

# Using Plain and Persuasive Style

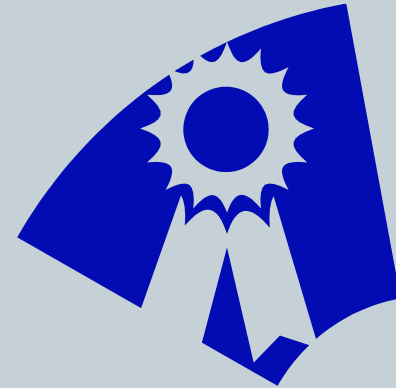


**HOW YOU SAY SOMETHING IS OFTEN WHAT  
YOU SAY.**

# Your writing style reflects your



- Attitudes
  - Values
  - Beliefs
  - Relationship with reader.
- 
- Style is quality, and it reflects your and your organization's commitment to excellence.



# Good Style Goes Below the Surface



## **For quality at a deeper level,**

- Choose right words and phrases
- Structure sentences and paragraphs for clarity
- Use an appropriate tone
- Add a visual sense to the text.

# Types of Styles



Grand Style	Eloquence. Heavy use of rhetorical devices and tropes.
Persuasive Style	Elements of the grand style to influence audience. Used with proposals, letters, presentations.
Plain style	Clear wording and simple prose. Most often used to inform, educate or present information. Good for technical descriptions, instructions, activity reports.

# Writing Plainly Takes Skill



- Clarity and placement of subject determine a sentence's focus.

## **Subject**

**The institute**

## **Verb**

provided

## **Comment**

the government  
with accurate  
crime statistics.

**Crime statistics**

were provided

to the government  
by the Institute.

Same information, but different emphasis.

# Eight Guidelines for Plain Sentences: Look Carefully at Examples in the Text



- The subject of a sentence should be what the sentence is about.
- The subject of a sentence should be the “doer” of the sentence.
- The verb should state the action or what the doer is doing.
- The subject of a sentence should come early in the sentence.
- Avoid excessive prepositional phrases.
- Eliminate nominalizations (verbs and adjectives turned into awkward nouns).
- Eliminate redundancy in sentences. Not to be confused with repetition and phrasing to increase coherence.
- Write sentences of breathing length. Average sentence length for professional writing is 20 words—you can go over or under, but look at the average.

# Intercultural Style and Translation Software



- Use basic sentences.
- Use standard punctuation.
- Use consistent words.
- Avoid metaphors, sayings, and clichés.
- Remove cultural, historical, or sports-related references.
- Back translate all text.
- Avoid words with double meanings.
- Minimize jargon and acronyms asap.
- Avoid puns or other plays on words.

# Writing Plain Paragraphs: Four Kinds of Sentences



- Transition sentence—purpose is to make a smooth bridge from the previous paragraph to the present paragraph. Typically used when new paragraph handles a significantly different topic.
- Topic sentence—makes a claim or statement that the rest of the paragraph will support (provide details for). Usually the first or second sentence, although it may come last.
- Support sentences—provide examples, reasoning, facts, dates, anecdotes, descriptions, and definitions. They prove the point of the topic sentence.
- Point sentences—restate the paragraph’s message and reinforce the topic sentence. Used when readers may not remember claim or when action is needed. Often begin with transitional word like “therefore” or “consequently.”



# Anatomy of a Plain Paragraph



**Transition Sentence** –optional, but often needed

**Topic Sentence**—almost always needed unless several paragraphs develop the same topic or for narrative and anecdotal paragraphs wherein the topic is implicitly evident.

**Support Sentences**—always, always needed

Examples

Reasoning

Facts

Dates

Definitions

Descriptions

**Point sentence**— (a sentence that clearly articulates the paragraph’s point - answers the reader’s question of “what’s your point?”); optional, but often used.

# The Given/New Method



Also called “old news, new news.”

- This technique ensures clear coherence.
- Example
  - Santa Fe offers many **beautiful places** for **artists** to work. Some **artists** choose to strike off in the **mountains** to work while **others** enjoy working in **local studios**. Both the **mountains** and the **studios** offer **places** to savor the wonderful **landscapes** of the area.
  - Note both the repetition and variety of those repetitions.

# Active voice is preferred, but passive voice is fine when:



- The readers really do not need to know who or what is doing something in a sentence like in report experiments.
- The subject of the sentence is what the sentence is about.

# Persuasive Style



- Sometimes, information is not enough, and you must influence (ethically) your audience.

Elevate the tone  
(Mostly diction, but  
also verb forms,  
pronoun use, rhythm)

Use Similes and  
Analogies (consistent  
with tone)

Use Metaphors  
(consistent with tone)

Change the Pace  
(Rhythm—read aloud.  
Punctuate with short  
sentence after long.)

# It's a Balancing Act



- When drafting and revising, look for places to use plain and persuasive style. Minimally, a document should have good, clean plain style with clear and easy sentences to read with clearly structured paragraphs.
- Persuasive style adds color and energy and must be used when readers need encouragement to accept your ideas or claims.



# You've Heard it Before: Practice, practice!



A wise man once told me --

Practice may not make you perfect,  
but it beats what you are doing now.

