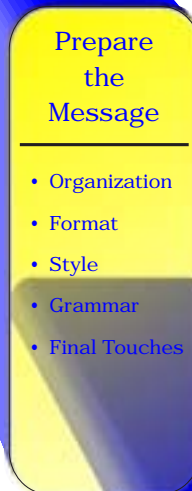
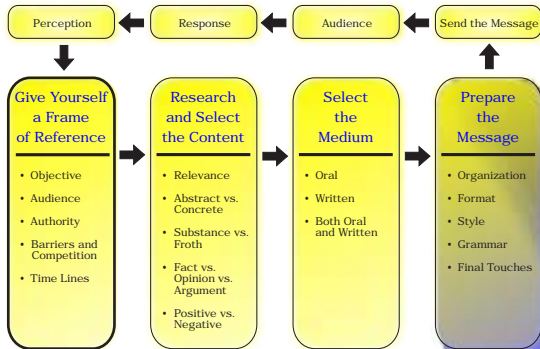


Writing for Results

A Step-by-Step Model for Executive Documents



Grammar

Contents

Introduction

Relative Clause: Does it Specify? Or Does it Just Describe?

Introduction

Theory

Examples

Which, That or . . . ?

Closing Comma in Describing Clauses

Proximity

Missing Pronouns

Commonly Misused Words

Impact

Commit

Compose – Comprise

Presently

Regrettable

Key

Capital Letters

Introduction

Proper Nouns and Common Nouns

Titles of Office

Organizations

Documents

Acronyms

Conferences and Meetings

Programs

Generic Short Forms

***This is the sort of arrant nonsense
up with which I will not put.***

Winston Churchill, in reaction to an overly zealous editor's work on a sentence he had written. The editor had awkwardly rearranged the sentence so it would not end with a preposition.

Introduction

The rules of proper English usage are the ultimate expression of democracy. The people vote for and against the rules every time they speak or write. And the rules change if enough people vote against one rule and in favour of another.

Despite that reality, my advice is to stick with widely accepted practices to the greatest extent possible. Executive documents are not the place to test the English language to its limits. The last thing you need is to have an audience that is distracted by thoughts that a given expression represents improper grammar.

That presents you with a challenge: Where do you go to find guidance on proper English usage? A great deal has been written on the subject, and much of it is very good. You could spend a lifetime sorting through it all.

In the pages that follow, I will address a handful of issues that I've found to be common challenges in English usage. But they are just a handful of the many thousands of rules and issues that could arise in your writing. Here are two excellent books that provide more detailed guidance:

- *The Gregg Reference Manual*. William A. Sabin, 1997, McGraw-Hill. This text provides extensive guidance in a user-friendly format.
- *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, R.W. Burchfield (ed.), Henry Watson Fowler, 1996, Oxford University Press. This is a classic. It has been in print, in various editions, since 1926. Its longevity is a strong testament to its quality.