

WELCOME TO

**EDITING FOR
MAXIMUM
EFFECTIVENESS**

Allison Horak, Instructor

CPS HR CONSULTING™

1

HOUSEKEEPING

We'll take frequent breaks.

Most of the time, you'll be muted for a better audio experience for everyone.

Use the Chat feature to communicate with the group or with me directly.

Respect others' opinions, even when they differ from your own.

2

AGENDA

- General editing guidelines
- Plain language
- Organization
- Positive phrasing
- Active and passive voice
- Parallelism
- MS Word readability
- Effective feedback

...and practice throughout the day

3

7

EDITING GUIDELINES

1. Purpose

Is the purpose stated in the first sentence or paragraph?

2. Reader response

Do I know what should I do—by when?

3. Logical flow

Can I follow the ideas easily?

4. Sentence length

Is every sentence 25 words or fewer?

5. Clear language

Is the document understandable in one read?

6. Concise language

Does every word play an important role?

7. Positive language

Does the document persuade and maintain relationships?

4

1. Purpose

2. Reader response

3. Logical flow

4. Sentence length

5. Clear language

6. Concise language

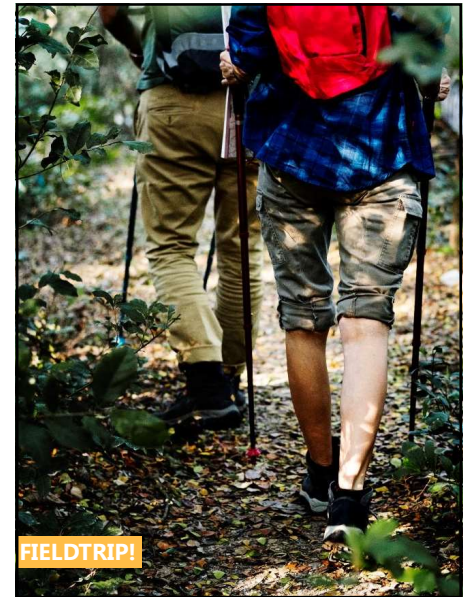
7. Positive language

California Biodiversity Council


The California Biodiversity Council will be meeting for a half-day plenary meeting and networking dinner on Thursday, November 1, followed by a full-day fieldtrip on Friday, November 2. The fieldtrip will include important sites in the vicinity of Twenty-nine Palms and Joshua Tree National Park.

The focus of the meeting will be to examine the unique ecology, biology, and conservation history across the Mojave Desert ecoregion. There is much to be learned from the unique partnership and planning processes that are being used to address the conservation and land management challenges and opportunities in this region. We will also reflect on how these lessons can be adapted to address similar challenges and opportunities in other ecoregions across the state.




5



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FIELDTRIP!

Go to allisonhorak.com

Click on the Resources tab at the top

Scroll down and click on “Word Choice Worksheet”

Take the 20-question challenge


Then, check your answers

7:00

7

Welcome Back!

What did you learn?



Use Chat to share any insights or questions you have.

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PLAIN LANGUAGE

9

PLAIN LANGUAGE
LEGISLATION



PLAIN WRITING ACT
OF 2010



CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENT CODE
§6219

10

PLAIN LANGUAGE

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

- Identify and write for your audience
- Address separate audiences separately

ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS

- Organize to meet your readers' needs
- Address one person, not a group
- Use lots of useful headings
- Write short sections

WRITE YOUR DOCUMENT

- Words**
 - Verbs**
 - Use active voice
 - Use the simplest form of a verb
 - Avoid hidden verbs
 - Use "must" to indicate requirements
 - Use contractions when appropriate
 - Nouns and pronouns**
 - Don't turn verbs into nouns
 - Use pronouns to speak directly to readers
 - Minimize abbreviations
- Other word issues**
 - Use short, simple words
 - Omit unnecessary words
 - Dealing with definitions
 - Use the same term consistently for a specific thought or object
 - Avoid legal, foreign, and technical jargon
 - Don't use slashes
- Sentences**
 - Write short sentences
 - Keep subject, verb, and object together
 - Avoid double negatives and exceptions to exceptions
 - Place the main idea before exceptions and conditions
 - Place words carefully
- Paragraphs**
 - Have a topic sentence
 - Use transition words
 - Write short paragraphs
 - Cover only one topic in each paragraph

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BEFORE

Under 25 CFR §1.4(b), the Secretary of the Interior may in specific cases or in specific geographic areas, adopt or make applicable to off-reservation Indian lands all or any part of such laws, ordinances, codes, resolutions, rules or other regulations of the State and political subdivisions in which the land is located as the Secretary shall determine to be in the best interest of the Indian owner or owners in achieving the highest and best use of such property.

