

**Writers have two main problems.  
One is *writer's block* when the words won't  
come at all,  
and the other is *logorrhea*  
when the words come so fast that they can  
hardly get to the waste basket in time.**

— Cecilia Bartholomew

# Three Basic Elements of Developing the Module Draft

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- **Use the six keys to good proposal writing style**

1. Write like you talk
  - *Well . . . most of you*
2. Communicate in customer's language
3. Use active versus passive voice
4. Be specific
5. Talk benefits not features
6. Use Effective Presentation Style

- **Make your presentation clear to the reader**

- **Answer the RFP's questions**

- Remember the RFP?  
Now's the time to go back and read it again

# Key #1 - Write Like You Talk

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- **Scrap the Flowery Language**
  - “Eradication of verbose passages is a necessity”
- **Use Plain Talk and Active Verbs**
  - “. . . As non viable units are observed they will be removed, transported to the holding facility, and identified with tags that are red in color.” **(24 words)**
  - We red tag defective units and send to the holding facility. **(11 words)**
- **Never Fear Using Little Words** (it won’t be easy)
  - Little words tend to say exactly what you mean
  - Remember, most big things have little names . . . God, love, life, death, peace, war, hope
- **“Shorter” Takes More Skill to Write**
  - When you don’t know what you mean - use big words and lots of them
    - But, they only fool little people!
  - Term paper style

# Key #1 – **Don't** Write Like You Talk

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- **Overly Dramatic Style**
  - Phenomenal..., awesome..., huge..., gigantic...
  - Intimate knowledge of ..., we embrace..., passionate...,
- **Other Interesting Phrases and Redundant Style**
  - Best and brightest...
  - Industry-proven...
  - Our proposed design
  - Tightly aligned or tightly integrated...
  - Well-established or well-managed...
  - Collaboration and involvement
  - Knowledge and know-how
  - Mature and repeatable CMMI Level 3
  - Proven and repeatable...
  - Continuously strive to effectively....
  - Full and comprehensive...

## Key #2 - Use the Customer's Language

- **Don't attempt to improve solicitation's choice of words**
  - If it says "Past Experience" don't use "Past Performance"
- **Embed "road signs" in your subheadings and text using key words from the RFP highlighting the location of our answer**
- **Avoid unexplained "Platinum-isms"**
- **Speaking to the customer in his/her language is hard**
  - For example, if you tell a DoD customer to "secure a building" ...



*The Army* occupies the building so no one can enter



*The Navy* turns off the lights and locks the doors



*The Air Force* takes out a three-year lease with an option to buy



*The Marine Corps* assaults the building, captures it using suppressive fire and close combat, and defends it

## Key #2 - Communicate with Customer in Their Language or Context

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*Other parts of the Government have their different reactions too... for example CBP / Border Patrol Agent*

- The Navy will turn off the lights and lock the doors
- The Army will occupy the building so no one can enter
- The Marines will assault the building, capture it using suppressive fire and close quarter hand to hand combat, defend it to the death
- The Air Force will take out a three-year lease with an option to buy
  
- The Border Patrol Agent will park across the street, out of plain sight, and watch for UDAs to exit the building... detain and remove them, then seize and search the building

## Key #2 - Communicate with Customer in Their Language or Context

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*Even in the commercial world if you say the same thing to a **BearingPoint, Accenture, or IBM Consultant...***

- The **Navy** will turn off the lights and lock the doors
- The **Army** will occupy the building so no one can enter
- The **Marines** will assault the building, capture it using suppressive fire and close quarter hand to hand combat, defend it to the death
- The **Air Force** will take out a three-year lease with an option to buy
- The **Border Patrol Agent** will park across the street, out of plain sight, and watch for UDAs to exit the building... detain and remove them, then seize and search the building
  
- The consultant will do a business case analysis, and use management process re-engineering, and determine if the solution delivery team really needs the building

## Key #2 continued Minimize Consultant Speak

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- **DEEP experience – holes are deep**
  - Extensive, comprehensive
- **Numerous ENGAGEMENTS – a lot of people planning to get married?**
  - Contracts, projects, programs
- **GOING FORWARD - is going backward a possible confusion?**
  - Usually redundant and unnecessary
- **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP – sounds like mind control**
  - You WILL think like we do!
  - Do you really mean just... leadership?

