

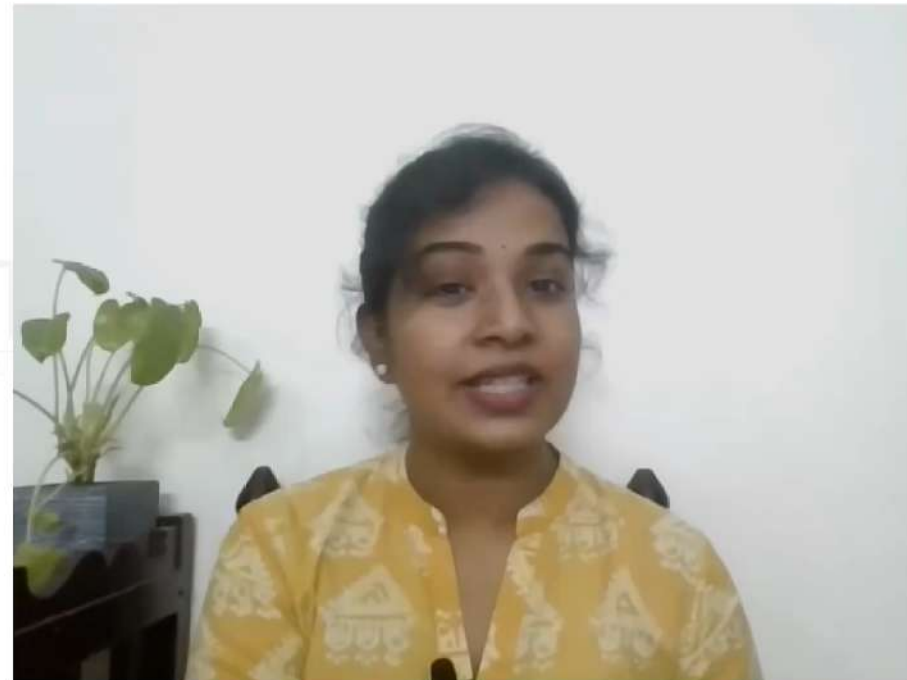


# Introduction to business writing

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## Learning objectives

- Understand the similarities and differences between oral and written communication
- Comprehend the relevance of written communication in business contexts
- Learn the features and styles of business writing



# Oral vs Written communication

- Source
- Message
- Channel
- Receiver
- Feedback

Adam, Jay here! Please participate in a conference call at 3.15.