AFTER

Section 1.4(b) of 25 CFR allows us to make state or local laws or regulations apply to your off-reservation lands. We will do this only if we find that it will help you to achieve the highest and best use of your lands.

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BEFORE

Investigators at the contractor will review the facts in your case and decide the most appropriate course of action. The first step taken with most Medicare health care providers is to reeducate them about Medicare regulations and policies. If the practice continues, the contractor may conduct special audits of the providers' medical records. Often, the contractor recovers overpayments to health care providers this way. If there is sufficient evidence to show that the provider is consistently violating Medicare policies, the contractor will document the violations and ask the Office of the Inspector General to prosecute the case. This can lead to expulsion from the Medicare program, civil monetary penalties, and imprisonment.

AFTER




We will take two steps to look at this matter:

1. We will find out if it was an error or fraud.
2. We will let you know the result.

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EXERCISE:




YOU SUPPLY
THE AFTER

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EXERCISE:

8:00 YOU SUPPLY
THE AFTER

When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activity on most days preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, calisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sports exercise, and dancing.

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RE-WRITES
FROM THE
AGENCIES

I When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, fill the hole before you drive away.

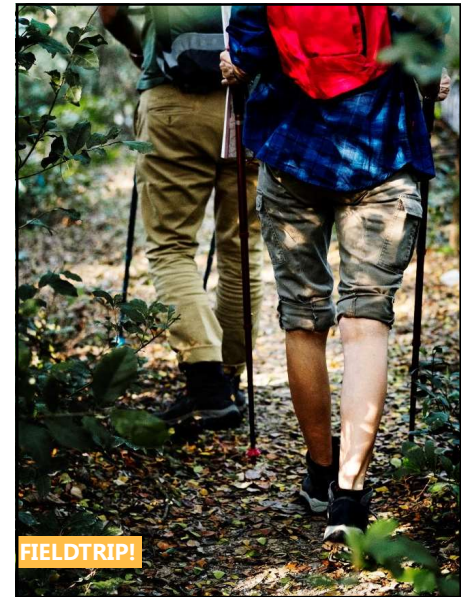
2 The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activity on most days, preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, calisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sports exercise, and dancing.

Do at least 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking, most days of the week.

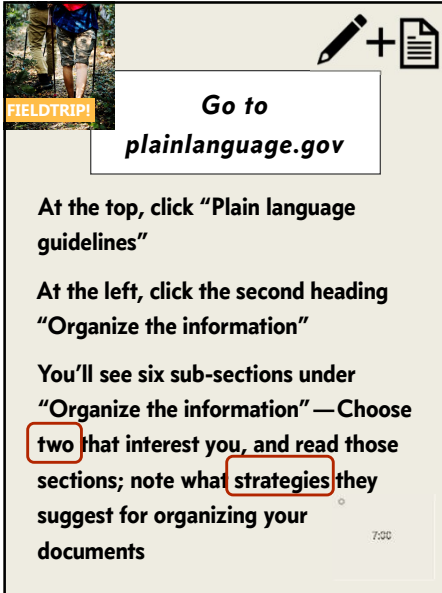
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HOW TO
ORGANIZE A
DOCUMENT

17



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Go to
plainlanguage.gov

At the top, click "Plain language guidelines"

At the left, click the second heading "Organize the information"

You'll see six sub-sections under "Organize the information" — Choose **two** that interest you, and read those sections; note what **strategies** they suggest for organizing your documents

FIELDTRIP!

7:00

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Welcome Back!
What strategies did you find?