**Our deep experience in thought leadership enables us to excel in this engagement going forward.**

# Key #3 Use The Active Voice

- **Simpler**
- **More direct and believable**
- **More forceful and self-confident**
- **Usually less wordy**
- **Writers use passives to avoid first person pronouns**
  - Mistakenly believe: I, we, our, us are inappropriate
  - Comes across like we are **not accountable**, do not want to take responsibility, not part of the team

**Active:** Never pour hazardous chemicals into the sink

**Passive:** Hazardous chemicals should never be poured into the sink

- **Active Voice:**  
When the structure of the sentence has the actor before the action
  - Australian companies manufacture millions of precision machine tools
- **Passive Voice:**  
When the structure of the sentence has the receiver before the action
  - Millions of precision machine tools are manufactured by Australian companies

8 words

10 words

## Key #3 Active Versus Passive

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- **Passive sentences are longer, weaker-willed, indecisive, evasive**  
... but are OK sometimes
  - When you don't know or don't want to mention actor
    - "...Failure occurred because metal shavings had been dropped into the worm-gear housing..."
  - Receiver is more important than the actor
    - "Our cross-sectional analysis techniques - the most important of our innovations – are currently being tested in our xxx lab..."
    - "... the shavings were dropped into the gear box..."

# Key #3 How to Eliminate Passives

- **Three ways to make sentences active**

- Turn sentence around > put actor first
- Change the verb
- Rethink the sentence

- **Two examples of a turn-around**

- **Passive:** Work packages will be scheduled and monitored by individual program managers.  
(11 words)

- **Active:** Program managers schedule and monitor their work packages. (8 words, present tense)

- **Passive:** These chemical methods are described in more detail in Section 6. (11 words)

- **Active:** Section 6 describes our chemical methods in more detail.  
(9 words)

## Key #3 How to Eliminate Passives (continued)

- **Example of changing the verb**
  - **Passive:** The Navy requirements are expected to bring added emphasis to structural integrity.  
(12 words)
  - **Active:** The Navy requirements will probably emphasize structural integrity. (8 words)
- **Example of rethinking the sentence**
  - **Passive:** Special consideration must be given to the structural mounting, heat exchanger shape, ducting losses, and ducting loads. (17 words)
  - **Active:** Structural mounting, heat exchanger shape, ducting losses and loads are especially important. (12 words)
- **Use the Grammar Checker in MS Word to find the passive sentences**

Check the verbiage on your art and in your action captions and convert passives there too!

# Use Present Tense to Convey Realism

- Lends air of credibility and confidence
- Gives impression that we are proposing something real rather than mere good intentions
  - We do it this way today
- Only exception is when it is important to make a distinction between past, present, and future

Poor: **The Program Manager will publish a weekly status report for contractor visibility.**

Better: **Our Program Manager publishes a weekly status report for contractor visibility.**

# Be Friendly — Don't Be Afraid of the First Person

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- Stronger, more vigorous, more emphatic
- Use we, us, and our instead of “the ABC Company” and “Platinum” most of the time
- Remember, our customer is looking for a co-worker, not a disembodied entity
  - But not too friendly – use first person (we, us, our) for us, but not second person (you, your) for FBI

1. Launch of the first satellite will occur in month 26.
2. Jane Leader has been appointed program manager.

We launch the first satellite in month 26.

Our program manager is Jane Leader.

# First, Second, Third Person

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I am firm.

First person

You are obstinate.

Second person

He is a pig-headed fool.

Third person

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— Katharine Whitehorn

# Be Positive

- **Make positive statements**
  - Shows confidence
  - Carries more conviction
  - Usually shorter
- **Negative statements often sound evasive**
- **Avoid caveats and conditional statements unless they really are absolutely necessary**

**Positive:** ...with all transactions completed on 9/11.

**Negative:** ...with no transactions lost on 9/11.

**Positive:** Our training program ....

**Conditional:** Our proposed training program ....

# Avoid Stilted Phrases

- In proposal writing, our challenge is to demonstrate understanding with statements of substance
- Avoid phrases such as

- “Our Company understands ...”
- “It is understood ...”
- “We understand ...”

*“Eradication of verbose passages is a necessity”*

These stilted phrases become unsubstantiated claims and actually convey the opposite impression

- Never fear using little words
  - Little words tend to say exactly what you mean
  - Remember, most big things have little names . . . love, life, death, peace, war, God, hope
- Learn to use little words in a big way
  - It might not be easy . . . Shorter takes more skill to write
  - When you don't know what you mean . . . “use big words and lots of them” . . . but . . . they only fool little people!

