Write for the Reader
Research Summaries
Workshop objectives

- clear writing principles
- practice techniques
- develop summaries
Clear Writing Writing Writing
Puts the reader first and focuses on action.
Intended audience can readily find what they need, understand it, and use it.
Clear Writing

- language your readers know
- information readers need
- design that improves understanding
“The secret of being a bore... is to tell everything.”

“...we have to write so people don’t have to read what we write.”
synchronous diaphragmatic flutter = a sudden closure of the glottis due to the spasmodic contraction of the diaphragm
NORMAL BREATH:
- Epiglottis snaps shut, making a hiccups sound

HICCUP:
- Diaphragm goes into spasm, forcing air into lungs
The case for clear writing
- literacy skills
- experience with English
Many Canadians lack literacy skills

Per cent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4/5</th>
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<td>Nuevo Leon, Mexico</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>

Note: The bar chart shows the percentage of people at different literacy levels in various countries.
Does education = literacy level?

Education ≠ Literacy
Use it or lose it
information overload
readers are changing
TL;DR
Who reads?

- literacy
- English
- familiarity
- time & trust
“If we cannot understand our rights, we have no rights.”
BMD False Alarm

Amber Alert (CAE) - Kauai County Only

Amber Alert (CAE) Statewide

1. TEST Message

PACOM (CDW) - STATE ONLY

Tsunami Warning (CEM) - STATE ONLY

DRILL - PACOM (CDW) - STATE ONLY

Landslide - Hana Road Closure

Amber Alert DEMO TEST

High Surf Warning North Shores
- reach larger audience
- engage people
- save time and money
- improve outcomes
CASE
CLOSED
- time consuming
- demeaning
- lacks precision
6-Step Process

- Think
- Plan
- Write
- Design
- Test
- Revise
Step 1: Thinking

- know your reader
- know your purpose
- know your impact
Step 2: Planning

- essential information
- order
- tone
Step 2: Planning

- style
- format
- design
Who are your primary and secondary audiences (readers)?

What parts of your research would work for each audience?
“I need an interpreter. Send in someone who speaks jargon.”
Step 3: Writing

- organization
- words
- sentences
- paragraphs
- grammar
Step 3: Writing

- begin with important ideas
- use logical order
- make the order obvious
Before: Do not open door until checking that area is clear.

After: Check that the area is clear then open door.
Step 3: Writing

- abbreviations
- jargon
- nouns made from verbs
- noun stacks
Step 3: Writing

simple, complete sentences:

Matthew presents this workshop
(Subject) (Verb) (Object)
Step 3: Writing

Before: Do not open door until checking that area is clear.

After: Check that the area is clear then open door.
Step 3: Writing

Before: The report was not written clearly.

After: Staff wrote the report clearly.
Exercise: Crystal Clear
Find an Alternative

- at this point in time
- experiencing (...)
- assistance
- numerous
- remainder
- initial
- sufficient degree of
- endeavour (verb)
- in the event that
- on behalf of
- referred to as
- subsequent
Step 3: Writing

- verbs
- adverbs
- adjectives
Step 3: Writing
Exercise:
Translating academic writing
The way people seek and use reference information also suggests that smaller, discrete units of information are more functional and easier to handle than long, undifferentiated tracts.
People understand information better when it’s in short sentences.
People prefer information that is short and organized.
"It can scarcely be denied that the supreme goal of all theory is to make the irreducible basic elements as simple and as few as possible without having to surrender the adequate representation of a single datum of experience."
Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.
6-Step Process

Think → Plan → Write

Design → Test → Revise
Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising

- Flesch-Kincaid
- Fog Index
- Fry Readability
.39 \times \frac{\text{# words}}{\text{# sentences}} + 11.8 \times \frac{\text{# syllables}}{\text{# words}} - 15.59
Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising

- read document aloud
- ask colleague to read your draft
- conduct a focus group
Who reads research?

- Literacy
- Access
- English
- Familiarity
- Time & trust

Overlap between these factors determines who reads research.
On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction

William Zinsser
Exercise: Ten Hundred Words
Thing Explainer examples

- food-heating radio boxes
- tall roads
- the shared space house
- sky boats with turning wings
HAND COMPUTER

These machines began as radios for talking out loud to people who were far away. Over the years, they slowly became more and more like computers.

As these machines turned into computers, they started taking the place of a lot of things we used to carry around—like picture takers, music players, and even books.

FACE CHECKER
This turns the screen off if your head is near it, so you don’t press keys with your face while you’re talking.

HOT SPOT TALKER
This lets the hand computer talk to people through a little radio in your house. Instead of the big radio run by the phone company, which can save you money.

EXTRA MEMORY HOLDER
If your phone is storing too many memories for you (like pictures, sounds, and games), you can put cards here to give it more space.

As computers and radios get better, companies are holding more and more information on their computers, and only sending them to you when you ask for them.

LOUD CONTROLS
These controls make the sound in your ear louder or quieter.

TINY POWER GATE
Like other computers, almost every part of a hand computer needs its own different kind of power gate.

This picture is used in many parts to mean “power gate.”

These gates take power from one line and listen to another line to decide whether to let the power through or not. Computer brains are built by sticking these gates together.

There are as many power gates in a computer as there are people on Earth. Some of them are big and easy to see, but most of them are small and can’t be seen. Some are even little power. The gates, I mean, not the people.

RADIO FEELER
This part takes in the thin pieces of metal using the radio feeler to listen to the world. When a radio message comes in, it makes power move in the metal. This thing listens to how the power is changing and turns it into words.

It also listens to words that the hand computer wants to send back out, and turns them into power changes to send down the metal.

POWER KEY
You can push this to make the computer stop or wake up.

POCKET MOVER
This part of motor turns very fast to make the phone move. That way, it can get your attention without making too much noise. (It’s sitting on a hard table, then it can make a lot of noise.)

JOINERS
Different parts of the hand computer, like the screen and the radio feeler, join up with the rest of the phone when it gets put together.

CARD HOLDER
This holds the card that lets the phone talk to the world. You can use this radio to talk to a company that you pay to carry your messages. It uses this card to tell them which hand computer they’re talking to.

SOUND UNDERSTANDER

RADIO TALKER
This tells the hand computer how to understand the words the company’s radios send.

DIRECTION FEELER
This part of the phone holds onto this word comparactor as thinking about what you’re doing and where you’re sitting. The memory goes away when the phone turns off.

BIG SOUND MAKER
This thing makes noise that you can hear even when your ear is far away from the phone.

LISTENING BOX
This is a special thinking box that just listens for words. Since it only does one thing, it can do it really well. This box is just like the main thinking box that would need a phone to hear it, you can make it listen for your voice all the time, not just when you press a key.

POWER CONTROLLER
This thing pays attention to what different parts of the computer are doing, and makes sure each part gets the power it needs.
Exercise:
Ten Hundred Words

http://splasho.com/upgoer5