An official website of the United States government

 plainlanguage.gov

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POSITIVE PHRASING

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- +

Negative Phrasing	Positive Phrasing
<p>Tells the recipient what cannot be done</p> <p>Has a subtle tone of blame</p> <p>Includes words like <i>can't</i>, <i>won't</i>, <i>unable to</i> that tell the recipient what you can't do</p> <p>Doesn't stress positive actions that would be appropriate, or positive consequences</p>	<p>Tells the recipient what can be done</p> <p>Suggests alternatives and choices available to the recipient</p> <p>Sounds helpful and encouraging rather than bureaucratic</p> <p>Stresses positive actions and positive consequences that can be anticipated</p>

We can't process your application...

... because you didn't fill it out correctly.

We can process your application...

... when we receive a copy of your license.

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POSITIVE PHRASING STRATEGIES
 3

- 1) If you can send us [whatever], we can complete the process for you.
- 2) One option open to you is [option].
- 3) We can help you to [whatever] if you can send us [whatever].

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COMPARE AND CONTRAST

NEGATIVE PHRASING	POSITIVE PHRASING
<p>We regret to inform you that we cannot process your application to register your business name, since you have neglected to provide sufficient information. Please complete ALL sections of the attached form and return it to us.</p>	<p>Congratulations on your new business. To register your business name, we need some more information. If you return the attached form, with highlighted areas filled in, we will be able to send you your business registration certificate within two weeks. We wish you success in your new endeavor.</p>

24

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

NEGATIVE PHRASING

We regret to inform you that we cannot process your application to register your business name, since you have neglected to provide sufficient information. Please complete ALL sections of the attached form and return it to us.

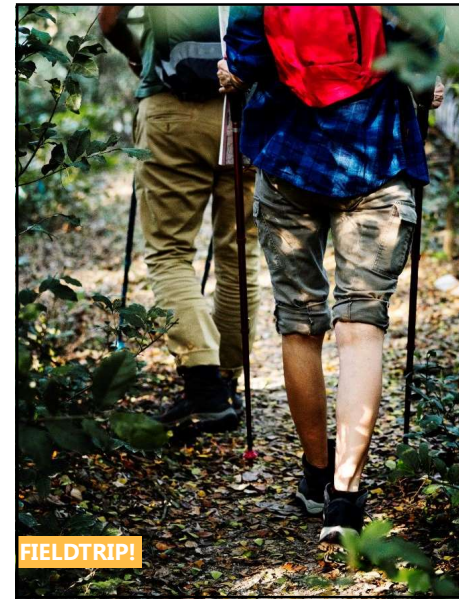
POSITIVE PHRASING

Congratulations on your new business. To register your business name, we need some more information. If you return the attached form, with highlighted areas filled in, we will be able to send you your business registration certificate within two weeks. **We wish you success in your new endeavor.**

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ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

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27



Last names A-M:
 Google "**Grammar Girl**"; click on the first search result (not the ad at the top)
 Search "**active voice**"; click on the first result
 What did you learn?
 Come back with at least one insight.

Last names N-Z:
 Google "**Purdue OWL search**"; click on the first result
 Search "**active voice**"; click on the first result
 What did you learn?
 Come back with at least one insight.

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WELCOME BACK!

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Last names A-M:
Grammar Girl

Last names N-Z:
Purdue OWL
 (online writing lab)

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ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE




VOICE = WHO

Passive voice:
 The boy was bitten by the dog.

Active voice:
 The dog bit the boy.

Method:
 1. Find the verb.
 2. Who's doing that?
 3. Does it appear first?
 (If not, it's passive.)

30

EXERCISE:   

SWITCH TO
ACTIVE VOICE

All job applications must be received
by our office before 5:00 p.m.

The testing lab was cleaned thoroughly.

The system will reboot at midnight.

Method:

1. Find the verb.
2. Who's doing that?
3. Does it appear first?
(If not, it's passive.)

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EXERCISE:

SWITCH TO
ACTIVE VOICE

All job applications must be received by our office before
5:00 p.m.

**Our office must receive all job
applications before 5:00 p.m.**

The testing lab was cleaned thoroughly.

**The custodian cleaned the testing lab
thoroughly.**

The system will reboot at midnight.

IT will reboot the system at midnight.