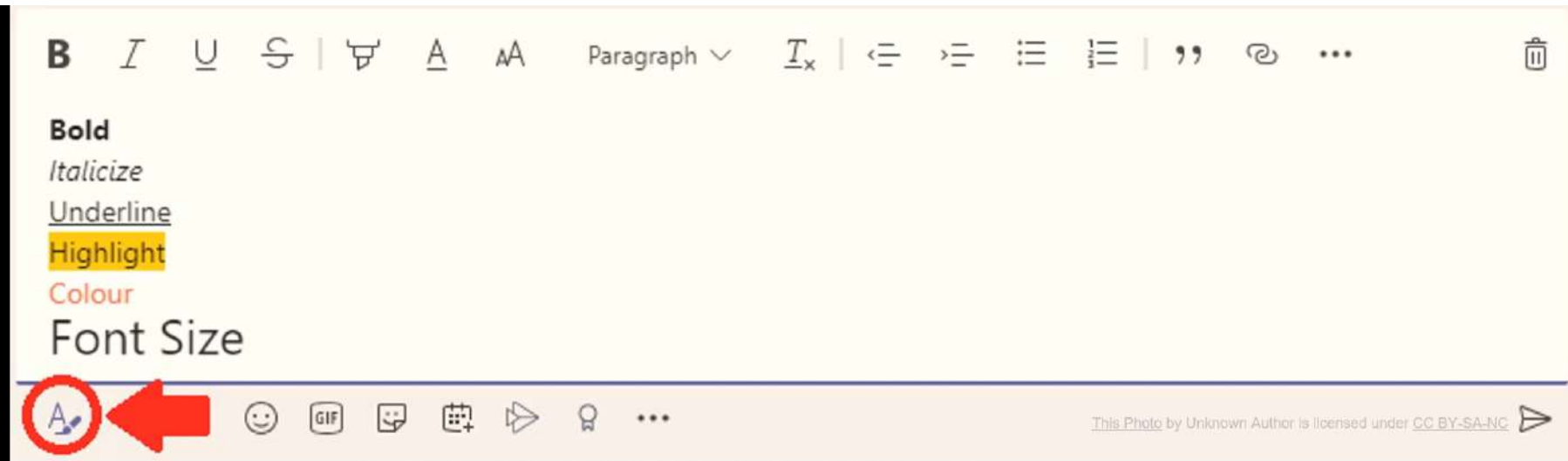


Dear Adam,  
Please participate in a conference call at 3.15.



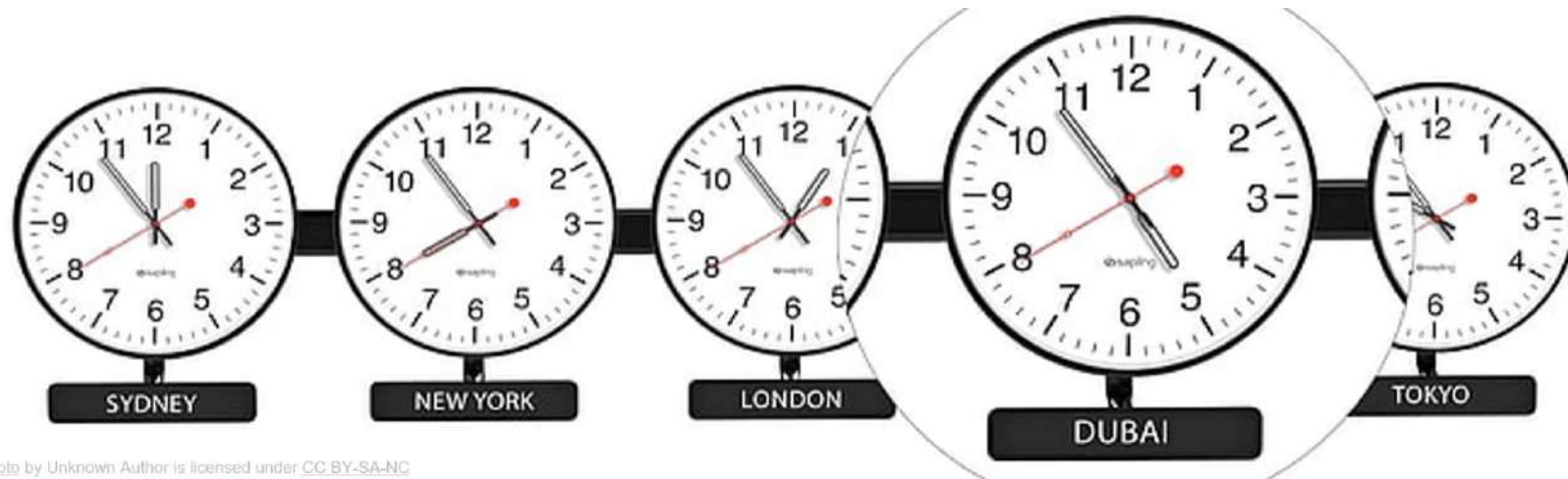
# Why is written communication important?

- It provides records and references.
- It helps in providing clarity and avoiding confusion.
- It can be used as evidence in case of a lawsuit.
- It helps in reducing ambiguity.
- It is formal and reliable.
- The effectiveness of written communication is dependent upon the skill of its handler.



Does written communication have non-verbal dimensions?

- Yes!
- Written communication= what is said + how it is said
- What is said- the words chosen
- How it is said- medium, font type, font size, appearance etc.



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## Written communication is asynchronous

- Written communication occurs at different times.
- The communicator takes reasonable time to encode a message.
- Immediate feedback is often absent.
- Anticipate the reader's needs, interpretation, and likely response to our written messages.



