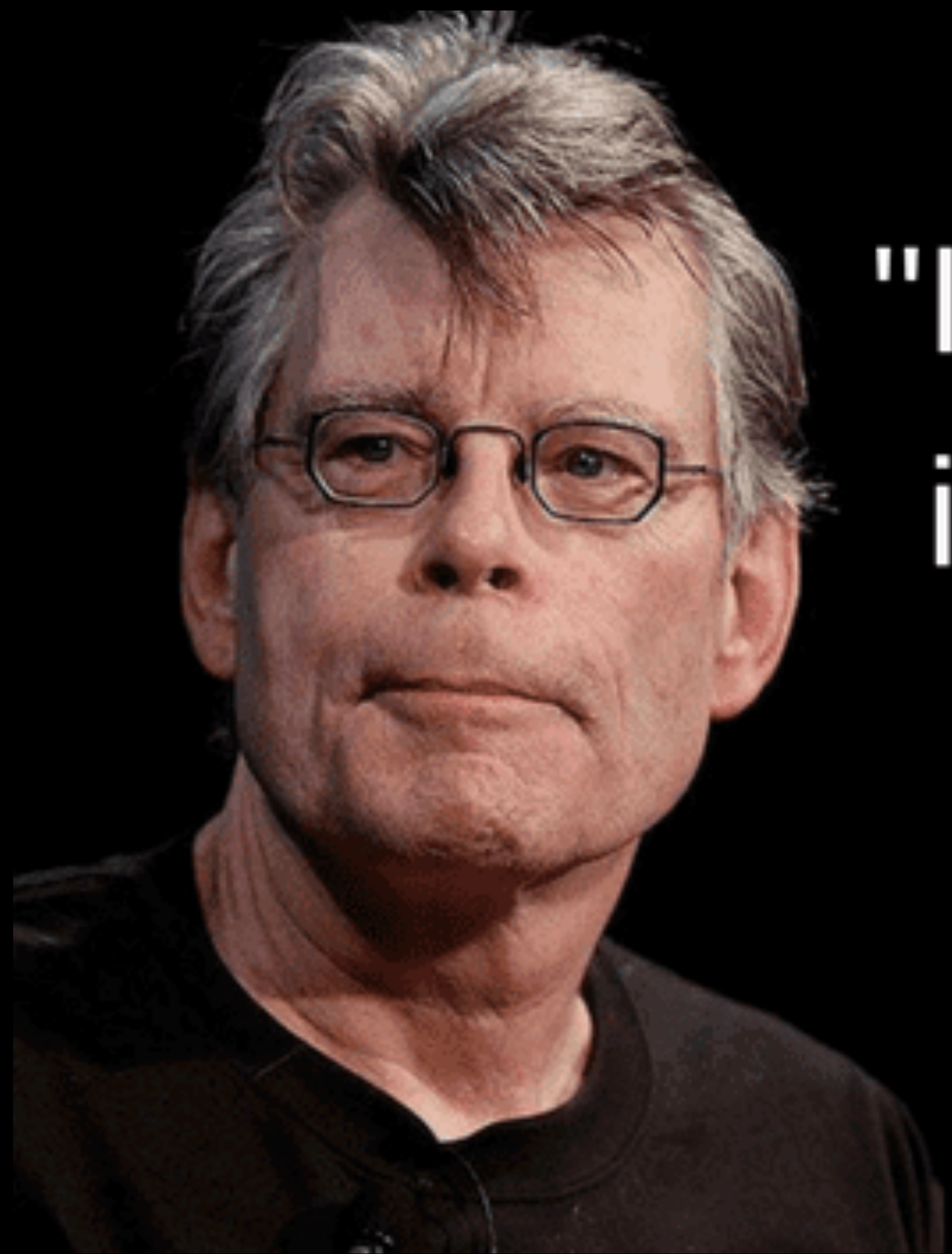


The lion roared
ferociously.

The kitten purred
very softly.



When a lion roars, when *isn't* it ferociously?
When a kitten purrs, isn't it softly?



"I believe the road to hell
is paved with adverbs."

Stephen King


Let's rewrite this sentence

I walked slowly and methodically through the majestic, lush, green hills, the scent of fresh, spring grass smelled very, very nice.

I ambled through the grass hills in the spring air.

When in doubt, strike it out.

Slack Etiquette

- Don't start with a "hey" only message. Just write your message.
- Use shift-return to compose multi-line message
- Use  arrow to edit a message
- Don't be the “TMI” person – Avoid oversharing
- Don't send multiple messages to an unresponsive person

Summary

- Writing is hard.
- Emails are the most common type of writing for most people.
- People get too much email so you do your best to lighten their load.
- Be brief. Be clear.

Avoid Business Cliques

- What are your least favorite business cliques?
- Just use Plain English
- Try to tweak the clique "Content is Queen"