

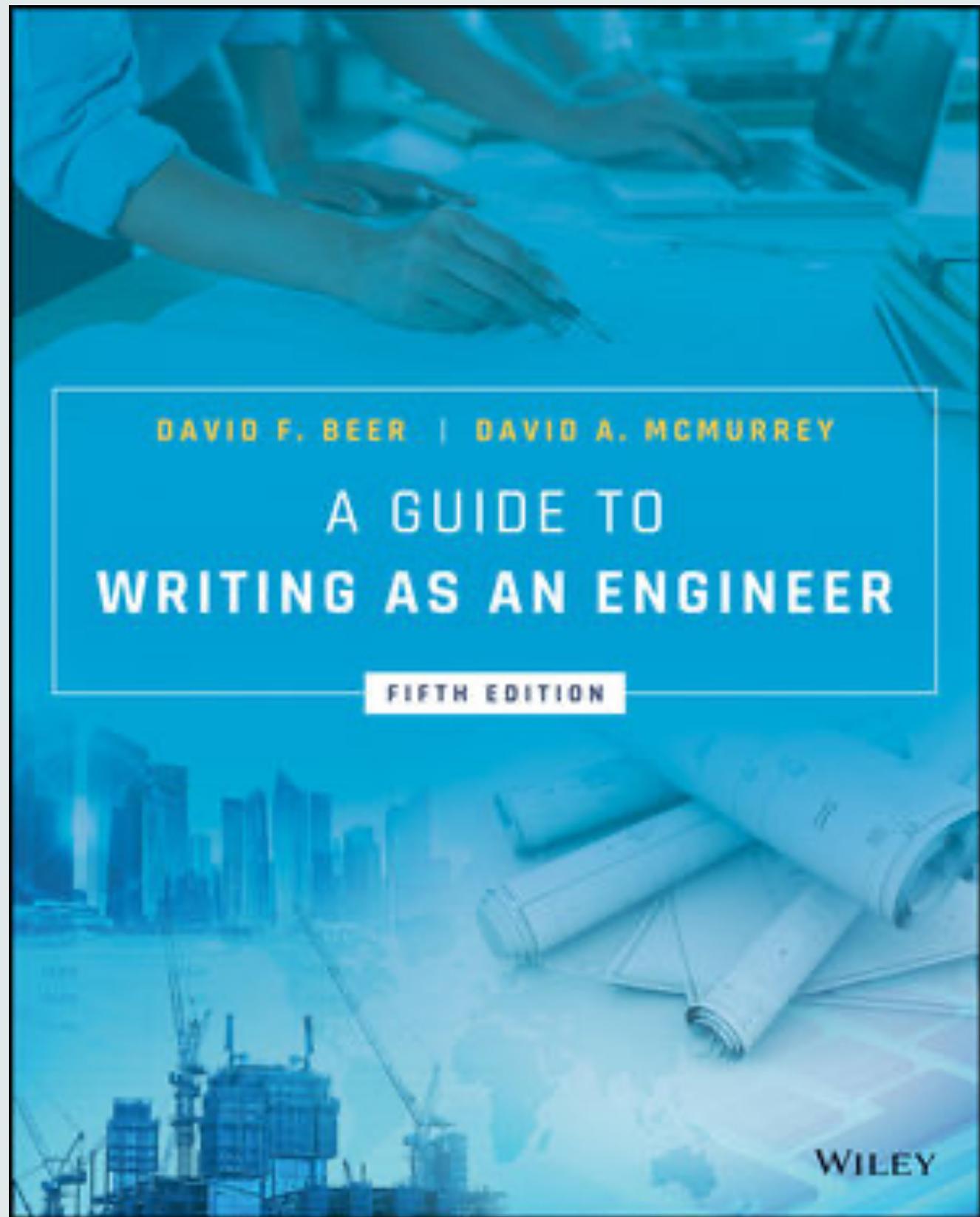
Introduction to Technical Writing



Agenda

- Technical Writing Overview
- Evaluating thesis statements
- Types of Engineering Documents

