

All write now?

A seven point plan to help improve your writing

1 What's the point?

Why are you writing in the first place? What are you trying to achieve? Is writing the best solution or might it be better to speak to the person?

2 What's in it for them?

Work out what's in it for your reader and put that at the start to get their attention. Dump the bits that would bore them.

3 Talk their language

Use words that they like. Listen to them closely and you'll hear what their favourite words and phrases are.

4 Talk their way

Decide whether your reader likes complexity or simplicity. Complexity means long sentences with long words. Simplicity: key points in short, simple sentences. Knowing the person is vital.

5 Make it look and feel good

Make it look as attractive as possible by using headings, bullet points, and different colours. If it's a letter, think about how the paper will feel in their hands.

6 Keep a check on jargon

Jargon can work for you when the people you are writing to speak that language. It's a code that says, "We understand each other". But don't use it to obscure your message unless that's what you really want.

7 Check that it worked

Did they read what you thought you wrote? And will they do what you want them to do? Always look for ways of making your writing better.

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