# Omit Needless Words

- Also unnecessary sentences and paragraphs  
(just as a drawing should contain no unnecessary lines, or a machine any unnecessary parts, or code any unnecessary interfaces)
- Some examples:

• is representative of	typifies
• on account of	because
• on the basis of	by
• to summarize the above	in summary
• assuming that	if
• at the conclusion of	after
• in order to	to
• due to the fact that	because, since
• during which time	while
• utilize	use

*Too often, insecure writers mistakenly believe that extraneous words give their writing an air of authority; in fact, readers are far more likely to be annoyed than impressed by wordiness, particularly in business documents.*

See the job aid, “Tightening Wordy Phrases.doc” in folder 3.3

# Build Your Module Paragraph by Paragraph

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- **The content for every paragraph is defined in the AMU**
  - Don't allow paragraphs to become too long
- **Go back and read through your Mod Spec**
  - Remind yourself what the reader is looking for from the RFP and reference document instructions and what win strategy and messages you agreed to convey
- **Focus at least one paragraph on each “hunk” of proposal instructions or evaluation criteria – see latest versions of Section L and M**
- **Begin each paragraph with a statement that suggests that topic (hunk)**
  - Limit paragraph content to the message defined in the AMU
  - Provide transitions between paragraphs
- **Keep sentences short**
  - A good rule of thumb is keep sentences no longer than 25 words
  - Using big words and a lot of them conveys the message that you don't know what you mean
    - Often it is a valid perception

# Writing Style Can Bias the Reader For or Against You

- You develop a relationship with the reader through your writing style
  - Establish perception of **credibility** and **confidence**
  - Create environment of **compatibility** or **arrogance**
  - If it is a “friendly read” and **easy to score**, the evaluator will often become an ally and look for ways to help us win
- Techniques to communicate your message effectively
  - Use the customer’s language
  - Be specific – don’t generalize
  - Use the present tense to convey realism
  - Be friendly – don’t be afraid of the first person
  - Be positive
  - Avoid stilted phrases
  - Use the active voice



- These won’t come naturally to you
- Write your text to capture it, then self-edit following JIT Training instructions

## Key #4 Good Text is Specific

- **Eliminate generalities. Everybody has:**
  - “... a team of highly qualified personnel
  - ... a record of past performance
  - ... a wealth of experience directly related to this effort . . .”
- **Try:**
  - “... and our team of highly qualified technical personnel has an average of 5 years of college, 27 years in the industry, 18 years with our company, and 7-1/2 years experience on . . .”
- **Be definite and concrete**
  - Poor: The launch was delayed because of unfavorable weather
  - Better: The launch was delayed because of high winds
  - Best: Fifty knot winds delayed the launch for three days

Good proposals are data rich — they deal in particulars and present the details that matter

## Key #4 Good Text Is Specific #2

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- **Be specific – test every sentence**
  - . . . frequent contacts . . . – how frequent?
  - . . . covered in other paragraphs . . . – cite specific paragraph
  - . . . other program organizations . . . – identify them
  - . . . reduces the amount of time . . . – by how much?
- **Steamboat test**
  - If your description works as well for a steamboat as it does for our approach, then the description is not sufficiently specific
  - Make sure to highlight the specifics of YOUR process and tasks

# Key #4 Good Text Also . . .

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- **Uses comparative phrases**
  - “. . . this system provides 40dB of gain, uses only 20 watts, and weighs 40 pounds”
  - (try finishing with) “. . . a two-fold improvement over current state-of-the-art equipment.”
- **Uses “Ahas” – Put emotion into dispassionate reader**
  - (the competition’s team member originally developed the HE/S but since lost that capability)  
“Our team currently employs 12 members of the original HE/S development team...”
- **Uses ghosts – Bring negative thinking to bear against the competition**
  - “Correct generation of MC&G topology and data is a difficult task. Only the PG/S and DE/S contractors have the experience and expertise to perform this task with minimum risk.”
- **Avoids weasel wording – “. . . we really can’t be sure . . .”**
  - Proposed, generally, usually, likely, possibly, surmise, suggest, appear, seem, believe, speculate, conjecture, etc.
- **Avoid terms like:**
  - “Our company understands . . .”, “We understand . . .”
  - Challenge is to be specific to demonstrate that we understand

