

FranklinCovey® exce[↑]lerators

Business Writing Skills™

Getting Your Point Across
With Power and Influence

Toolkit



Good Writing is Good Customer Service

Your readers want:

- Relevant information.
- To easily find what they are looking for.
- To get in and out fast (_____).
- Documents that are well organized.
- Documents that have a friendly tone.
- To skim and scan.

Quality Writing Standards

- Subject line conveys a clear purpose
- Purpose is clear and up front
- Lists in the form of bullets
- Good use of white space
- Emphasis using bold font
- Headings are informative (Think “headline.”)
- Short paragraphs and sentences (six lines maximum; 18–22 words average)
- Complete, relevant detail
- Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Review in longer documents

Good Writing Requires Good Thinking

What do good writers think about?

- How will I send the message?
- Who will read my message?
- What is the purpose of my message?

ADVANTAGE WRITER TOOL

Signal Words

Recommendation to...	Information about...
Request for...	Report of...
Warning about...	Invitation to...
Directions for...	Announcement/notice of...
Proposal to...	Agenda for...

State Your Purpose

Subject Line:

Opening Paragraph:

List Your Key Points

-
-
-

Expand Your Key Points

Restate Your Purpose

Message B

To: [you]

From: Leah Posselli

Subject: Recommendation to Approve Claims Processing Procedures

Wednesday you asked me to review the procedures for processing claims. I strongly recommend you approve the procedures attached ASAP.

The recommended procedures would bring these benefits:

- Reduce processing costs by 16 percent, saving \$15,000/month.
- Increase customer satisfaction by speeding up the process.

Reduce processing costs

The current system costs an average \$236.65 per form. The recommended system would cut that cost to \$198.70—a 16 percent savings. Since we process over 400 claims/month, we would save at least \$15,000 per month.

Increase customer satisfaction

We currently take 3 working days to process a claim. The recommended system would cut that time to 1 day. We'd get funds to the customer faster and increase their satisfaction with our service.

State Your Purpose In Your Subject Line

Subject Line

- Start with a signal word that tells readers what the document **IS**.
- Tell readers what you want them to **DO** (and **WHY**, if appropriate).
- Tell readers what you want them to **KNOW**.

Signal Word

Proposal to Lease and Renovate Comark Building at No Cost to City

What should readers DO?
WHY should they do it?
What should readers KNOW?

Three-Mile Island Memo

Babcock & Wilcox Company

IR Generation Group

August 3, 1978

To: [name], Manager, Plant Integration

From: [name], Manager, Plant Performance Services Section (1149)

Subject: Operator interruption of high-pressure injection

References:

1. [name to name], Operation Interruption of High-Pressure Injection, 9 February 1978
2. [name to name], Operation Interruption of High-Pressure Injection, 16 February 1978

References 1 and 2 (attached) recommend a change in Babcock & Wilcox's philosophy of HPI system use during low-pressure transients. Basically, they recommend leaving the HPI pumps on, once HPI has been indicated, until it can be determined that the hot leg temperature is more than 50°F below T for the reactor cooling system (RCS) pressure. Nuclear Service believes this mode can cause the RCS (including the pressurizer) to be solid. The pressurizer reliefs will lift, with a water surge through the discharge piping into the quench tank.

We believe the following incidents should be evaluated:

1. If the pressurizer goes solid with one or more HPI pumps continuing to operate, would there be a pressure spike before the reliefs open which would cause damage to the RCS?
2. What damage would the water surge through the relief valve discharge piping and quench tank cause?

To date, Nuclear Service has not notified our operating plants to change HPI policy consistent with References 1 and 2 because of our above-stated questions. Yet the references suggest the possibility of uncovering the core if present HPI policy is continued. We request that Integration resolve the issue of how the HPI system should be used. We are available to help as needed.

Develop Your Introductory Statement

The following categories are useful in developing an introductory statement:

- Benefits
- Risks
- Steps
- Recommendations, suggestions, reasons
- Highlights
- Overview (of main sections)

