



BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

“Oral and written communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer surveys year after year.”

* Business Communication for Success by Scott McLean p. 8

AGENDA

Writing and Presenting

- Planning
- Getting Started
- Style and Grammar
- Summary

Public Speaking

- What's Your Purpose?
- Practice
- Props
- Public Speaking Don'ts
- Reinforce Your Message
- Take Aways
- Summary



PLANNING

PLANNING — Who?

Know your audience

- How is your language affected by your audience? Acronyms, technical terms, etc.
 - Example: auto accident—write about it to your parents vs. insurance
- Will your audience need visuals to understand what you are trying to convey?
 - When is a picture (or diagram, screen capture) worth a thousand words?

PLANNING — Why?

Know your goal/purpose

- What do you want the audience to remember?
- Teach how to do something?
- Update your team on a project status?
 - Inform them of progress made?
 - Help them understand why your project is important?

PLANNING — How?

Strategy

- Given your audience and your goal, what is the best way to accomplish your purpose?
- Some options:
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Word document with bullet listed or step-by-step instructions (FAQs, quick-start guides, user manuals)
 - Lecture vs. hands-on session

COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

Email	
Useful for:	Brief notes, meeting schedules, invitations to lunch, brief progress reports
Not good for:	Sensitive information, personal feedback, critiques, mediating conflict, maintaining confidentiality
Note:	Email lives forever

Phone Call	
Useful for:	Resolving misunderstandings, maintaining confidentiality, or immediate feedback
Not good for:	Simple request, complex instructions, addressing numerous people
Note:	No record of communication

COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

Group Meeting	
Useful for:	Building consensus, mediating conflict, assessing commitment
Not good for:	Maintaining confidentiality or making a simple request
Note:	Have an agenda and keep on topic

Individual Meeting	
Useful for:	Evaluating personnel, maintaining confidentiality, relaying bad news, receiving input
Not good for:	Simple request or general information
Note:	Plan to listen as well as speak

PLANNING — Organization

Organize your thoughts and materials

- What materials do you already have?
- Do you need visuals? Screen captures? Charts? Graphs?
- Do you have the tools needed to create a document, slide presentation, visuals?
 - Free documentation tools—Google Docs, LibreOffice
 - Free graphics tools—Paint.NET, GIMP
 - Visio

PLANNING – Time

Budget your time

- Estimate how much time it will take to prepare
 - Write, review, revise, and edit
 - Create visuals or graphics (PowerPoint, Visio, charts)

PLANNING — Communication

Communication Design

- Is there a pre-formatted design such as a corporate template?
- If there is no template, what is the best design for your audience?
 - Find examples of designs that are easy to use and easy to read.
 - Consider using Information Mapping techniques:
 - Divides and labels information to facilitate comprehension, use, and recall
 - <http://www.informationmapping.com/en/>



 GETTING STARTED

GETTING STARTED

Writing is a process, not a one-time event

- Write, review, revise, and edit.
- Allow time to create a PowerPoint, create visuals/graphics that help convey your message.
- Writer's block
 - Not as important how you start—just that you start
 - Create an outline
 - Write notes on Post Its
 - Draw process picture



 **STYLE AND GRAMMAR**

STYLE AND GRAMMAR — Style

Writing Style

- Clarity
- Active voice
- Brevity
- Simplicity
- Completeness
- Tone
- What to avoid



STYLE AND GRAMMAR — Clarity

Clarity

“Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style.”
Matthew Arnold

- Use active voice rather than passive voice.
 - Active: “The agent determined who wrote the message.”
 - Passive: It was determined who wrote the message.”

STYLE AND GRAMMAR — Voice

Active vs. Passive Voice

- *Our lack of pertinent data prevented determination of committee action effectiveness in fund targeting to areas of greatest assistance need.*
- Rewritten in active voice
- *Because we lacked pertinent data, we could not determine whether the committee had targeted funds to areas that needed assistance the most.*

We	lacked
we	could not determine
the committee	targeted
areas	needed

STYLE AND GRAMMAR — Brevity

Brevity

- The shorter the sentence, the easier it is to understand.
 - The relationship between the nature of salt water to fresh water in the Edgartown Great Pond that fluctuates often is extremely important to everyone including scientists, residents, and environmentalists on Martha's Vineyard.*
- Revised:
 - The fluctuating salinity of EGP concerns many environmentalists, scientists, and residents.*

STYLE AND GRAMMAR — Simplicity

Simplicity

“Never use a long word when a short one will do.”

