


Writing well at work




About writing well

- Writing as thinking & communicating
- Making it easy for your readers
- Purpose, audience & key message

Content & structure

- Generating content
- Layering content
- Organising point first
- Using talking headings




Plain language

- Simple words
- Active voice
- Verbs not nouns
- Short, point first sentences
- Conversational style

Writing

- Paragraphing
- Style
- Reviewing & editing
- Document testing
- Persuasive writing



What makes a document 'good'?



Better documents




Good documents

Effective achieve purpose







Did the document work?
Objectives achieved?




Good documents

Efficient written and read quickly



Quick email
(just a little unclear)

Writing time	2 mins
Reading time	3 mins
	x 20
Total comm cost	62 mins



Quick email

(just a little unclear)

Writing time 2 mins

Reading time 3 mins
x 20

Total comm cost **62 mins**

+ clarifying phone calls
+ wrong actions & rework



Thoughtful email

(greater clarity)

Writing time 6 mins + 300%

Reading time 2 mins
x 20

Total comm cost **46 mins** -26%



Quick email

(just a little unclear)

Writing time 2 mins

Reading time 3 mins
x 20

Total comm cost **62 mins**

Thoughtful email

(greater clarity)

Writing time 6 mins

Reading time 2 mins
x 20

Total comm cost **46 mins**



Documents as conversation



Think-write



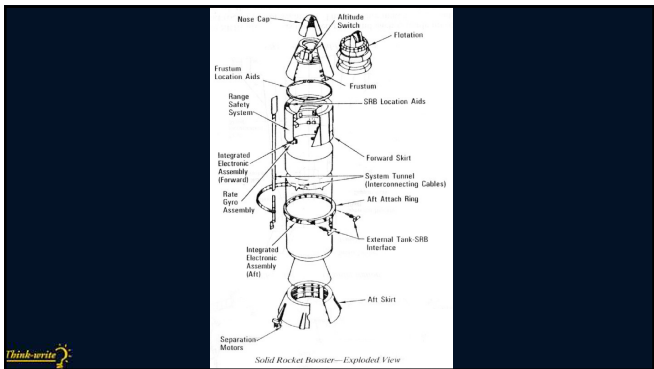
Think-write

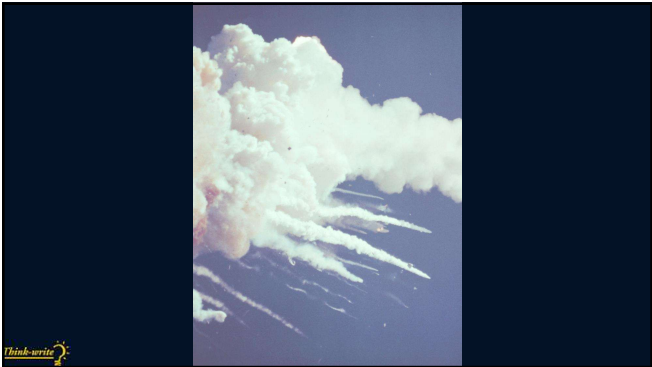



Think-write











MARCH FOR SCIENCE
22 April 2017
AUSTRALIA

Aims and Goals

Why we are marching

Informed Policy
March for Science Australia calls for:

- Decision-makers to genuinely consider the all the available evidence when formulating policy, and
- The public to hold decision-makers to account if they deny or ignore evidence for political reasons

Science observes and asks questions about the world. As new evidence is found, our understanding is continually updated, presenting us with new questions and answers. Science gives us the ability to examine these questions and craft improved policies and regulations that serve our best interests. Political decision-making affects our daily lives and should take account of peer-reviewed evidence and scientific consensus.

We acknowledge that the complexities of social and environmental issues mean that many factors need to be taken into account when applying evidence to create public policies. However, when those tasked with making public policy do not consider all the available scientific evidence as the starting point for their decision making, the resulting policies will not serve the common good and may ultimately endanger our standard of living and that of for future generations across the planet.

The March for Science invites the public to join us in voicing their concerns to their elected representatives, and to hold these representatives to account by not returning them to office if they do not properly respect and take account of scientific evidence.