Textbook

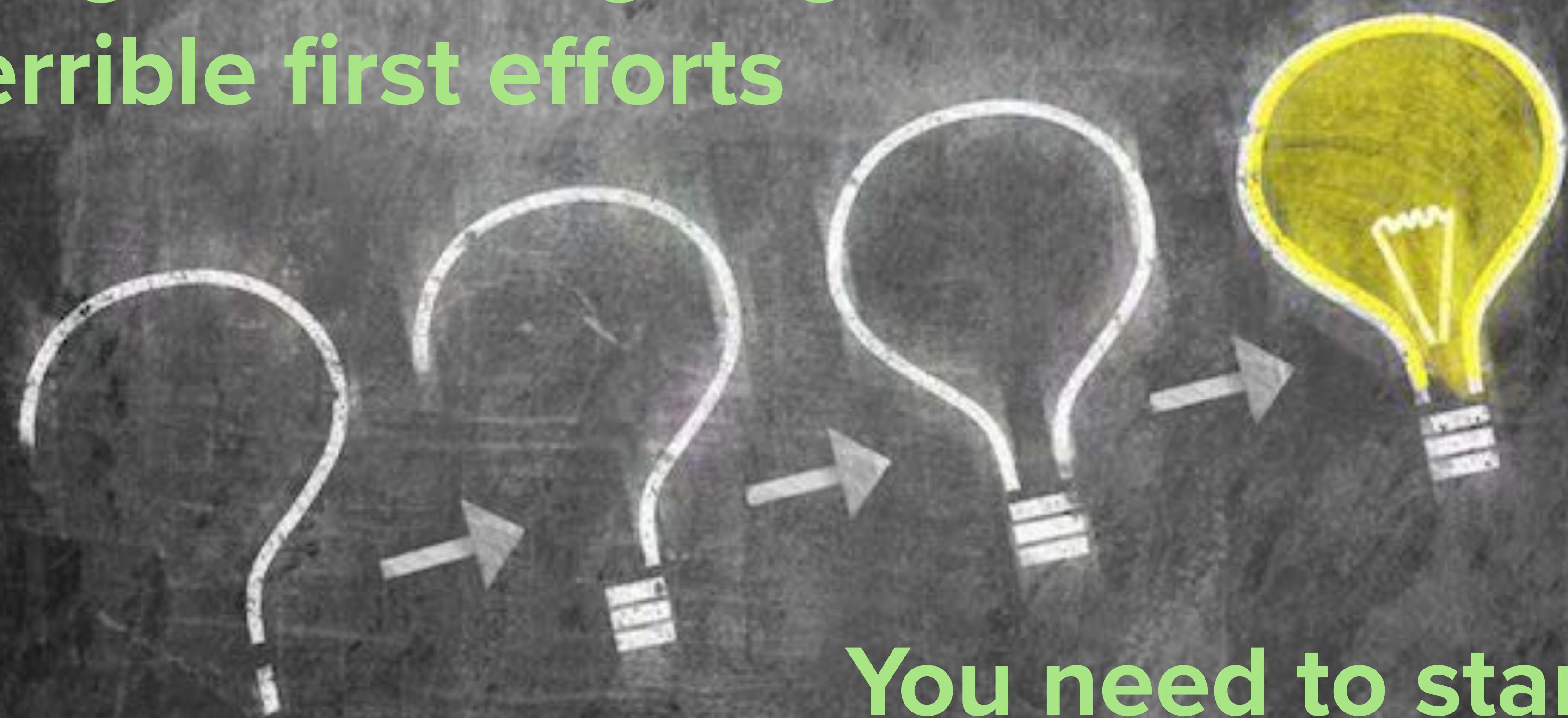


David F. Beer, David A. McMurrey

Fifth Edition

2019

All good writing begins with
terrible first efforts

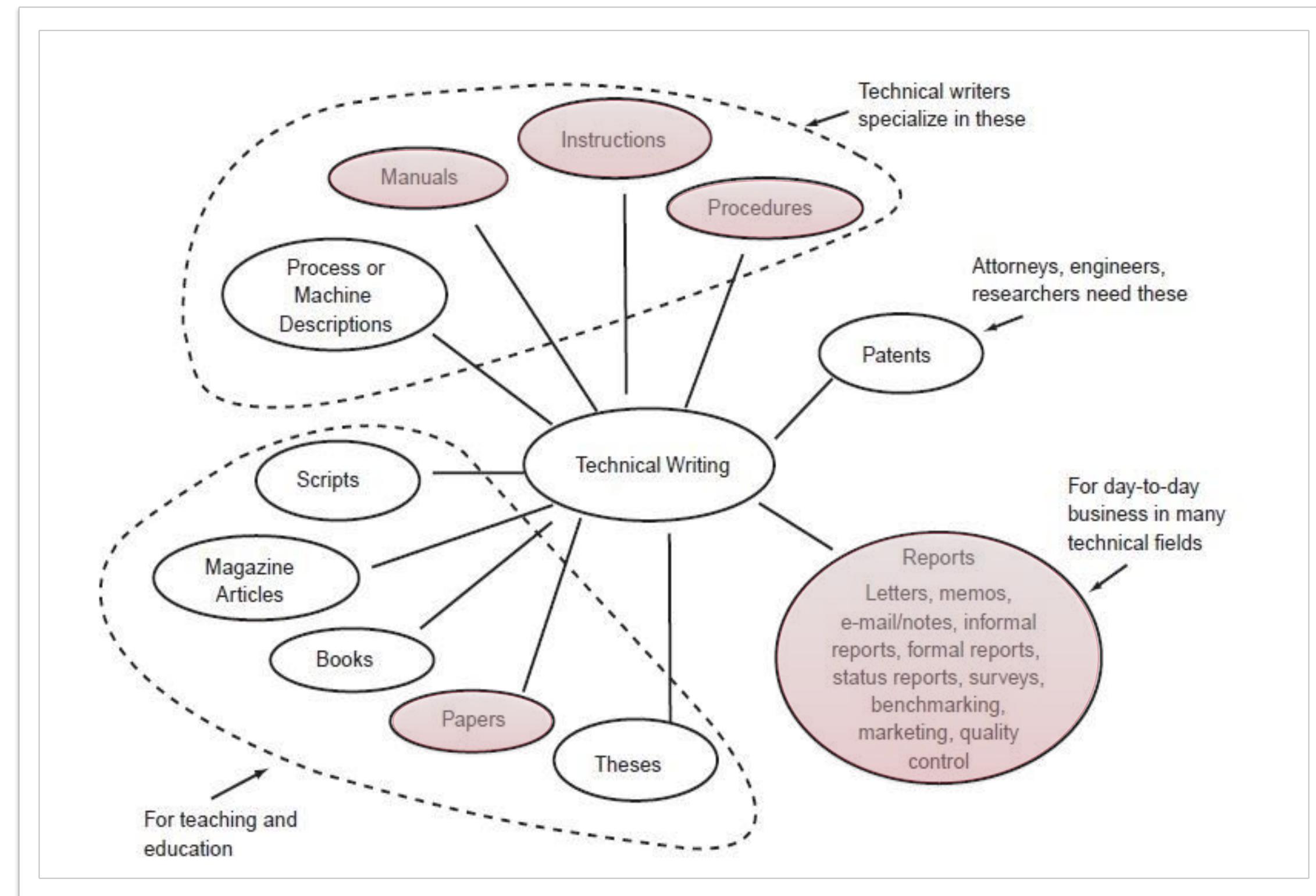


You need to start
somewhere

What is technical writing?

- Technical writing is writing that is done for the purpose of **educating, informing or directing** someone on how to do something
- It is often very **detail-oriented** and usually involves writing within fields where some advanced knowledge is required

Types of technical writing



General Writing

- General writing is a form of writing that is done for the purpose of expressing thoughts, emotions, personal experiences of the author

Comparison

	TECHNICAL WRITING	GENERAL WRITING
CONTENT	Factual & Straight-Forward	Imaginative
STYLE	Standard Structured Format	Informal, Artistic Non-Structured Format
PURPOSE	To Inform & Persuade	To Entertain & Captivate
TONE	Objective	Subjective
VOICE USED	Active, Uses 3 rd Person	Uses 1 st Person
VOCABULARY	Specialized	Evocative
AUDIENCE AVAILABLE	Specific	General



Similarity

- Both writings are used for engaging the reader
- Both writings must be free from grammatical errors

Common Engineering Documents

- Inspection or trip reports
- Research, laboratory, and field reports
- Specifications
- Proposals
- Progress reports
- Instructions
- Recommendation and feasibility
- Reports

Document Considerations

- Don't obsess over the names of reports
- Find out your company's requirements
- Think about content and organization
- Carefully craft with the report introduction



There are no secrets to **success**

It is the result of
preparation, hard work,
and learning from failure.

