



EFFECTIVE WRITING

Cindy Watts, Ph.D.

ODE TO SPAM

Grotesque pinkish mass
In a blue can on a shelf
Quivering alone

- ASPIRE TO WRITE WELL
- KNOW THAT IT IS POSSIBLE
- TAKE HOME SOME QUICK TIPS

Charles Wilkinson

"Language, Law, and the Eagle
Bird." *The Eagle Bird*. Pantheon
Books. 1992

INSPIRED (AND INSPIRING)
WRITING HAS PASSION.

GOOD WRITING IS CLEAR,
STRONG, AND CLEAN.

"How do I know what I think until I see
what I say?"

-- E.M. Forster

"Writing is thinking on paper. Anyone who thinks clearly should be able to write clearly - about any subject at all."

-- William Zinsser

CLEAR WRITING \Leftrightarrow CLEAR THINKING

“I’d have written you a shorter letter, but I didn’t have time.”

-- Mark Twain

GOOD WRITING TAKES:

- UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR AUDIENCE
- ABANDONMENT OF EGO
- ABSOLUTE MASTERY OF MECHANICS

- GOOD ORGANIZATION

- STRONG INTRODUCTION

- LOGICAL BODY

- COMPELLING ENDING

- LIVELY VOICE
- COLORFUL AND PRECISE LANGUAGE
- EDITING

- MORE EDITING
- EVEN MORE EDITING
- *STILL MORE EDITING*

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

THE AUDIENCE

- WHO WILL READ THE DOCUMENT?
- WHY WILL THEY READ IT?

"NEVER CONFUSE YOUR REASON
FOR WRITING WITH THE
READER'S PURPOSE FOR
READING."

-- KATHY KOHM

THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU.

NO MISSTAKES

WOMAN WITHOUT HER MAN IS A SAVAGE

WOMAN, WITHOUT HER
MAN, IS A SAVAGE.

*WOMAN! WITHOUT HER,
MAN IS A SAVAGE.*

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we are apart. I can be forever happy -- will you let me be yours?

Gloria

Dear John,

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we are apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours, Gloria

GRAMMAR JEOPARDY

To crack an egg properly, the yolk is left intact.

Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, a breathtaking view opened to our campsite below.

Born at the age of 43, the baby was a great comfort to Mrs. Witherspoon.

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE VOICE

- ACTIVE VOICE: SUBJECT, VERB, DIRECT OBJECT
- PASSIVE VOICE: THE DIRECT OBJECT BECOMES THE SUBJECT

You are being watched by Big
Brother.

Big Brother is watching you.

- George Orwell

Paradise was paved and a parking
lot put up.

They paved paradise and put up a
parking lot.

- Joni Mitchell

The sheriff was shot by me.

I shot the sheriff.

- Bob Marley

A new nation was brought forth on
this continent by our fathers.

Our fathers brought forth on this
continent a new nation.

- Abraham Lincoln

WHY BE BORING?

- "As soon as one stopped talking the other would start, like a pair of jugglers passing oranges to and fro..." (Thomas Bouchard Jr, "Whenever Twain Shall Meet.")
- "...Greyhound decanted...." (Greg Vancil)
- "...tiny wasps accept the invitation to climb way up into (the daylilies') throats in search of nectar; afterward they come stumbling out like drunks from a bar."
(Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire*)

THINK CARROTS

SUBSTITUTE A SINGLE WORD

- DUE TO THE FACT THAT...
- TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION...
- DESPITE THE FACT THAT...
- IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF...
- A LARGE NUMBER...
- SUBSEQUENT TO...
- BY THE SAME TOKEN...
- AT THE PRESENT TIME...

Brevity, the Soul of Wit

Have you had a thought that's happy?

Boil it down.

Make it short and crisp and snappy -

Boil it down.

When your mind its gold has minted
Down the page your pen has sprinted,

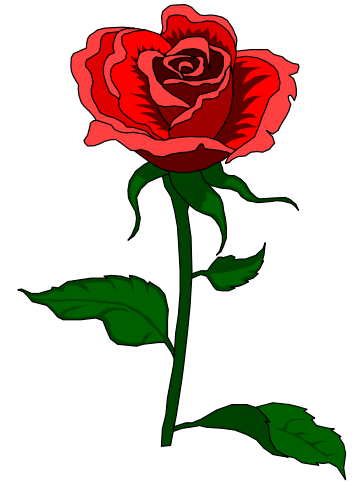
If you want your effort printed,

Boil it down.

- The American Journal of Public Health, 1918

ODE TO SPAM

THE BRIQUETTES RED GLARE
THE SMELL OF SPAM IN THE AIR
THE HOME OF THE BLAND



SO WHAT??

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?



GET TO THE CHEESE WHILE
IT IS STILL HOT.

Since the time of the Pony Express, people in this country have been writing letters as a way of staying in touch. However, recently, a small number of therapists have begun putting pen to paper with a more specific focus in mind.

Therapists have been writing letters to clients for years, but only recently have they recognized the interventive or therapeutic possibilities of doing so.

The therapeutic value of *talking* to clients has been widely acknowledged since the time of Freud, but few therapists have recognized the potential therapeutic benefits of *writing* to them.

ORGANIZING STRATEGIES

- TIME
- SEQUENCE
- PROGRESSION
- SPACE
- IMPORTANCE
- CONCEPT

A HEALTHY BODY

- LOGICAL FLOW OF IDEAS
- GOOD TRANSITIONS
- ONE TOPIC PER PARAGRAPH
- EVERY IDEA MUST BE CENTRAL

A HAPPY ENDING

- RETURN TO THE BEGINNING
- NO NEW FACTS
- YOUR LAST CHANCE TO EXTEND,
APPLY, AND PERSUADE

EDITING

- Is the message clear?
- Are there gaps in logic?
- Are key ideas placed strategically?
- Is there consistency of format, terminology, depth?
- Is the language precise, concise, and powerful?

System planners also must recognize functions that may not be the official "charge" of the particular service environment, but may impact intended functions and patient use of the movement across functional units. For example, even though some state divisions of long term care encourage timely discharge as part of a policy of nursing home downsizing, the societal function of the community nursing home as an employer may provide an incentive to individual nursing home administrators to delay discharges.

Nursing homes have multiple roles in their communities. These roles may create conflicting incentives. For example, the nursing home administrator in his role as employer may wish to increase patient days to generate more wages for the community. In his role as agent for the taxpayer, however, he may wish to reduce patient days to lower expenditures on public patients.

Economists argue that resource allocation decisions of nursing homes are more likely to be based on the economic and political markets in which the facility operates than on best medical practices. For example, patients may be discharged earlier in markets where public policy encourages downsizing regardless of the medical needs of patients.