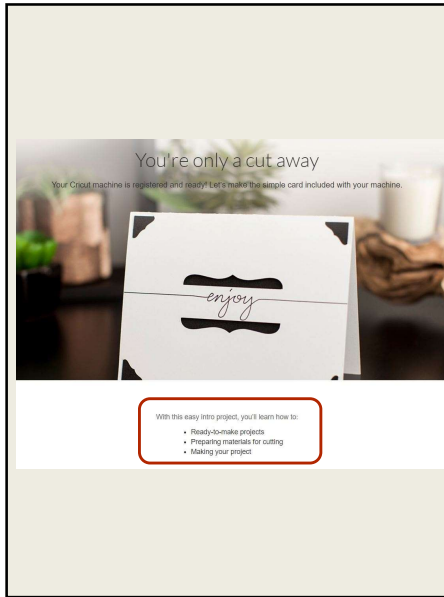
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2. Who's doing that?
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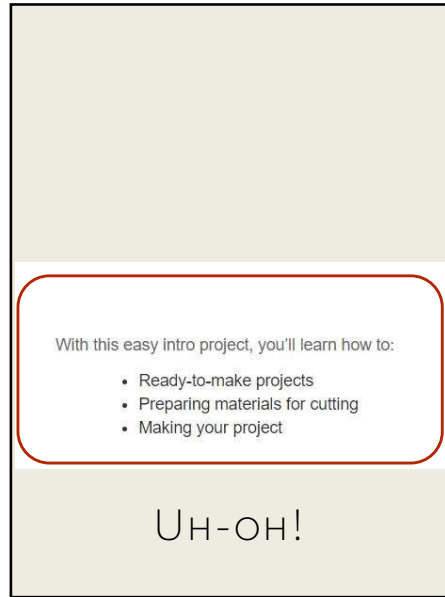
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PARALLELISM

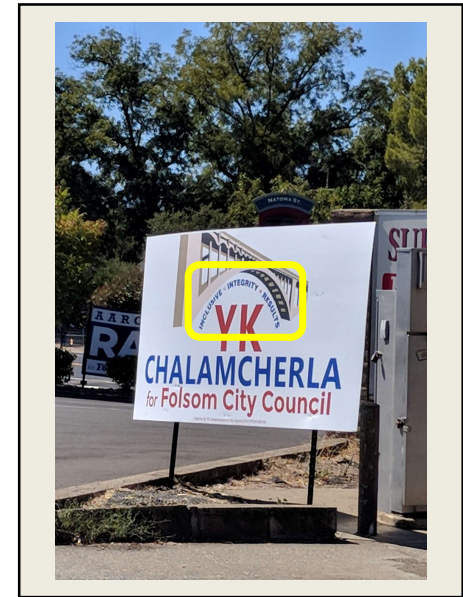
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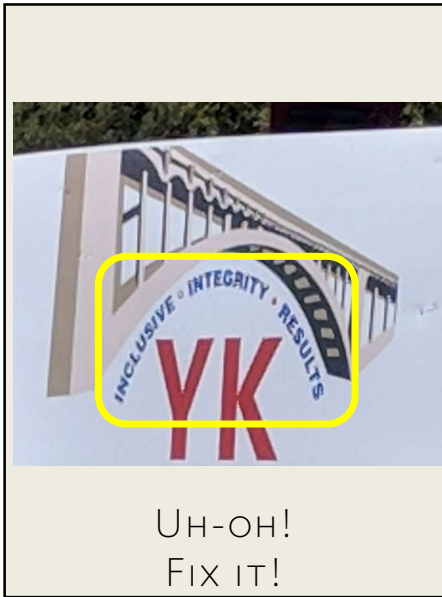
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35



36



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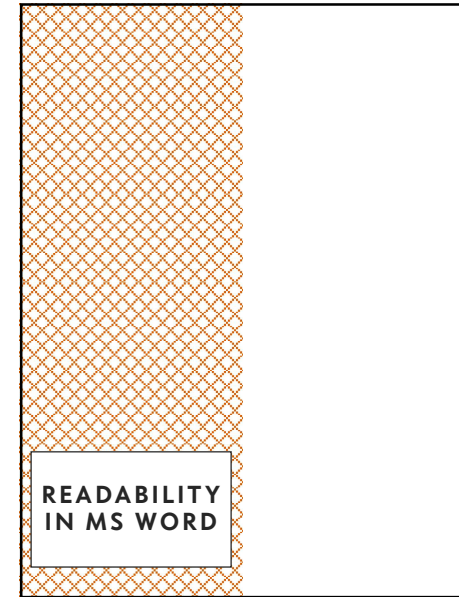
EXERCISE

Find and fix the parallelism problems.