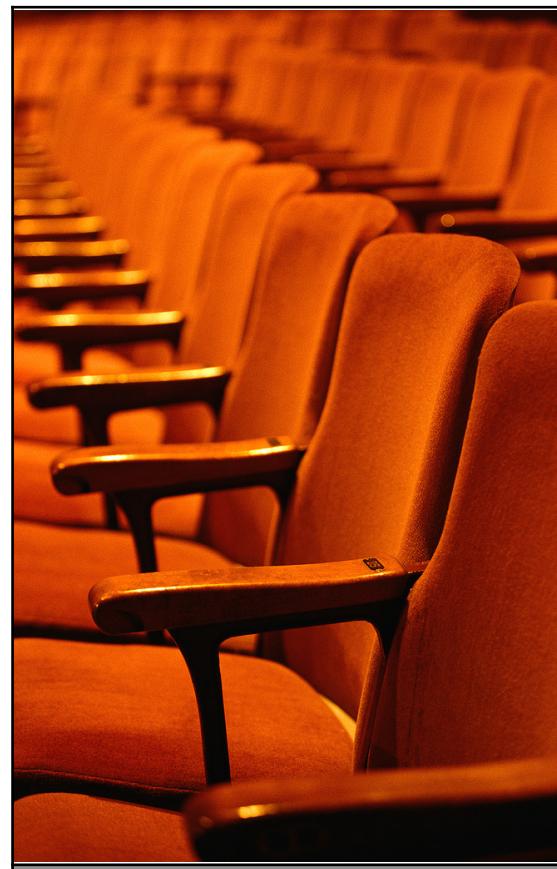
Collin Powell



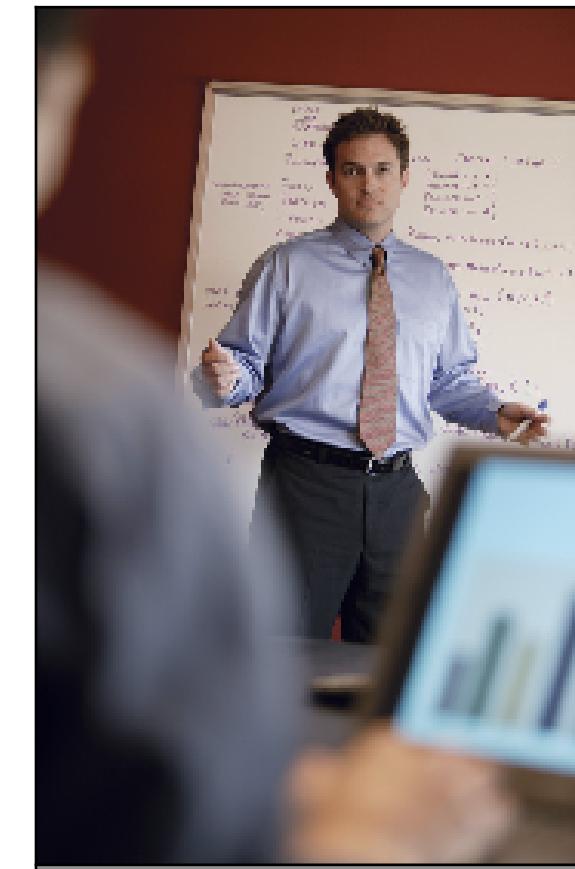
Getting Started



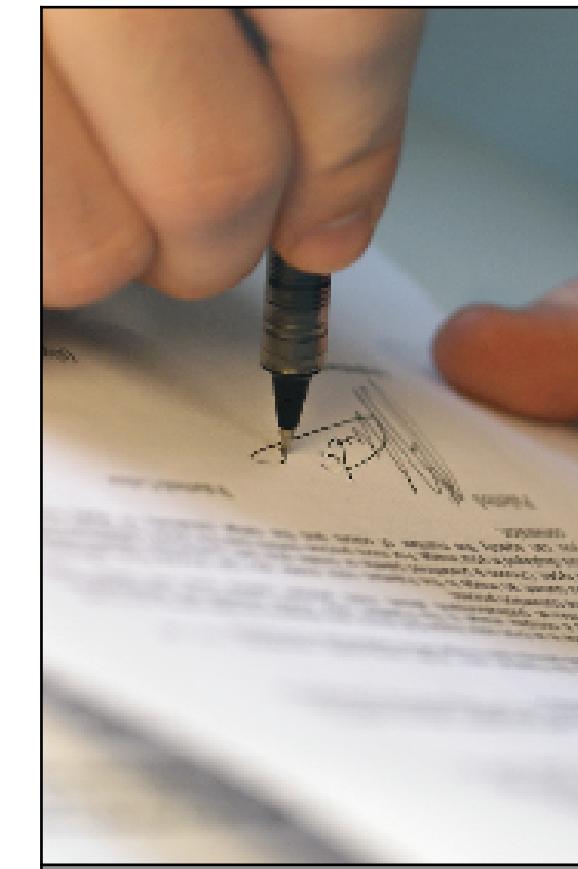
Topic



Audience



Purpose



Thesis



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Selecting a Topic

- Subjects are broad areas of knowledge
- Topics are specific aspects of subjects

“

Grasp the subject,
the words will follow.

Cato the Elder



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Selecting a Topic

- Topics will sometimes be assigned to you in your career (Give an overview of Project X)
- Other times you may have to choose your topic

Analyzing the Audience

- Age
- Education
- Gender
- Language
- Occupation
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Socio-Economic Background
- Knowledge of Subject
- Attitude towards Subject

Using Audience Analysis Data to

- Audience knowledge
- Audience interest
- Audience understanding
- Audience attitude toward your subject
- Audience attitude toward You the speaker

Audience Considerations



Peers



Management



Clients



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Audience Considerations



Peers

- Prior knowledge of
 - topic/project/proposal
 - field knowledge
 - specialized engineering area

Audience Considerations



Management

- Sufficient details without overwhelming their knowledge level
- Knowledge of engineering jargon and terms
- Distilling the executive summary