# Styles in written communication

- Colloquial- informal, conversational style of writing; uses colourful expressions, slang, and regional phrases; suitable only for one-on-one internal communications
- Casual- involves everyday words and expressions; casual style is usually out of place in business contexts
- Formal- focuses on professional expression with attention to roles, protocol, appearance

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## Is writing learned?

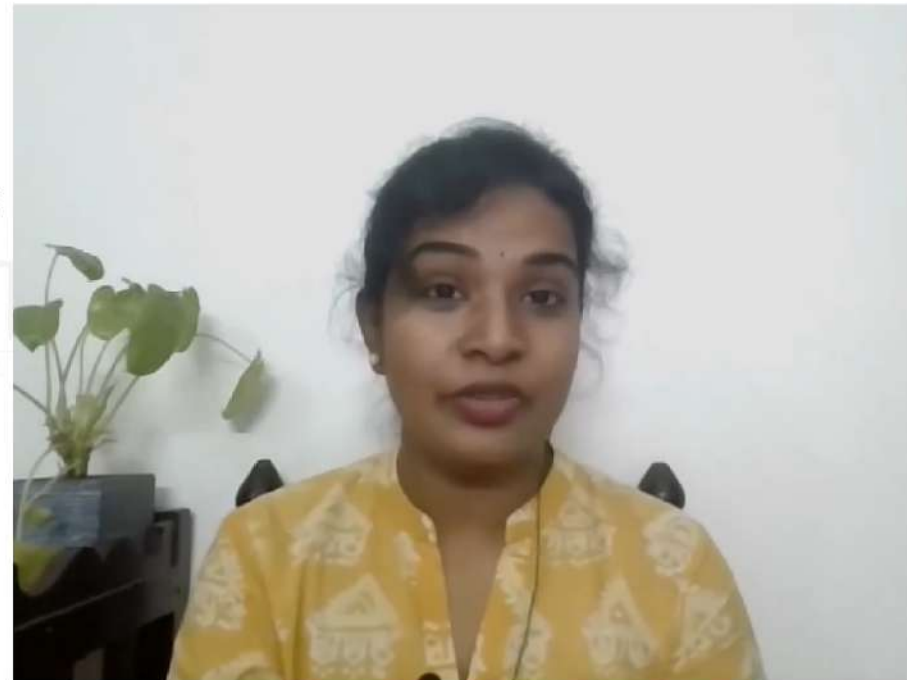
Writing is a reflection of  
experience and effort.

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# Summary

- Oral and written communication have similarities and differences.
- Written communication is relevant in businesses mainly because of its clarity and documentation features.
- Formal communication is considered as the most appropriate style in business writing.





# What is good writing?

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# Learning objectives

- Understand the basic qualities that characterize good business writing.



# What is good writing?

Edward P Bailey- Good writing



follows the rules, is easy to read, and attracts the reader.



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## What are the rules?

- audience expectations, industry standards, what you learnt at school, what is reflected in the writing of authors
- "all of the above"
- Common sense is one basic criterion of good writing.
- Know the rules so that you can bend them.
- You can be a little creative even by following rules.