When you've read this book, you'll know how to:

- Craft an effective cover letter
- Best practices for interviewing
- Find out what type of job best suits your education and experience
- Resume pitfalls

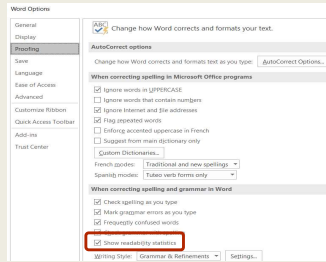
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39

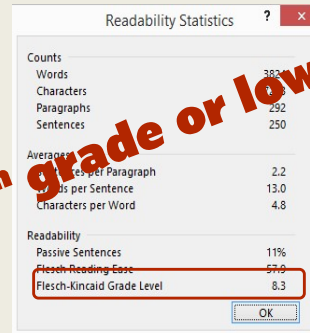
READABILITY IN MS WORD

- Open a Word document.
- Click **File**.
- Click **Options** (last choice).
- Click **Proofing**.
- Under the section entitled “When correcting spelling and grammar in Word”, check the box by **Show readability statistics**.
- Click **OK**.
- Run spell check on your document. When completed, a box will pop up with your readability results.



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WHAT GRADE LEVEL SHOULD I BE WRITING AT?



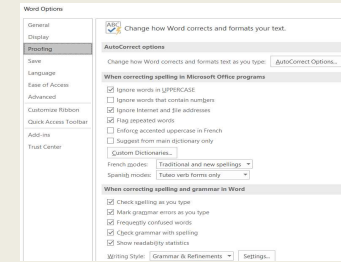
What if it says 14.7 instead? How do I get my grade level down to 8th grade or lower?

→ Shorten your sentences; shorten your words.

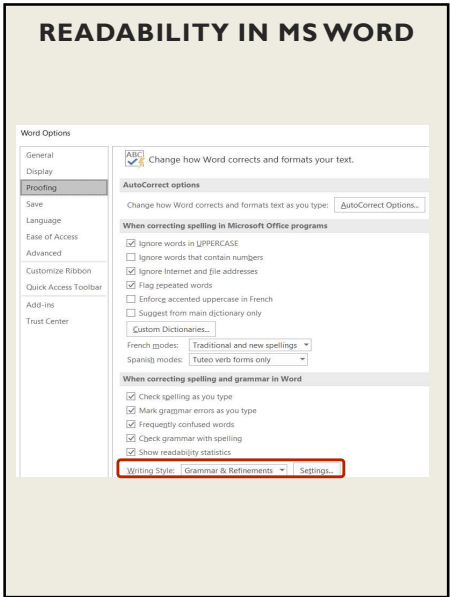
41

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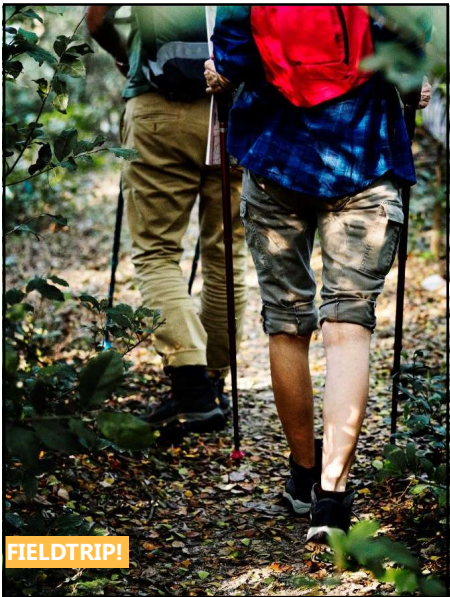
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45



Click on the link in the Chat.

