Preparing Spoken and Written Messages

Business Communication, 15e
Lehman and DuFrene
Actual Newspaper Headlines

- Police begin campaign to run down jaywalkers
- Miners refuse to work after death
- Drunk gets nine months in violin case
- Iraqi head seeks arms

Source: http://english.glendale.cc.ca.us/badheds.html
Process for Planning and Preparing Spoken and Written Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>STEP 3</th>
<th>STEP 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine the purpose</td>
<td>Envision the audience</td>
<td>Adapt the message to the audience’s</td>
<td>Organize the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and select an appropriate channel</td>
<td></td>
<td>needs and concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 5</th>
<th>STEP 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare the first draft</td>
<td>Revise and proofread for accuracy and desired impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Step 5: Prepare the First Draft

• Craft ________ sentences
  ─ Use correct sentence _________
  ─ Rely on _______ voice
  ─ ____________ important ideas

• Develop ________ paragraphs
  ─ Position _____ sentences appropriately
  ─ Link ideas to achieve ____________
  ─ Keep paragraphs _______
Using Bulky vs. Broken Text

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Active/Passive Construction

Identify the construction in these sentences.

The award was presented to Josh.
The company president presented the award to Josh.

Maggie was invited to be the keynote speaker.
The event manager invited Maggie to be the keynote speaker.

Ryan was driven to the airport after the meeting.
My assistant drove Ryan to the airport after the meeting.
When might you use passive voice deliberately?

1. To hide the doer of the action
2. To show that you know how to write passive sentences
3. To de-emphasize negative information
Step 6: Revise and Proofread

- Improve readability
  - Understand readability measures
  - Assess and adjust to receiver’s needs
  - Apply visual enhancements for easier reading

- Proofread using systematic procedures
Factors Affecting Readability

• **Difficult words**
  – Three or more syllable words
  – Does not include compound words, proper nouns, or words where a suffix adds a syllable

• **Sentence length and structure**
  – Passive voice
Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lee:

1. With interest rates at their lowest level in 20 years, you chose a good time to buy your first house.

2. Choosing a fixed mortgage rate allowed you to “lock in” your 6 percent interest rate, protecting you from potential increases in interest rates before your closing.

3. Had you selected a variable rate mortgage, you could have taken advantage of the recent drop in interest rates. However, you would have been subject to later increases in interest rates.

4. If interest rates continue to decline, you may want to consider refinancing your fixed-rate mortgage.

5. Refinancing is typically cost effective when interest rates are 1 percent below your current mortgage rate.

6. Mr. and Mrs. Lee, we are glad to have been of service in your recent home purchase. Please call me if you need information about other financing needs.
## Readability Computation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of words:</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of sentences:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average sentence length:</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \frac{138}{8} = 17 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of difficult words:</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of difficult words:</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \frac{16}{138} = 11.6 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average sentence length + Percentage difficult words</td>
<td>17.0 + 11.6 = 28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \times 0.4 ) (constant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability level</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the Audience

Desirable readability index for business writing: 8–11 grade
Applying Visual Enhancements to Improve Readability

- Enumerated or bulleted lists
- Headings
- Tables and graphs
- Lines and borders
- Relevant images
Example: Before

This is a multipurpose passenger vehicle which will handle and maneuver differently from an ordinary passenger car, in driving conditions which may occur on streets and highways and off road. As with other vehicles of this type, if you make sharp turns or abrupt maneuvers, the vehicle may roll over or may go out of control and crash. You should read driving guidelines and instructions in the Owner's Manual, and WEAR YOUR SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES.
Example: After

Source: http://www.plainlanguage.gov
What errors can spelling software catch?

1. The “stupids” (miskeyed words)
2. Everything
3. Misused homonyms (their, there)
4. Words left out
Procedures for Proofreading

1. Use spell check to locate simple keying errors and repeated words
2. Print a draft of the document
3. Proofread several times
   - 1st for content, organization, style
   - 2nd for mechanical errors
   - 3rd if nonroutine and complex
4. Edit for format and layout
5. Print on high-quality paper
Cultivate a Frame of Mind for Effective Revising and Proofreading

• Attempt to see things from your audience’s __________ rather than from your own

• _______ documents until you cannot see further improvements

• Allow others to make ____________ for improving your writing