

## The Art of Effective Writing

If you wish to persuade me, you must think my thoughts, feel my feelings, and speak my words.

### 1. Having Trouble Starting?

Call a friend or colleague and start to tell them what you're writing about. You'll be surprised how readily the ideas start to flow when you're concerned with content only and not worried about style or format.

Put your thoughts into words informally, then start writing immediately.

### 2. Be Your Own Source Of Inspiration

Re-read something you have written and are pleased with. Reminding yourself how good you can be is often all it takes to inspire you to begin your new writing task.

Prove to yourself that you've done it before – and know you can do it again.

### 3. Use Plain Language

If you're out to impress your readers by using elaborate phrases and big words, forget it. The aim of your exercise is clear communication – no frills, no jargon, and no clichés. As you write, check that you move through these stages:

- Begin by saying why you are writing
- Include only the information your reader needs and wants to know
- Resist the temptation to waste words by repeating yourself or telling the reader things they already know
- When you've said it, stop

### 4. What You Say Is Just As Important As How You Say It

Identify your main message, be clear about your target reader (or audience) and choose the appropriate words, tone and style. Putting these three elements together is crucial to successful and effective writing.

Ask yourself who will be reading your work, and select your language accordingly.

## **5. Everyone Loves A Good Story**

This is a guaranteed way to get – and keep – the attention of your readers. Attract them with an arresting beginning, keep their attention with an interesting middle, and satisfy them with a well-rounded conclusion.

## **6. Paint A Picture For Your Readers**

If you can help the reader into your world by setting the scene, so much the better. Use language that invites the reader to join you: ‘Imagine this scene’ or ‘Let’s look closely at’ and so on.

Be descriptive and give your reader visual cues.

## **7. Arrange Your Material In An Appealing Way**

Use short sentences and brief paragraphs so your material won’t appear too hard to read. Break up your information into easily digestible chunks with lots of white space, small headings, quick reference lists and useful summaries.

Your reader will be invited into your writing when it looks easy to digest.

## **8. Remember Writing Differs From Speaking**

A speaker often repeats the message just to make sure everyone has heard. Where a speaker works the room, getting laughs and warming up the audience, a writer will please you most by getting straight to the point.

As a writer, say it once and say it well. Get to the point sooner rather than later – your main objective is clarity, not length.

## **9. Use The Positive, The Direct And The Active**

Use active words and phrases rather than passive ones – your sentences will be shorter and have more energy.

Cut negative statements, too, by providing solutions instead of reiterating what won’t work.

Give your writing energy – you’ll have a much more receptive audience.

## Check List

1. Check you have your facts right
2. Include evidence or examples when trying to convince or persuade
3. Check to see if you have managed to convince yourself? Have you been vague?
4. Put yourself in your reader's shoes. How will your readers react?
5. Study form and structure. Does your writing follow a logical sequence?
6. Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.
7. Consider the tone and style of your writing. Will you reach your target audience?

## Final Tip

Don't try to be everything to everyone. Focus on the main reason for this piece of writing and address those issues alone.