

Rules on writing technical matters

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1. Write clearly. If you are clear your audience will understand.
2. Assume you can be sued.
 - a. Don't live in fear.
 - b. Words used well can save you.
 - c. Words used poorly can sink you.
3. Assume you will be sued.
 - a. Don't live in fear.
 - b. Words use well can save you.
 - c. Words use poorly can sink you.
4. Assume you can and will be sued.
 - a. Don't live in fear.
 - b. Words use well can save you.
 - c. Words use poorly can sink you.
5. Assume you can and will be sued even if right.
 - a. Don't live in fear.
 - b. Words use well can save you.
 - c. Words use poorly can sink you.
6. You already speak and read.
 - a. Give in to the notion you can write.
7. Writing is hard work.
8. Assume you can write.
9. Good writing comes by correcting a lot of bad writing.
10. Assume it is you who must make reports clear to the audience.
11. Assume the audience will not want to work to understand you.
12. Assume you have a great audience on a bad hair day.
13. Remove fuzzy words.
14. Avoid jargon except for the hard data (e.g. bearing pressure, lumens).
15. Use short words when available.
16. Use words from the immediately previous sentence in the following sentence. When you use words from one sentence to the next, you will connect the ideas of the sentences. As you connect the ideas, the ideas are easier to follow.
17. The word "and" is often present. Check the sentence. Perhaps the sentence is two sentences.
18. Do not start sentences with the words "this, it, or that". However, if you use however, don't.
19. Remove adjectives and adverbs as much as possible.
20. Remove repeated ideas.
21. Avoid absolutes such as none, never, etc., least, most, maximum, minimum, average, and so on.
 - a. If there is an absolute, one can use it. For example "No one died during the drilling".
 - b. Avoid a sentence like: "None of the soils encountered to the maximum depth of the excavation had a concentration of lead below the guideline". In the example were all of the soils encountered tested or only select samples.
22. Use shorter sentences. Ten (10) to fifteen (15) words in one sentence is plenty.
23. Use short paragraphs. Four(4) to six (6)lines in one paragraph is plenty. 2 to 4 sentences is enough.

24. Let us write good reports and documents. What are good reports and documents? I think the basics of a good report are in part as set out below.
- a. A good report is neat.
 - b. A good report is concise, whether long or short.
 - c. A good report communicates ideas clearly.
 - d. A good report communicates ideas to an audience.
 - e. A good report supports the audience.
 - f. A good report is not a Shakespearean sonnet. A good report it is a subtle and complete equation.
 - g. A good report takes a \$1000 piece of data and turns it into a diamond of value.
 - h. A good report values its data.
 - i. A good report represents work.
 - j. A good report is about the truth.
 - k. A good report is written to a Grade 7 to 9 level audience.
 - i. Tools to keep in mind are the Fleisch-Kincaid Index and the Gunning Fog index.
 - ii. When the indices are at 9 it is thought those with a Grade 9 level can read them. That grade level is where we still used the same words. Beyond that grade level we specialized.
25. What is the basic structure of a report? What rules can one follow? I follow the rules below.
- a. A report is an elaborated "sentence". Keep to one topic. A report has:
 - i. a subject. What is it about?
 - ii. at least one verb. What did you do?
 - iii. an object. What was important along the way?
 - iv. a summary.
 - b. A report is made up of chapters. The chapters are actually an elaborated "sentence". Keep to one topic in one chapter. A chapter has:
 - i. a subject. What is it about?
 - ii. at least one verb. What did you do?
 - iii. has an object. What was important along the way?
 - iv. a summary.
 - c. Each chapter is made of paragraphs. Each paragraph is or can be an elaborated "sentence". Each sentence is a part of the elaborated "sentence". Keep to one idea in one paragraph. A paragraph has:
 - i. a subject. What is it about?
 - ii. at least one verb. What did you do?
 - iii. an object. What was important along the way?
 - iv. a last sentence that summarize the paragraph's information.
 - d. Each paragraph is made of sentences. Each sentence is all the "poop" on one idea. Keep two ideas in two sentences. Each sentence has:
 - i. a subject. What is it about?
 - ii. at least one verb. What did you do?
 - iii. an object. What was important along the way?
 - iv. A sentence, is mathematical and science terms is an equation. The equation of a sentence states, when you do this - that will happen, or y is a function of x .
26. Enjoy yourself writing. Take breaks.