George Orwell

Category	Example	Substitute
Noun	Utilization Functionality	Use Feature
Verbs	Facilitate Finalize	Cause End
Adjectives	Aforementioned individualized	Mentioned Individual
Adverbs	Firstly, secondly Heretofore	First, second Previous

COMPLETENESS

Include all information needed

- Complete communication keeps the reader from guessing or making wrong decisions.
- Complete communication answers the questions:
 - Who, What, When, Where, and Why?
 - Action Items, Responsible Party
 - Deadlines!
- Completeness prevents the need for repeated follow-up communication or explanation, saving time and resources.

TONE

Tone is the “body language” of your message

- Always be:
 - Professional
 - Courteous
 - Gracious
 - Calm
- Avoid language that is:
 - Contemptuous
 - Judgmental
 - Harsh

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is a matter of life and death!

- Let's eat Grandma.
- Lets eat Grandma.



- Let's eat, Grandma.



PUNCTUATION

Two rules for commas

- Use commas in a series.
 - Example: This presentation includes style, grammar, and punctuation.
- Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by a conjunction.
 - Example: John went home, and Bill went to school.
 - Not this: John went home first and later went to school.

PUNCTUATION – Costly Commas!

U.S.

Lack of Oxford Comma Could Cost Maine Company Millions in Overtime Dispute

By DANIEL VICTOR MARCH 16, 2017



Oakhurst Dairy trucks lining up in Portland, Me., in 2006. Pat Wellenbach/Associated Press

State law overtime rules do not apply to:

The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, **packing for shipment or distribution of:**

- (1) Agricultural produce;
- (2) Meat and fish products; and
- (3) Perishable foods.

Does the law intend to exempt the distribution of the three categories, or does it mean to exempt *packing for* the shipping or distribution of them?

Avoid

What to avoid

- Conditional words (could, may, perhaps, somewhat) that water down your message.
 - Example: The daily scrum might be somewhat improved if it was kept shorter, and people didn't talk about unrelated issues.
 - Revised: The daily scrum is too long. Please encourage team members to keep their comments brief.
- Buzzwords, abbreviations, acronyms
 - Spell out the word the first time followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis.
 - *"Discovery is halfway between manually adding devices and the plug-and play functionality of web services for devices (WSD)."*
 - *"I know my alphabet, but I have no idea what you are talking about,"* a new employee at Lucent Technologies once said.

GRAMMER, SYNTAX, LEVEL, EDITOR

Mechanized tools in MS Word or PowerPoint

- Spelling
- Reading level
- Grammar
- Usage
- Voice

MS Word

(File -> Options -> Proofing)

When correcting spelling and grammar in Word

- Check spelling as you type
- Mark grammar errors as you type
- Frequently confused words
- Check grammar with spelling
- Show readability statistics

Writing Style: Grammar Only

MS PowerPoint

When correcting spelling in Microsoft Office programs

- Ignore words in UPPERCASE
- Ignore words that contain numbers
- Ignore Internet and file addresses
- Flag repeated words
- Enforce accented uppercase in French
- Suggest from main dictionary only

BLUNDERS

Common blunders that spell-check may not catch

- To, too, two
- There, their, they're
- Insure, ensure, assure
- Examples:
 - “We apologize for any incontinence we caused.”
 - “Users may decide at their own desecration.”
 - “No drink’s in the gym.”