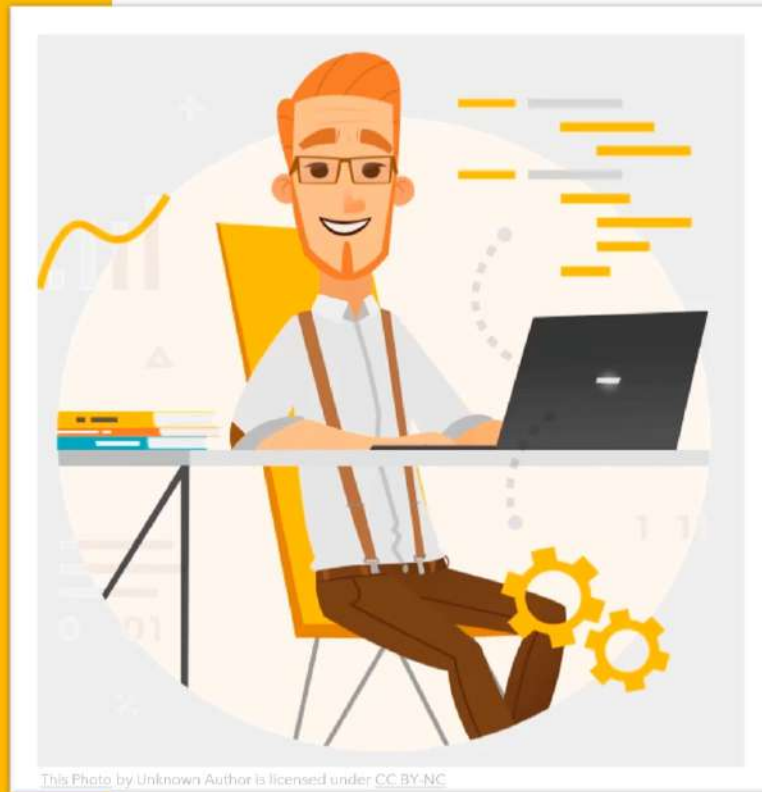




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## What is easy to read?

- Not the same as simple writing.
- Cater your writing to the audience.
- Avoid creating artificial and unnecessary barriers.
- Use jargon sparingly.
- Explain difficult terms, choose brilliant illustrative examples, incorporate definitions



## Will the audience want to read it?

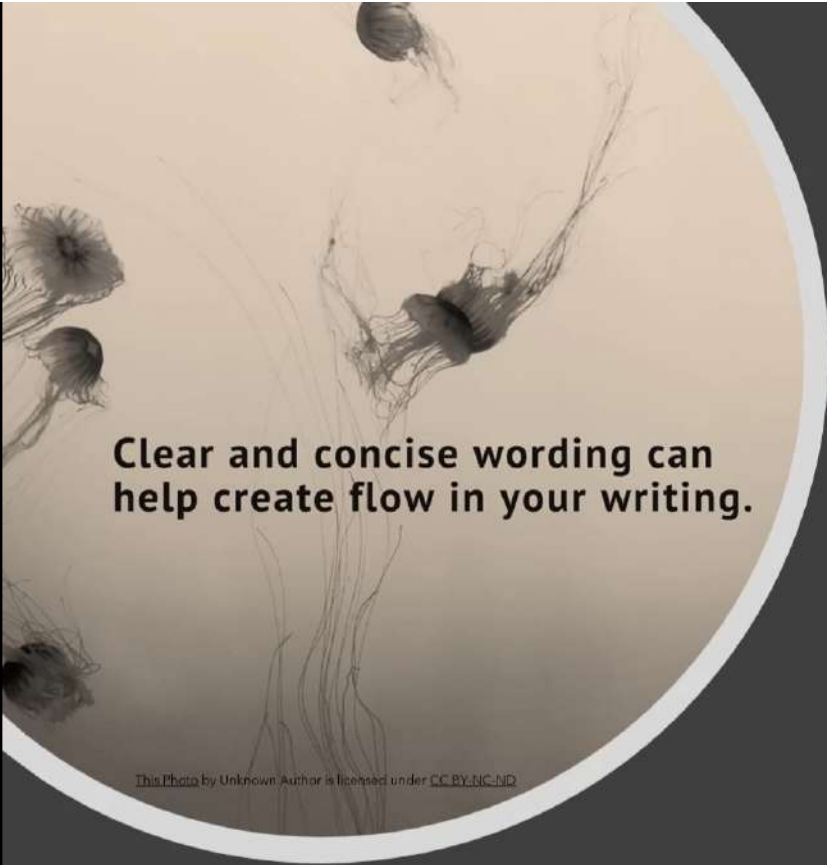
- It is important to grab the attention of the audience.
- Appeal to readers with short, punchy sentences and catchy phrases.
- State how your writing can meet the reader's needs.
- Open with a "what's in it for me" strategy

A stack of books and papers on a wooden surface. The stack includes several books with different colored covers (yellow, red, blue) and a large number of loose papers or folders, some with blue and yellow covers.