# Key #5 - Talk Benefits Not Just Features

***Every Feature Should Have an Associated Benefit.  
The Benefit Answers the Question, “So What?”***

Features	→	Benefits
–Advanced modeling and simulation software		–Lower development costs; higher reliability
–A high pressure water separation scheme and air bearings in the ACS		--Elimination of scheduled maintenance costs in the Air Conditioning System
–Two identical axial-position hydraulic motor to drive the unit		–Simplified maintenance requirements; graceful degradation
–Initiating detail design for long-lead hardware procurement before Phase II go-ahead		–Greater ability to meet program needs and lower schedule risk
–History of delivering airframes on or ahead of schedule		–Dependability; low program schedule risk
–Twenty years of experience in modular construction techniques		–Lower production costs; higher producibility
Program Manager reporting directly to the General Manager		–Higher program visibility; quicker allocation of resources; more responsive to customer needs

**Customers buy benefits... not features**

# Key #6 – Use Effective Presentation Style

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- **Use Paragraphs as Main Building Blocks**
  - Limit paragraphs to single topic
  - “Break up” paragraphs if they get too long (3-6 sentences)
- **Organize Paragraphs Logically**
  - Chronological, whole to parts, problem to solution, cause-effect, pro-con, topical (no order)
- **Use Transitional Sentences for “Flow” (sign posting)**
  - Announce, “. . . 4 topics”, then . . . first, second, third, etc.
  - Use key words to close paragraph / open next
- **Don’t Waste First or Last Sentences**
  - Make sure first sentence reflects paragraph content
  - Make last sentence a good summary
- **Use Simple Whole Declarative Sentences**
  - Keep sentences short (< 25 words) and active
  - No stuffy, extravagant, pompous, bureaucratic

# Key #6 continued Use Effective Words and Phrases

- **Avoid Overuse of Acronyms**

- Even limit use of defined yet unfamiliar
- Don't overdo . . . the program, customer, or our name

- **A Few Deadly Words / Phrases**

• We understand	Our experience ensures	Almost never
• We guarantee	Would be able to	We think
• Most of the time	We believe	More than a few
• We will	We are well positioned to	We feel
• We will continue to try		

- **Use Clichés Sparingly**

• Ample opportunity	As a matter of fact	Bottom line
• Built-in safeguards	Conservative estimate	Due consideration
• Each and every	Existing conditions	Final analysis
• Goes without saying	Grave concern	World class
• Best of breed	_____ of choice	

- **Use of the Word “...will...” is Overdone**

**Where there is a “will” there is a way... to remove it (usually)**

# Key #6 Wordy Phrases Are a Waste

Wordy Phrases	Translations	Wordy Phrases	Translations
is representative of	typifies	based on the fact that	due to/because
is clear that	clearly	by means of	by
is plain that	plainly	by way of illustration	for example
kept under surveillance	watched	called attention to the fact	reminded
made an investigation of	investigated	despite the fact that	although
notwithstanding the fact that	although	detailed information	details
a considerable magnitude	big/large/great	draw to a close	end
on account of	because	due to the fact that	because
on the basis of	by	during which time	while
period of time	interval/period	estimated at about	estimated
pertaining to	about	except in a small number of cases	usually
pursuant to	following	exhibit a tendency to	tend to
separate into two equal parts	halve	expose to elevated temperature	heat
take appropriate measures	act	for the purpose of	for/to
to summarize the above	in summary	from the point of view	for
without variation	constant/stable	in accordance with	by/under
with the exception of	except	in addition (to)	also/besides
afford an opportunity	permit/allow	in close proximity	near
a great deal of	much	in conjunction with	with
a great number of	more	in excess of	more than
along the lines of	like	in many cases	often
as a general rule	usually/generally	in respect to	about/concerning
as related to	for/about	in the absence of	without
assuming that	if	in the event that	should
a sufficient number	enough	introduced a new	introduced
at all times	always	in view of the fact that	considering
at the conclusion of	after	involve the necessity of	requires

**Total Characters: Wordy Phrases = 877. Short, Simple Translations = 322.**

## Key #6 continued Paragraphs and Sentences

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- **Do Not Start a Sentence with a Long Qualifier**