Parallelism Exercise

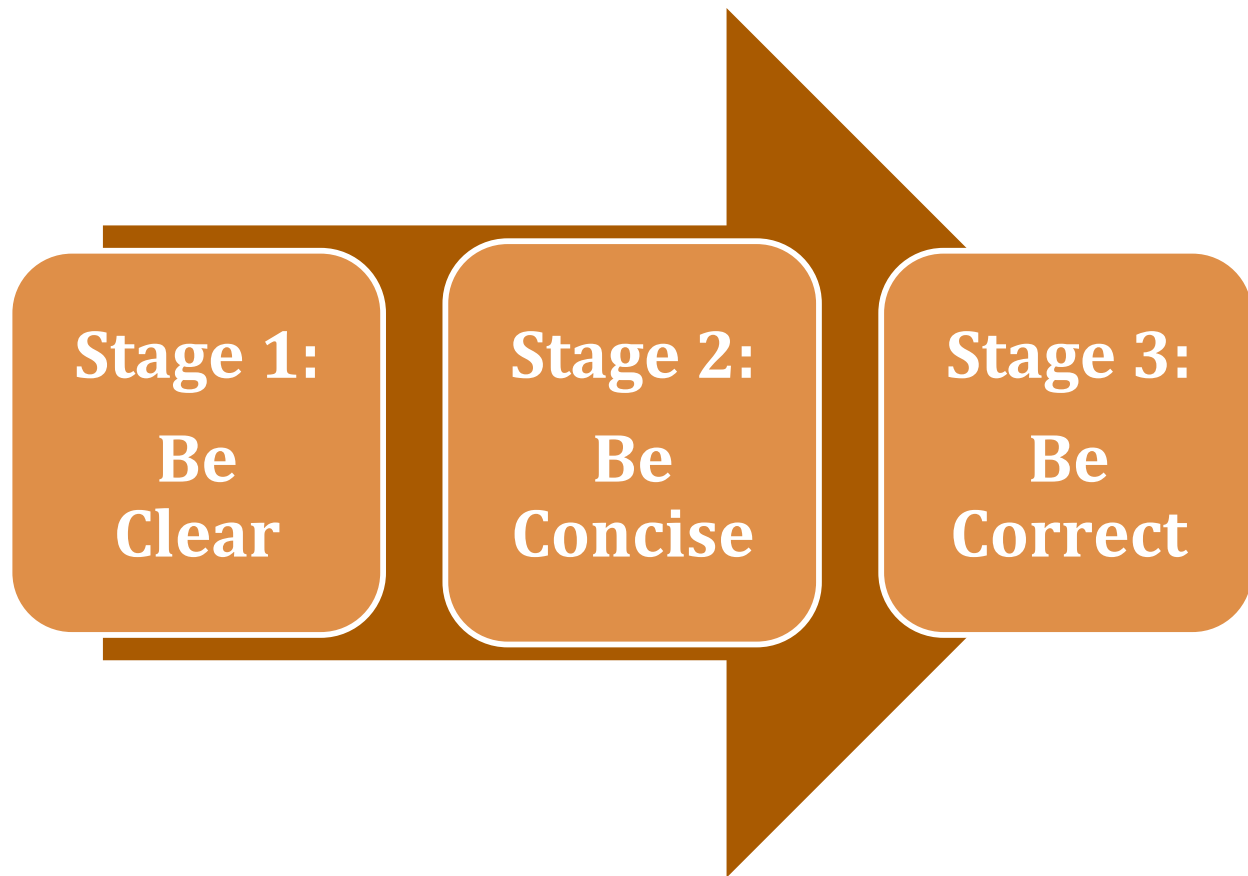
Make the items in this list parallel.

- Read all the instructions before assembling the kit.
- Rubber gloves are helpful and are included.
- Unwrap materials packaged in green shrink wrap.
- Solution may cause burning if it gets in eyes, cuts, or scratches.
- Cut out all patterns with scissors (included).

Your Parallel List:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Revise In Three Stages



Revision Checklist

Stage 1 Revision: Be Clear

Before you hit “Send,” ask yourself:

- ☐ Is my purpose clear and up front?
- ☐ Will the readers care?
- ☐ Is my message organized around the four boxes?
- ☐ Is every detail relevant?
- ☐ Can the reader skim and scan?

Stage 2 Revision: Be Concise

- ☐ Use lists.
- ☐ Use active voice.
- ☐ Use strong verbs.
- ☐ Avoid wordy and redundant phrases.

Stage 3 Revision: Be Correct

- ☐ Check spelling.
- ☐ Check grammar.
- ☐ Check punctuation.

Stage 2 Revision: Be Concise

Use Active Voice

Active Voice: To use active voice, think, “who” or “what” does “what?”

Passive Voice: You know you are speaking in passive voice when you use “to be” verbs (am, are is, was, were, be, being, been).

PASSIVE VOICE	ACTIVE VOICE
Outstanding service was given to clients by the Customer Service Team.	
A leave of absence was taken by the engineer without approval.	
The contracts were broken by our largest client.	
Jeff Abrams can be contacted for further information.	
The meetings may be attended by the Training Director.	

Use Strong Verbs

NOT THIS	THIS
She made an announcement...	She announced...
I am in agreement with...	I agree.
They made an evaluation of...	They evaluated...
There have been discussions among suppliers...	Suppliers have discussed...