## Meets the reader's expectations

- Understand who the intended reader is.
- Writing just to one person: make some reasonable assumptions
- Writing a document to be read by a group or team, an entire department, or even many total strangers
- Example: writing Web site content-why the audience would be drawn to the site and what they would expect to read there

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**Clear and concise wording can help create flow in your writing.**

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## Is clear and concise

- Clear and concise writing aims at eliminating error.
- No room for ambiguity in business writing.
- Central goal across communication: fidelity





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## Is efficient and effective

- Efficiency will be compromised if the goals and desired results are unclear.
- Read similar documents prior to writing
- Combine audience's needs with perspectives from similar documents.
- Effective writing accomplishes its purpose.



# Summary

Good writing

- follows rules
- is easy to read
- attract the readers
- meet the reader's expectations
- is clear and concise
- is efficient and effective





## Stages of writing

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# Learning objectives

- Learn the stages of effective business writing.
- Learn the skills needed in each stage of writing.



# Stages of writing

- Pre-writing
- Writing
- Revising



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## Pre-writing stage

- Prior to writing a message
- Understand the purpose- to inform or to convince
- Know the receiver
- Decide how to send the message



## John Thill & Courtland Bovee's checklist

- Determine your general purpose
- Determine your specific purpose
- Make sure your purpose is realistic.
- Make sure your timing is appropriate.
- Make sure your sources are credible.
- Make sure the message reflects positively on your business.
- Determine audience size.
- Determine audience composition.
- Determine audience knowledge and awareness of topic.
- Anticipate probable responses.
- Select the correct channel.
- Make sure the information provided is accurate, ethical, and relevant.

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## Purpose of writing

- General purpose- the overall goal of the communication interaction
- to inform, persuade, entertain, facilitate interaction, or motivate a reader
- Specific purpose- the intended outcome
- the result that will happen once your written communication has been read.
- Keep in mind the 5Ws and 1H: Who, What, When, Where, How, Why



## Determine the channel

- Consider the purpose when choosing the channel
- Electronic channels are widely accepted in today's business environment
- Is it the right time to send an IM? Is it appropriate to send a confidential matter via memo?
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of each channel

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## Writing stage

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- Collect information- reports, public documents, news items, discussions, surveys etc.
- Organize the information.
- The first draft is usually imperfect.
- Rearrange the matter, use appropriate words, structure the sentences and paragraphs, and add supportive contents like pictures or graphs





## Writing stage

cont...

- Time is money.
- "3 p.m. meeting postponed to 4 p.m." instead of "Wednesday meeting"
- Present a quick overview, or "executive summary," at the beginning of the document.
- Use boldface headings as signposts.
- Make your headings informative.
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence.
- Use bullet points when you have a list of points, questions, or considerations.



## Revising stage



- Read the message thoroughly- proofreading
- Edit the discrepancies
- Proofread again- spelling mistakes or grammatical error
- Check whether the message serves its purpose.



# General revision

- Evaluate content- Has any information been left out?
- Evaluate organization- Is the document properly organized and is the organization style clear to the audience?
- Evaluate style- Is it formal or informal? Is the style consistent?
- Evaluate readability- Can the reader comprehend the content?



# Summary

- Any writing assignment will follow the three-step process of pre-writing, writing and revising.
- Pre-writing is all about preparation.
- Writing is where the job is executed.
- Only after revising, the writing assignment is considered complete.





# Guidelines for effective writing

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## Learning objectives

- Learn the common mistakes in writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to eliminate error in writing and to write content effectively.