*“Even though we are new to the business, state-of-the-art subcomponents are used in our aircraft avionics designs including dual Intel 8600 microprocessors; Marquette frequency stabilizers, the most advanced anti-ECM devices currently available on the market today; and Barnett Industries’ recently improved and redesigned RF regulators.”*

- **And What Else Is Wrong with this Sentence???**

## Key #6 continued Paragraphs and Sentences (continued)

- **Do Not Start a Sentence with a Long Qualifier**

1 “Even though we are new to the business, state-of-the-art sub-components are used 2 <sup>passive</sup> *in our aircraft avionics designs including dual Intel 8600 microprocessors; 3 Marquette frequency stabilizers, the most advanced anti-ECM devices currently* 4 <sup>redundant</sup> *available on the market today; 5 6 and Barnett Industries’ recently improved and* 7 <sup>cliches / complex</sup> *wordy* 8 <sup>too long</sup> *redesigned RF regulators.” (49 words)*

“Our avionics design includes the latest dual Intel 8600 microprocessors, Marquette frequency stabilizers, and Barnett Industries’ redesigned RF regulators. The Marquette units are the most advanced anti-ECM devices available.” (19 & 11 = 30 words)

## Key #6 continued Effective Text Also . . .

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- **Uses Comparative Phrases**
  - “. . . our system provides 40dB gain, uses 20 watts, and weighs 40 pounds . . .” (try finishing with) “. . . a two-fold improvement over state-of-the-art equipment.”
- **Uses Aha's – Put Emotion into Dispassionate Reader**
  - (The competition's team member developed the HE/S but since lost that capability)
  - “Our team currently employs 12 members of the original HE/S development team...”
- **Uses Ghosts – Bringing to Bear Negative Thinking**
  - “Correct generation of MC&G topology and data is a difficult task. Only the existing contractors have the experience and expertise to perform this task with minimum risk.”

## Key #6 continued Effective Text Also . . . (continued)

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- **Avoids Weasel Wording – “. . . we really can't be sure . . .”**
  - Generally, usually, possibly, surmise, suggest, appear, seem, believe, speculate, conjecture, etc.
- **Makes Positive Statements**

He often arrived on time. Vs. He did not always arrive on time.

He is frequently right. Vs. He is not frequently wrong.

- Positive shows more confidence and conviction
- Negative frequently sounds evasive

## Key #6 continued    **Miscellaneous Stuff**

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- **Capitalize**
  - “... as shown in Figure T-057 ...”
  - “... is covered in Section 4.3 ...” (really Section 3 of Vol. 4)
  - “... as explained in Appendix 1 ...”
  - “... can be found in Volume III ...”
  - the word Government
- **Do Not Capitalize**
  - “... as covered in paragraph 5.4.1, 3.4.5, 2.5.4.3 ... etc..”
  - “... as shown on page 1-34 ...” (avoid page references)
- **Spacing / Punctuation**
  - Single space between para. numbers and names
  - Single space between sentences
  - Don’t skip any lines in your text
  - Keep sentences simple, do not use semicolons
    - Make into two (or more) simple sentences

# Key #6 continued A Proposal Is Not a Technical Report

## Technical Reports

- Develop approaches and establish features
- Present analyses and test data that verify performance
- Convince reader of performance and conclusion
- Gain acceptance of performance claims
- Tell all you can

## Proposals

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>{ Primary Emphasis }</p> <p>{ Method of Presentation }</p> <p>{ Objective }</p> <p>{ Goal }</p> <p>{ Length }</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Show how features benefit the customer</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use data to substantiate benefits claimed</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sell evaluator on worth of benefits</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Selection of approach and contract award</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Brief and to the point</li></ul> |
|--|---|

# Key #6 continued If That Did Not Convince You . . .

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## Technical Reports

- Objective report
- Present findings
- Include all data; hope reader believes conclusions are substantiated
- Describe past events
- Inform reader

## Proposals

- Sales document
- Influence evaluator
- Select data to substantiate claims
- Describe future events
- Win contract

# Figure Callouts

- Use the art control number to identify the figure in the text
  - “... Figure A-017 ...”
- Readers MUST come to a callout before they get to the figure . . . as they read the page
- Do not call out a figure more than once on that page
- If you must refer to an earlier figure include that fact in the callout
  - “... As shown earlier in Figure A-123 ...”
  - Better: refer to the Tab or numbered paragraph where the figure appears so the evaluator gets the whole story
- Focus boxes and quote boxes do not need a callout
- There is no need for text to repeat the tedious technical detail that is already in the art
  - If the data is NOT already in the art, consider converting it into a graphic or table
- Figure appears in the next available corner AFTER the callout

Figure callout is used to tell the reader  
it's time to look at the figure NOW!