Audience Considerations

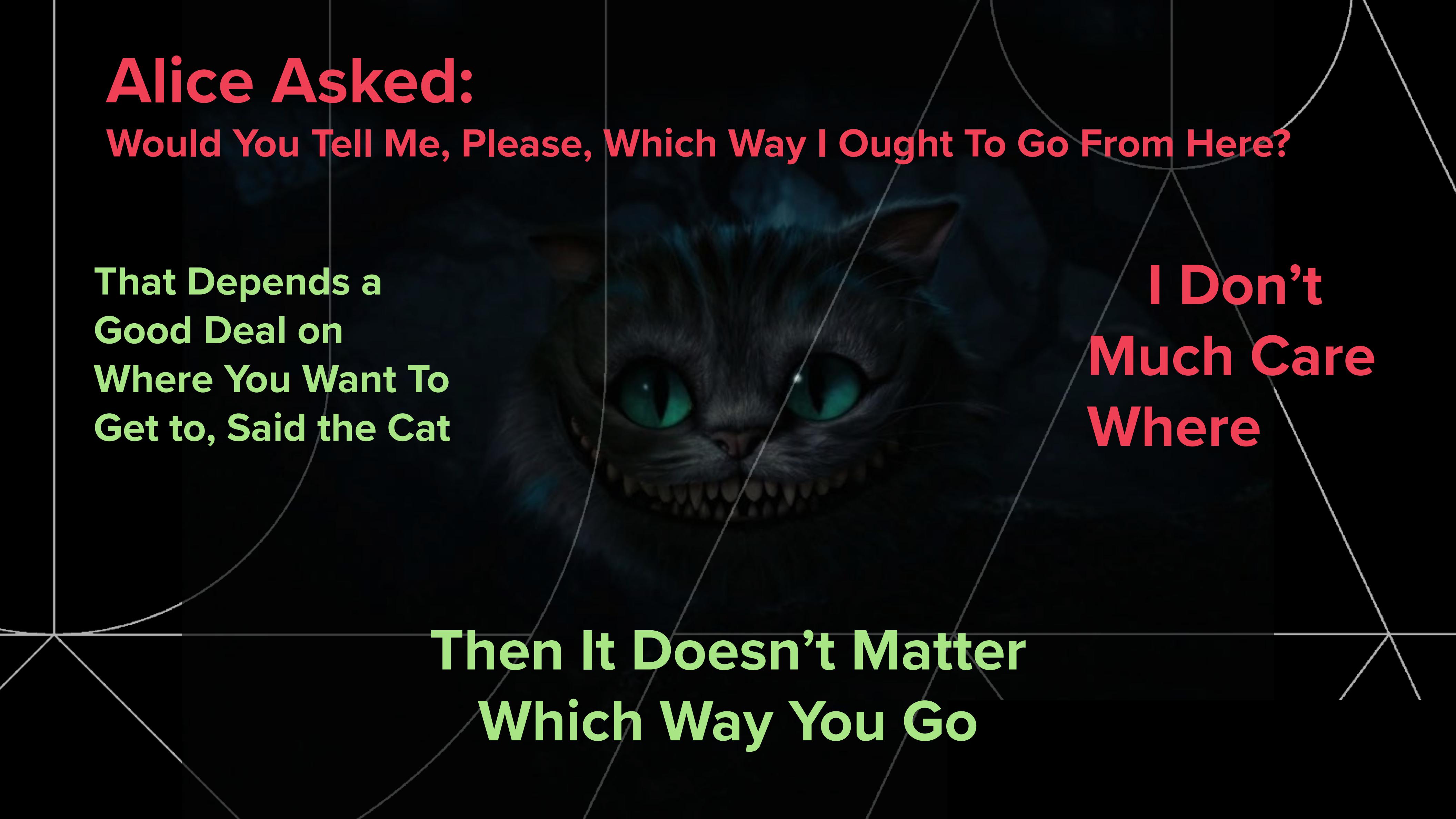


Clients

- Addressing their primary concerns
- Avoiding engineering speak

Defining your purpose

- What do you want the audience to learn or do?
- If you are making an argument, why do you want them to agree with you?
- If they already agree with you, what is your writing goal?
- How can your audience benefit from what you have to present?



Alice Asked:

Would You Tell Me, Please, Which Way I Ought To Go From Here?

**That Depends a
Good Deal on
Where You Want To
Get to, Said the Cat**

**I Don't
Much Care
Where**

**Then It Doesn't Matter
Which Way You Go**

Developing your thesis

- Thesis Statement

Single statement that outlines the specific elements of the document or speech supporting the goal statement