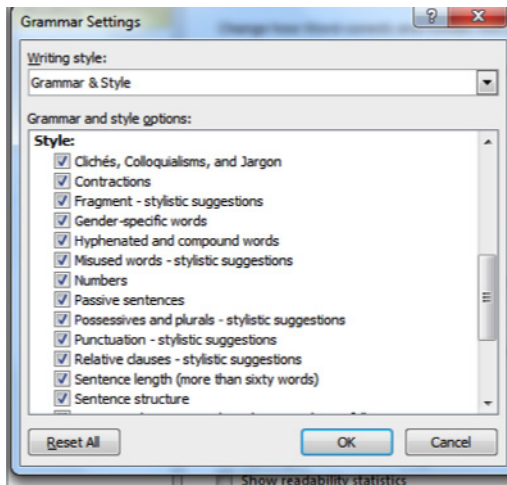
Stage 2 Revision: Be Concise

Avoid Wordy or Redundant Phrases

Examples of converting wordy phrases to shorter equivalents:

FAMILIAR WORDY PHRASE	SHORTER EQUIVALENT
At the present time	Now
Despite the fact that	Though, although, even though, while
Due to the fact that	Because
For the purpose of	For
For all intents and purposes	For

Use Style Options



Often your word-processing software will help you revise for conciseness. Microsoft® offers many grammar and writing style options. For example, MS “Style Options” will flag many writing problems including wordiness, misused words and jargon, and passive-voice sentences.

Note: In most versions of Microsoft Office and Outlook, setting the style options is located under the “Grammar Settings” tab.

Additional tips for making your writing more concise:

- Use “intensifier” words sparingly. Examples: *really, extremely, considerably, rather, quite, etc.*
- Rewrite sentences and clauses starting with: *There is/are/was/were/will be*
- Rewrite sentences and clauses starting with: *It is* *that* or *It was* *that*.

Stage 3 Revision: Be Correct

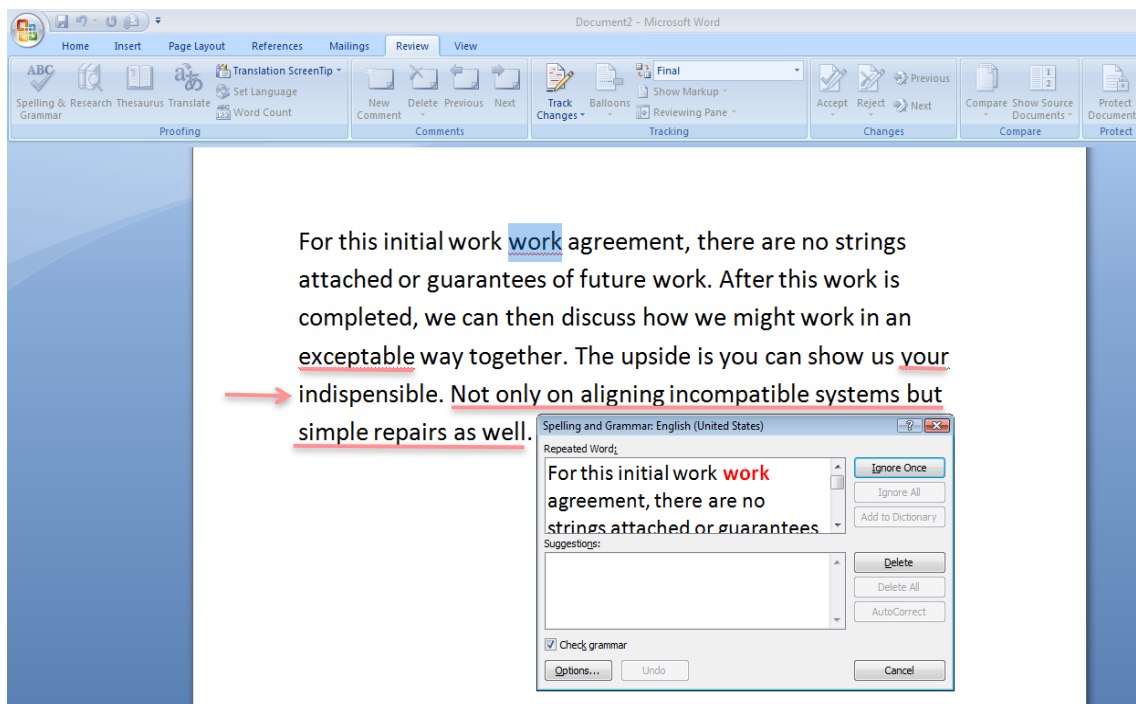
Check Spelling

Use the **AutoCorrect** feature to prevent common spelling errors *you* make. For example...

- Replace *manger* with *manager*.
- Replace *accomodate* with *accommodate*.
- Replace *dessert* with *desert*.

Check Grammar

Use the **Spelling and Grammar** function in the **Review** menu.



[illegible]

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