SUMMARY



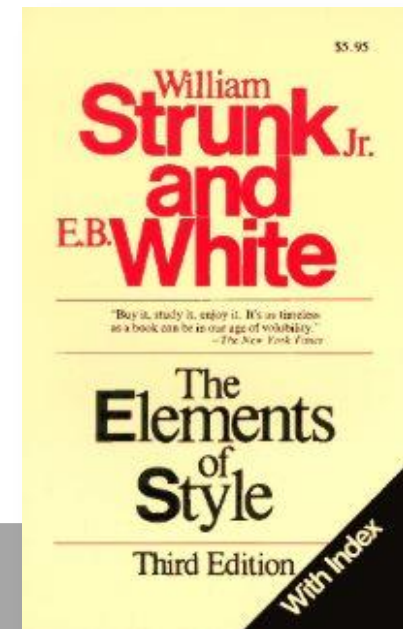
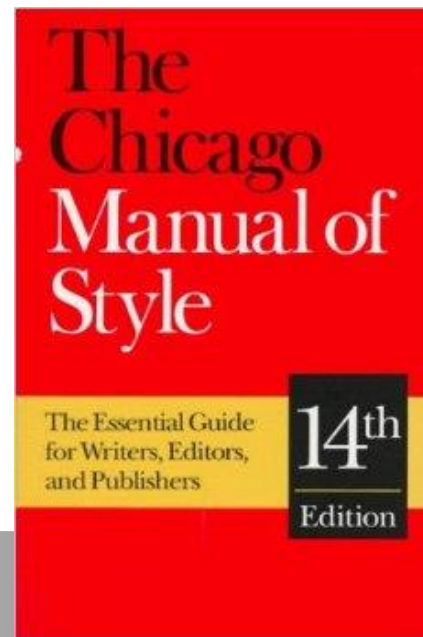
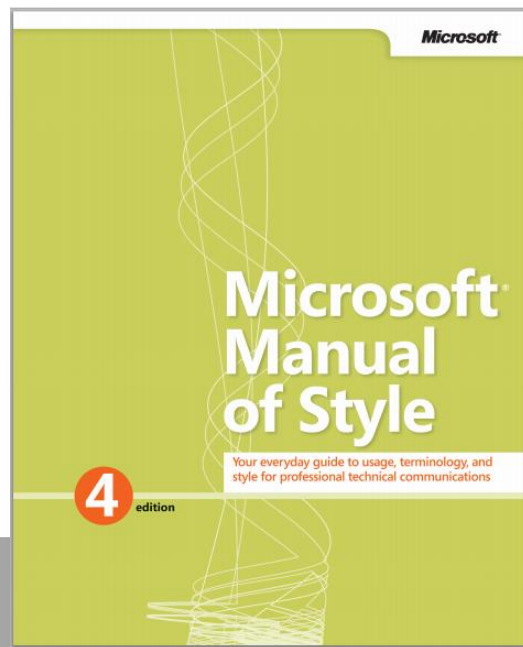
QUICK REVIEW

Follow a process

- Write, get started
- Edit
- Walk away for a minute, hour, day, week
- Edit / Proofread / Get feedback
- Send / Present

STYLE AND GRAMMAR AIDS

- Microsoft's Manual of Style for Technical Publications
- <https://www.Grammarly.com>
- The Chicago Manual of Style <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
- The Elements of Style (Strunk and White)



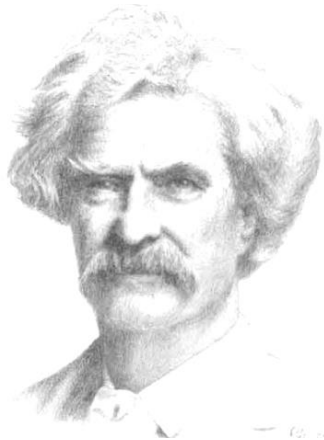


 PUBLIC SPEAKING

PUBLIC SPEAKING

“There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave.”

– Dale Carnegie



“It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.”

– Mark Twain

PUBLIC SPEAKING — What's Your Purpose?