Morton-Thiokol's presentation to NASA


PRIMARY CONCERNS -

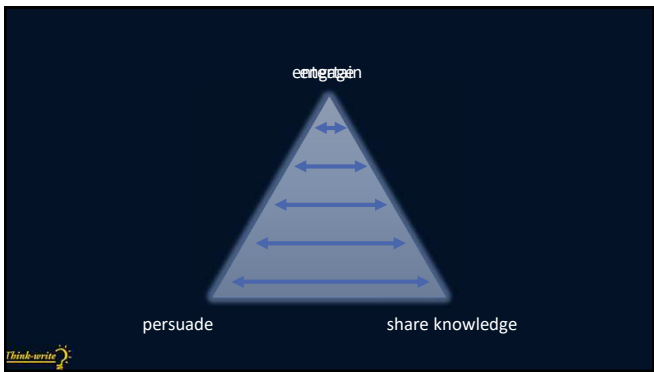
FIELD JOINT - HIGHEST CONCERN


- **EROSION PENETRATION OF PRIMARY SEAL REQUIRES RELIABLE SECONDARY SEAL FOR PRESSURE INTEGRITY**
 - **IGNITION TRANSIENT - (0-600 MS)**
 - (0-170 MS) HIGH PROBABILITY OF RELIABLE SECONDARY SEAL
 - (170-330 MS) REDUCED PROBABILITY OF RELIABLE SECONDARY SEAL
 - (330-600 MS) HIGH PROBABILITY OF NO SECONDARY SEAL CAPABILITY
- **STEADY STATE - (600 MS - 2 MINUTES)**
 - **IF EROSION PENETRATES PRIMARY O-RING SEAL - HIGH PROBABILITY OF NO SECONDARY SEAL CAPABILITY**
 - BENCH TESTING SHOWED O-RING NOT CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH METAL PARTS GAP OPERATING TO MEOP
 - BENCH TESTING SHOWED CAPABILITY TO MAINTAIN O-RING CONTACT DURING INITIAL PHASE (0 - 170 MS) OF TRANSIENT

Morton-Thiokol Presentation to NASA
January 27, 1986

It's not enough to be complete and accurate...
you must communicate






- Engaging communication is reader focused
- answers readers' questions
 - touches hearts and minds
 - is accessible
- 


Writing well is hard work

No such thing as good writing
only good re-writing

Write is written without effort
in general,
read without pleasure.



Samuel Johnson




clarity

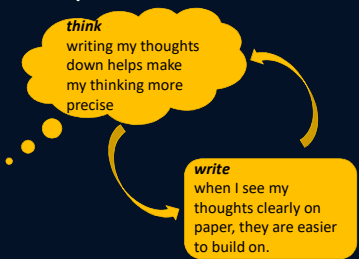
- no ambiguity
- reader picks up your intended meaning without modification

contact

- reader understands why your message is important to them
- reader understands how to act on the content




Writing makes thinking more precise



think
writing my thoughts down helps make my thinking more precise

write
when I see my thoughts clearly on paper, they are easier to build on.




Good documents – effective & efficient




Not enough to be complete & accurate – must communicate



Writing is work – focused on being clear and making contact

Writing well and thinking well are closely related




Make it easy for your readers






maximum meaning


minimum reading



If I had more time I would write a shorter letter.




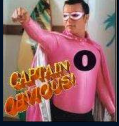
Blaise Pascal



Readers must be prepared to do some work from time to time, naturally, but they also have the right to expect that things are not made needlessly difficult for them. No subject is so elusive or challenging that it cannot be rendered reasonably clear and enjoyable for an audience. The failure to do so means only one thing, ultimately: the writer doesn't care about his audience, being enclosed in a mere ego-trip.

Richard Palmer, Write in Style





To be effective,
writing must be read.

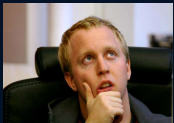
Think-write



Responsibility

Think-write

*Here are the facts –
you figure out what they mean.*



Think-write

The fluoride concentration in sample No. N193 was reported to NATA as 1.21 mg/L. This result has been statistically assessed and identified as an outlier with a z-score of 3.15.



People in business and government 'use' documents.



They need to respond

'users' rather than 'audience'