# Guidelines for effective writing

## Word selection- Simple words

- Use conversational words.
- The conclusion established from a scrutiny of applicable data is that a money-spinning market is present for the product. ✗  
The data studied confirm that the product is in good demand. ✓
- Unfamiliar Word: Endeavour, utilize, demonstrate, antiquated ✗  
Familiar Word: Try, use, show, old ✓



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## Word selection- Concrete words



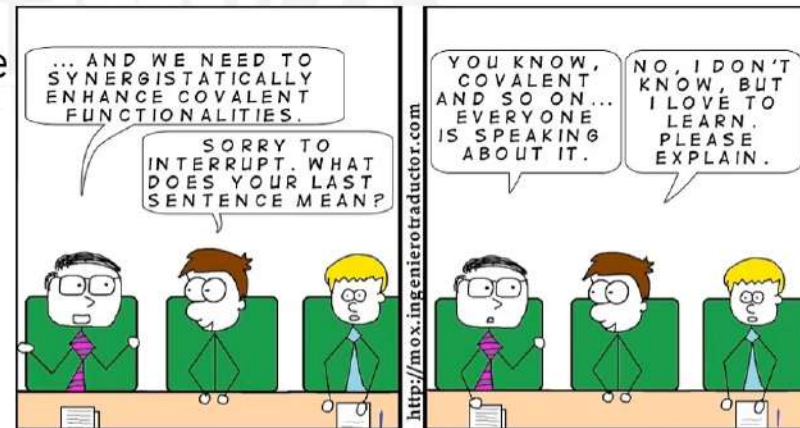
- Abstract and concrete – a large crowd; around 2000 people
- Always use concrete words as opposed to abstract words.
- 'Profits are rising significantly.' ✗  
'Profits are rising by 50%'. ✓
- Substantial increase in sale of products during last year. ✗  
An increase of 30% in sales of Product X and Y in the year 2014-15. ✓
- Abstract words: The minnows. ✗  
Concrete: Bottom 1%. ✓

## Word selection- Conciseness or Brevity

- 'The new manager is having a capability to come to such conclusions that are important to handle the situation.' ✗
- 'The new manager is a quick decision maker.' ✓
- More the number of words, more are the chances of misinterpretation.
- Long Words: During the preceding year  
Short Words: Last year
- Long Words: Incontestable evidence  
Short Words: Proof

# Word selection- Jargon

- Try to avoid jargon.
- With Jargons: The responsibility of a person from managerial cadre involved in pedagogical pursuits is to impart knowledge to subordinates sent to him for instruction.
- Without Jargon: The manager's job is to instruct subordinates.



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## Active voice

- Use active voice.
- Usage of passive voice decreases the strength of a statement.
- Passive Voice: The decision is supported by all the departmental heads.

Active Voice: All the departmental heads support the decision.

- Passive Voice: A new committee was appointed by the top management to investigate the issue.

Active Voice: Top management appointed a new committee to investigate the issue.

## Avoid repetition

- Needless repetition can make your document less than vigorous and discourage readers.
- Said: "indicate," "point out," "share," and "mention"
- Synonyms are useful in avoiding the boredom of repetition.

## Eliminate slang

- Avoid using chat language or instant message and text abbreviation
- Follow the norms of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Do not include slang.

## Avoid cliches

- A cliché is an expression which is technically correct but overused to describe a particular situation.
- Reader also perceives that the writer has nothing special to offer through the communication.
- leave no stone unturned, looking for an early response, this is to inform you that, last but not the least, for any other information feel free to contact me etc.

## 'You' is better than 'We'

- Writing with a 'you-viewpoint' connects the reader instantly to the communication.
- 'We' can also be used. But, the usage of 'we' should not dominate the purpose of using 'you'.
- 'We extend our full support to protect your interests.'
- 'We are happy to inform you.'
- 'You will be happy to know.'
- Look at the situation from the readers' point of view.



## Paragraph structure and length

- A paragraph is a group of connected sentences with an aim of providing the complete thought.
- Topic sentence-introducers-developers-modulators-terminators
- Length of a paragraph increases as we move from simple to complex thought.
- Break long paragraphs while writing.
- Long reports and documents may require longer paragraphs.

# Final check

- Is it professional?
- Is it too emphatic?
- Does it have too much jargon?
- Is it too simple?
- Does it represent you and your organization in a professional way?
- Will you be proud of the work a year from now?
- Does it accomplish its mission, stated objectives, and the audience's expectations?

# Summary

- Effective writing is essential in every profession.
- Clarity, brevity, conciseness, coherence etc. are to be followed in business writing.
- Effective and good writing has to be able to reach out to a large audience.