# Figure Introductions Make a Big Difference

- Proposal figures that suddenly appear without introduction or explanation generally confuse evaluators and reduce our score
- Text should direct the reader to the figure, summarize the information presented and highlight the conclusions that the reader should draw
- Examples:
  - Poor: “Total cost of this project is estimated to be \$356,000 (Figure -105).”
  - Better: “Total cost of this project is estimated to be \$356,000. Figure A-105 provides a detailed accounting of the cost breakdown.”
  - Best: “This project is estimated to be \$356,000. The cost breakdown in Figure A-105 shows that the hardware costs account for nearly 65 percent of the total costs, while labor costs constitute only 12 percent of the total.”

*Highlighting the figure reference makes layout easier*

Every figure (except focus box) MUST be referenced from text

# Remember to State the Benefit...

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Why does a person buy a shovel?

- a) Stainless steel blade
- b) Boron-reinforced fiber-glass handle
- c) Corinthian leather hand grip
- d) Enables the user to create holes in the ground quickly and easily



## Unsubstantiated Claims: Frequent Problem We See in Draft ...

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- **Making a claim without facts to back it up is a deadly sin in proposals**
  - When you make a claim – immediately follow it with proof (usually **objective, quantitative** proof; typically points to a figure)
- **Test your draft**
  - Highlight all your claims
  - Highlight the proof in another color (make sure the proof is real, supportable, supported, and objective)
  - If you have claims without the proof – you need to rethink
  - NOTE: All claims must show a benefit to CJIS Division or other stakeholders or they have no value in the proposal...
  - (Don't use this as a space saver by eliminating all your claims)

# BCWUA\*

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- **Define acronyms when first used**
  - Spell out the words first, capitalizing the letters used in the acronym
  - Then put the acronym in parentheses
  - Then use the acronym, don't spell it out again within that Volume
  - If the acronym is never used again in the volume, just spell it out – don't use the acronym at all!
- **Redefine acronyms that are reused after their definition is forgotten**
  - For example, acronym is first used in Tab 2, it's OK to spell it out again in Tab 6
- **Pages loaded with acronyms are foreboding**
- **Avoid any acronym that makes the reader stop and think — especially in text**
- **Avoid parochial or made-up acronyms (Platinum-isms)**
- **We plan to deliver a single acronym list for the entire proposal, not different lists per volume**

\*Be Careful When Using Acronyms

## Writing for Proposals

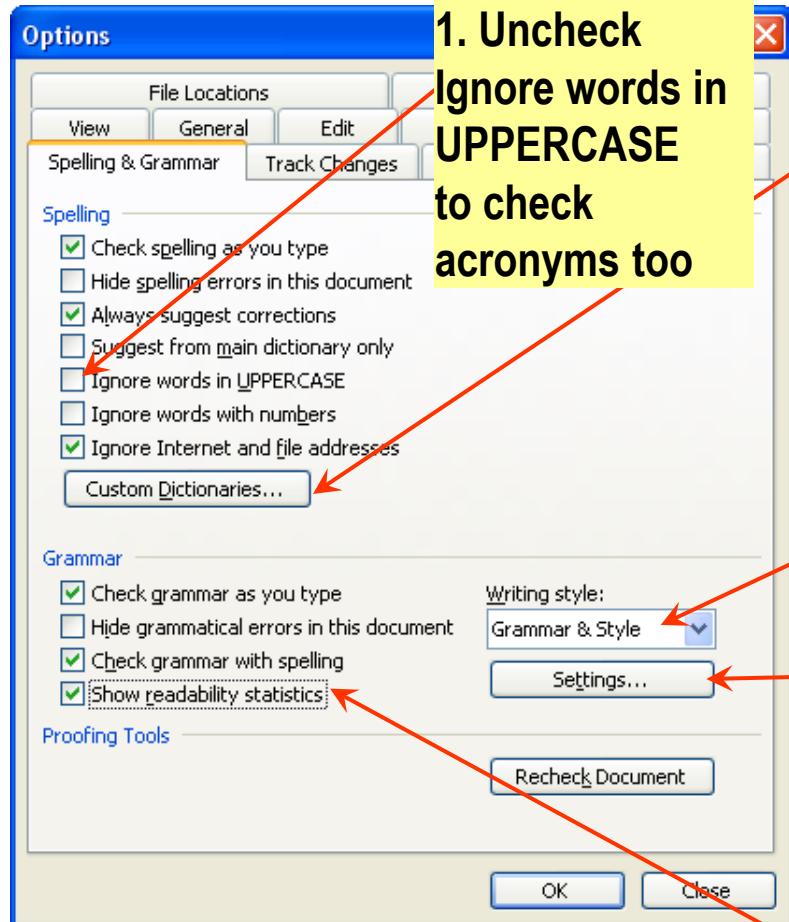
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Some phrases containing descriptives or other constructs meant to modify, clarify, or otherwise illuminate the precise meaning of a sentence, innocently inserted and harmless in themselves, require the reader to continually slog through a morass of words, and on occasion a significant, although tangential, thought good naturedly included for the edification of the readers, who in and among themselves wish that the author would only, if you please, get to ...