Read the article called **“Want Better Writing from Employees? Start with Coaching.”**

Come back with at least one insight.

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WELCOME BACK!

WHAT ARE
YOUR THOUGHTS?

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Excerpted from
*A Short Guide
to Writing
about Biology*,
Jan A. Pechenik

”

**EDITING
OTHERS' WORK**

Look at someone else's paper the same way you should look at your own, concerning yourself first with content. Avoid the temptation to smother the paper with notations about spelling errors and comma splices; it is only worth commenting on those things when you feel the paper is a draft or two away from perfection.

When examining a first draft, it may be most useful to write a few paragraphs of commentary to the author and not write on the paper at all. **Don't feel compelled to rewrite the paper for the author; your role is simply to point out strengths and perceived weaknesses and to offer the best advice you can about potential fixes.** Most of all, be firm but kind in your criticism; your goal is to help your colleagues, not crush their egos.

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1. Purpose

2. Reader response




3. Logical flow

4. Sentence length

5. Clear language

6. Concise language

7. Positive language



EXERCISE

Read this first draft of your colleague's inter-office memo, and edit it using the concepts learned in class.

Editing for Maximum Effectiveness

Please download and print this document. Then, wait for instructions; we'll use it at the end of class.

Exercise

Read this first draft of your colleague's inter-office memo and edit it using the concepts learned in class.

February 4, 2020

Good morning,

This is to announce that the Dept. is participating to help support the March of Dimes' Walk America 2016. As your Division Representative, I will assists and give my support to help with this year's campaign.

In order to help, I will be asking for your support to come up with some ideas that we as a team can do to raise funds for a worthy and meaningful cause.

This year our goal is to raise as much money as we can. In March, we will have a nacho sale and it will be held in the main lobby. All proceeds raised from the sale will go to the March of Dimes on behalf of the Department.

As the Dvsn. Rep, my job is to help support the March of Dimes. Each and every day, there are many babies who are born with health conditions and it's unfortunate, but most of these conditions are through birth and cannot be prevented. But with your help and support, we can work together with lifesaving research program to make sure every baby born gets a chance of a healthy life.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (916) 555-1234.

The help and support you give will assist in helping and saving the lives of innocent babies.

Sincerely,

Chris Smith

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DOES YOUR DOCUMENT LOOK LIKE THIS?

February 4, 2020

Good morning,

This is to announce that the Dept. is participating to help support the March of Dimes' Walk America 2016. As your Division Representative, I will assists and give my support to help with this year's campaign.

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Sincerely,

Chris Smith

Why is this abbreviated?

So you're not asking now?

TYPO!

You should have a specific goal!

Move this to the first paragraph

Do you really want people to call you? You should give your email instead.

50

OR THIS?

Editing for Maximum Effectiveness

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Exercise

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Sincerely,

Chris Smith

Chris:

Thank you for serving as our rep for this March of Dimes fundraiser. Your enthusiasm for the charity is evident in this memo.

I have a couple of suggestions for your next draft:

- Begin with a call to action, then a brief explanation of what the March of Dimes is; some people may not be familiar
- Add some specifics about fundraising goals and whether we're participating in the walk-a-thon

If you want me to look at your next draft, I'd be happy to. And, you can count on me to donate to the nacho bar!

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REVIEW

WHAT WE'VE COVERED...

1. Purpose
2. Reader response
3. Logical flow
4. Sentence length
5. Clear language
6. Concise language
7. Positive language



- +

active / passive

PARALLELISM

8th grade or lower!



EDITING OTHERS' WORK




WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY?


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COURSE EVALUATION

PLEASE RESPOND TO THESE QUESTIONS IN CHAT:

1. What are one or two things you liked about this course?
2. What's a suggestion you have for improving this course?
3. Thinking about your active engagement during class: Was the amount—
 - too little?
 - just right?
 - too much?
4. Yes or no—Did the exercises increase your knowledge of this topic?

4



53

I also teach

Writing Policies and Procedures


February 22

You don't always have to chop with the sword of truth. You can point with it, too.

~Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*

Two freebies:

1. NYT article re editing
2. BWB article re online editing tools



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