“

If you can't write your message in a sentence, you can't say it in an hour

Dianna Booher



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Developing your thesis

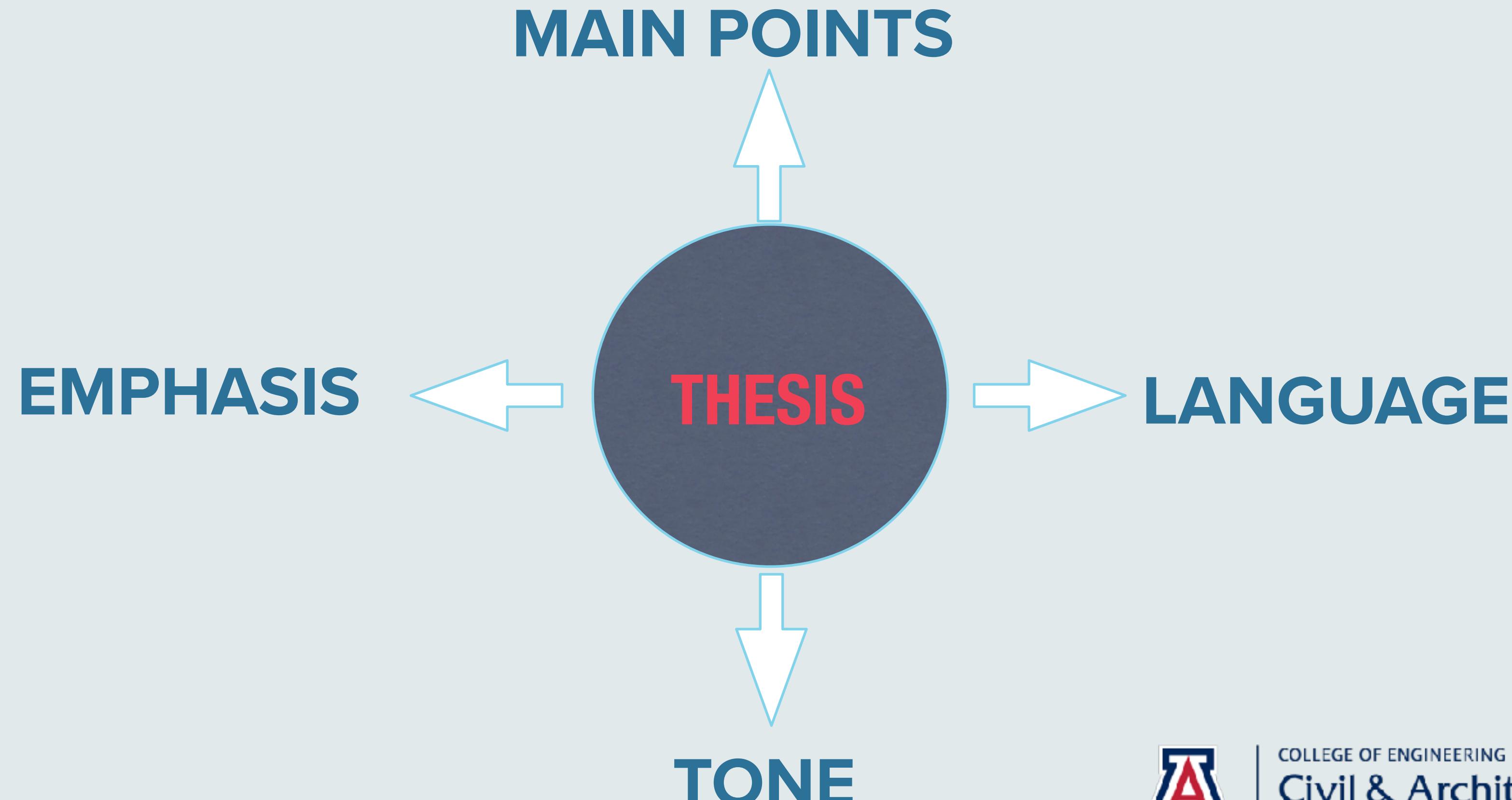
- The thesis sets up your entire document or speech for the audience (e.g. the roadmap)
- Collect and organize your ideas on the topic, then write your thesis
- All your main points should support the thesis



Writing the thesis

- Does this document or speech list a specific number of main points?
- If no, Identify and list specific ideas for audience to understand
- Review list and group items
- Select 2 to 5 items
- Write a thesis statement the identifies your topic and previews main ideas

Writing the thesis



Sample Thesis Statements

Analytical

- An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds.

Sample Thesis Statements

Explanatory

- The life of the typical college student is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers.

Sample Thesis Statements

Argumentative

- High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness

**B
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Bottom Line On Top



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Memo

To: Department Heads
From: Debora Lynn
Date: December 10, 2006
Subject: Annual Bonus Leave for Employees with Outstanding Performance

Starting January 1, we will introduce the following modification in our company policy with regard to annual leave: every year one employee from each department will be awarded special annual bonus leave for outstanding performance.

The eligible employees will have additional five (5) days of annual leave credited on January 15. The bonus leave will be accounted for separately and will remain available until used, notwithstanding any other limitation of the total number of days of annual leave that may be carried forward.

We will have a meeting on December 15 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the results of the 2006 performance evaluation and approve the final list of employees eligible for the bonus. The announcement to the employees will follow the meeting. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know before the meeting.

Bottom Line On Top

BLOT

- A solid BLOT = Successful document
- More than just the thesis
- Helps the reader understand the rest of the document

KISS

Keep It Simple Stupid



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KISS Principle

- Avoid
 - run-on sentences
 - Unclear pronoun references
- Short and simple sentences are best
- Beware of jargon and unknown acronyms