The POINT!

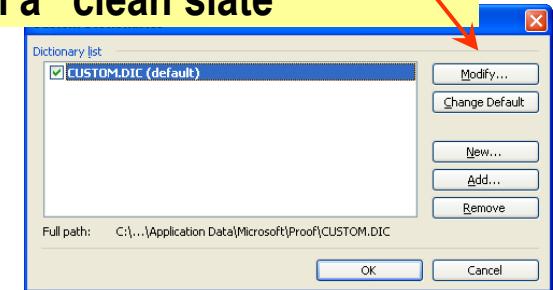
# Grammar Checker Settings for MS Word

## Tools, Options, Spelling and Grammar tab

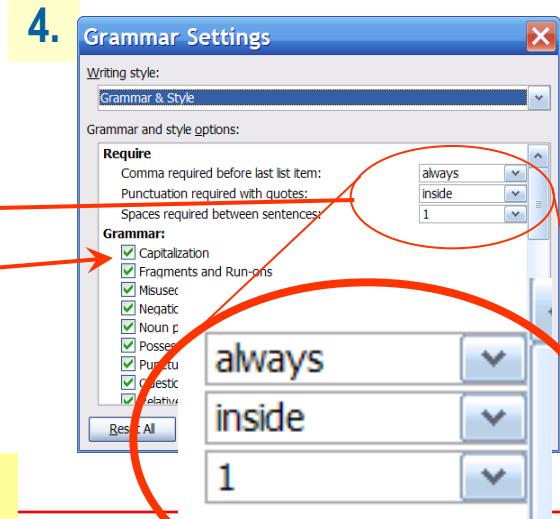


1. Uncheck  
Ignore words in  
UPPERCASE  
to check  
acronyms too

2. Click Custom  
Dictionaries...  
> Modify  
And delete all entries  
to start spell checker  
with a “clean slate”



3. Use Writing style  
= Grammar & Style



4. Check all, except  
Style > Use of first  
person

5. Check this box to see  
readability statistics

# “Bad Writing” – A Review

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- Be more or less specific
- Don’t be redundant; don’t repeat yourself for emphasis
- Don’t use more words than necessary; it’s highly superfluous
- One should never generalize
- The passive voice should be avoided
- Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are usually unnecessary
- Avoid clichés like the plague. (They are old hat.)
- Prepositions are not words to end sentences with
- Employ the vernacular
- Foreign words and phrases are not apropos
- Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
- Understatement is always best - Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement
- Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake
- Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed

# Summary

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- **Is your draft compliant?**
  - With the final RFP instructions and evaluation criteria?
  - With mod spec and story map?
  - With agreed-upon strategy?
- **Does your module sell?**
  - Did you prove every claim?
  - Are claims in agreement with the rest of proposal?
- **Polish your draft**
  - RFP compliance first
  - Check spelling and grammar
  - Complete text checklist
- **File Name on SharePoint**
  - > 6 InternalManagementReviews
  - > your volume folder :
    - Module# short topic revision#.doc
    - For example: P-2 ExecSumm R3.doc

*Remember:  
Respect your  
evaluator's time, make it  
short, direct and to the  
point*

*Make it personal – write  
to your evaluator – if  
you wouldn't say it that  
way, don't write it that  
way*