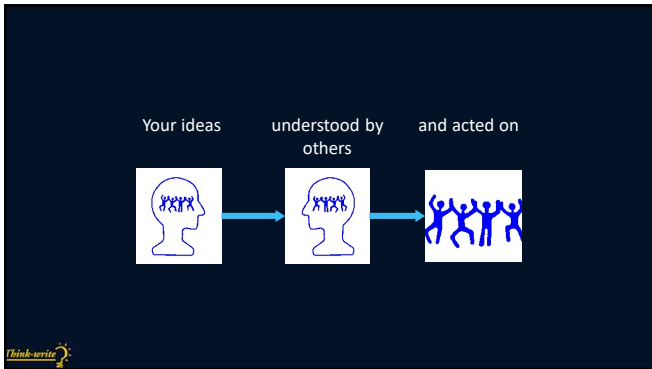


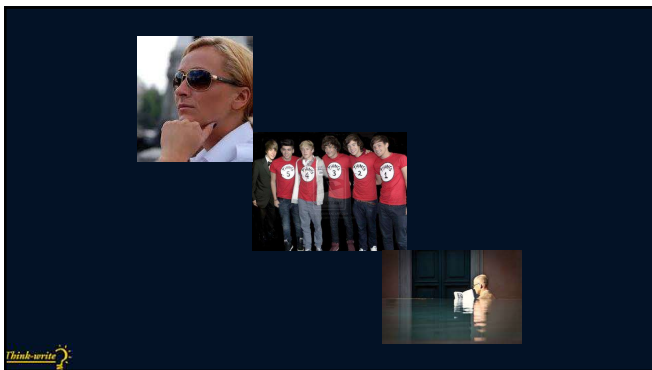
Your ideas



understood by others







Make it easy for your readers

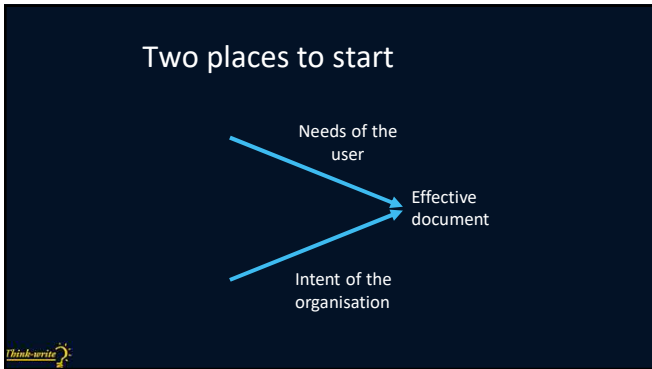
Maximum meaning, minimum reading

Writing needs to be read

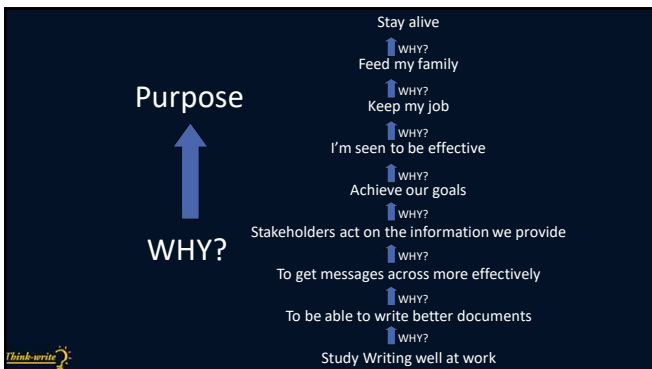
The writer is responsible

Evaluate – is document being acted on?

Think-write







HOW?

↓


Detail

Participate in this course
↓ HOW?

Listen and do activities
↓ HOW?

Hear and decode words
↓ HOW?


The hairs in my inner ear vibrate



Why are you writing this?



What do you want to happen?

What could happen if you don't write this?




What do you want your audience to think, feel or do?

As a result of reading this, I want Mr Smith to





Workbook exercise




Understand your user


- What are their needs, desires and fears?
- What is important to them?
- What do they already know, or think they know?
- What do they think of you?
- How do they need to use this information?



Workbook exercise




Persona



Persona

Represent actual users and needs

Personas have 'real' details:
names, families, pet peeves, homes, jobs,
type of computer used, goals, tasks,
needs, etc





Matt owns a small coffee shop franchise in suburban Sydney.

He's had the shop for 18 months after working in the industry for 4 years. He understands the processes used fairly well, being taught from people he considers to be the best in the industry.

His business is performing adequately, but a recent rise in shop rental has increased his costs. Matt borrowed \$100,000 to establish the business and is keen to pay that back as soon as possible. He has some innovative ideas he'd like to test in the marketplace.

Matt is more street-wise than formally educated. He glances at information provided by the franchise, but only reads articles in full when they really interest him.

He is aware of temperature control issues, but his experience with food at home suggests it's not really that important.



Persona

- Better understanding of users
- Puts users at the centre of the design/writing process
- Simplifies design/writing decisions

easier to design/write for a "real" person



Key message



Key message

What do you want your reader to remember, even if they forget everything else?



Key message



What will your reader think about this key message?

- Happy?
- Resistant?
- OK?



Workbook exercise