- Audience

- Demographic
- Situational



- Purpose

- Inform
- Persuade



- Interaction

- Think about them –What's in it for them?
- Don't think about you



PUBLIC SPEAKING — Practice

- Take the risk to speak
- Get through the first minute
- Overcome nerves
- Engage the audience
- Make eye contact
- Use gestures
- Own the venue – make it your place

practice
practice
practice

PUBLIC SPEAKING — Engage the Audience

- Meet them
- Say something personal
- Ask a question
- Make eye contact
- Use humor
- Announce a topic of interest
- Use props



PUBLIC SPEAKING — Props

Props and visuals

- Must be legible and viewable throughout the venue
- Draw attention to the most important detail
- Illustrate your content



PUBLIC SPEAKING — Don'ts

Avoid

- Having no clear point
- Showing no audience benefit
- Lacking organization
- Presenting too many details
- Speaking too long



PUBLIC SPEAKING — Message

Reinforce your message

- Tell them what you're going to tell them – Introduction
- Tell them – Presentation
- Tell them what you told them – Wrap Up

PUBLIC SPEAKING — Take Aways

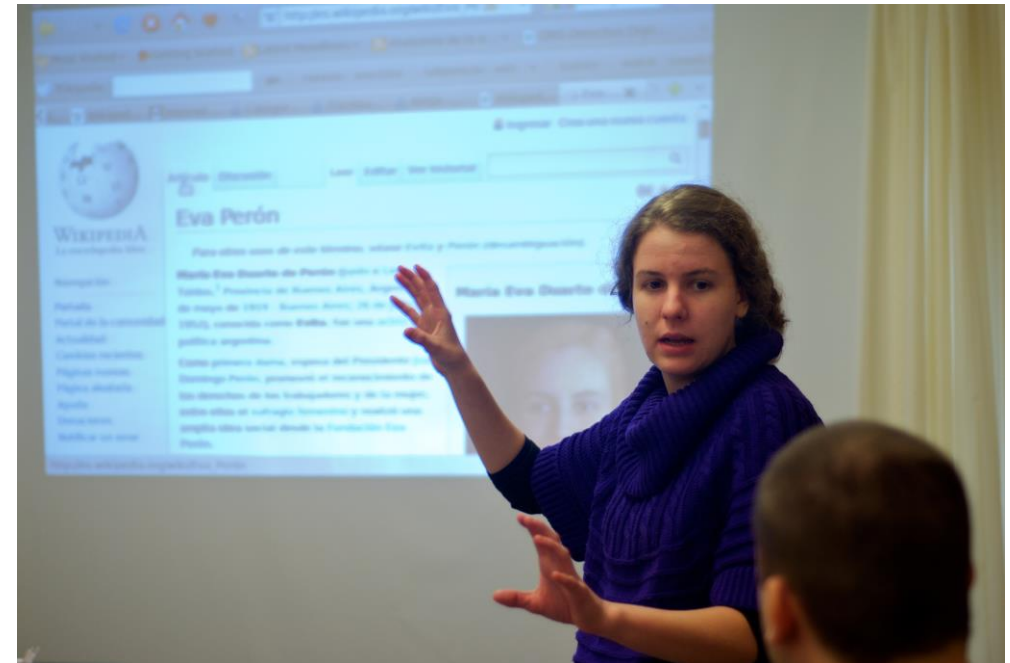
Public Speaking Concerns

- What are you afraid of when you must make a presentation?
 - Embarrassed
 - Look foolish
 - Lose place
 - Heckler
 - Boss
 - Others

PUBLIC SPEAKING — Summary

Process Summary

- Write
- Edit
- Walk away
- Revise
- Have someone else review
- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Present



PUBLIC SPEAKING — Summary

After Presenting

- Personal review
 - What went well?
 - What to improve
- Get feedback
- Make notes
- Update visuals



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- <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
- <http://www.informationmapping.com/en/>
- <http://www.pickthebrain.com/blog/george-orwells-5-rules-for-effective-writing/>

Presentations and Books

- Sentence Structure of Technical Writing, Nicole Kelley, Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies, MIT
- Style, Ten Lessons in Clarity & Grace, Joseph M. Williams

Additional Resources

- Bottom Line Business Writing, John S. Fielden, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.
- Business Writing with Style, John Tarrant, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1991.
- Mastering Business Writing, NY: Berkley Books, 1989.
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- Writing that Works, Sharon L. Pywell, NY: Mirror Press, 1994. p.98
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THANK YOU

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