

Human Performance for the Knowledge Worker: The Write Stuff

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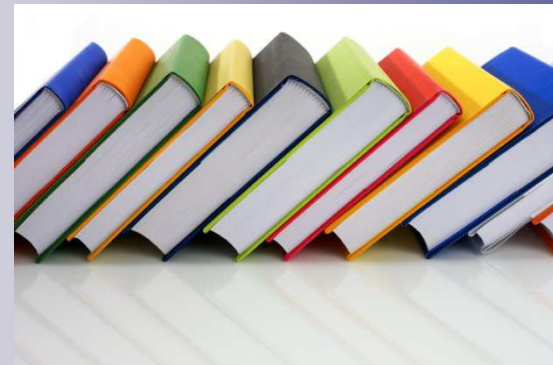
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Who are Knowledge Workers?

- ◆ Attorneys
- ◆ Compliance Professionals
- ◆ Risk Professionals
- ◆ Trainers
- ◆ Those of us who “use our words” for a living (our main capital is knowledge).



Poll Question #1

How many emails do you receive per day on average?

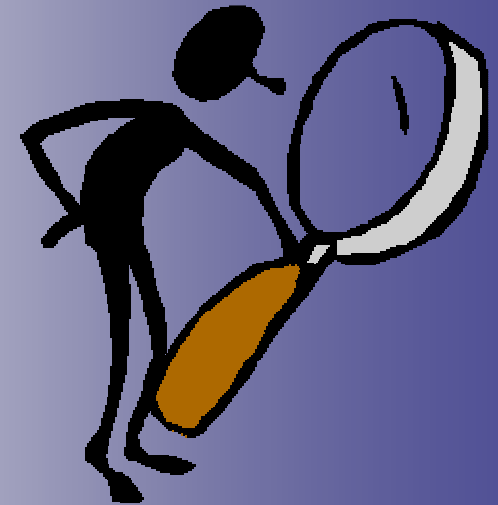
- A. 1 to 50
- B. 51 to 100
- C. 101 to 150
- D. 151 to 200
- E. OMG! I can't keep up!



Poll Question #2

How many emails do you actually read *all the way through* per day?

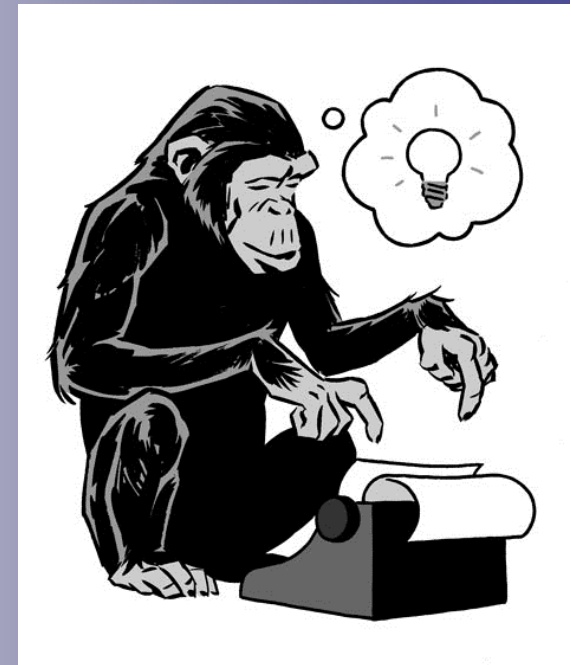
- A. 0 to 5
- B. 6 to 10
- C. 11 to 20
- D. 21 to 30
- E. 31 or more (You might be a lawyer)



Poll Question #3

How many documents, including emails, do you create on average per day?

- A. 1 to 10
- B. 11 to 20
- C. 21 to 40
- D. 41 or more (You might be a lawyer)



A Challenge for Writers: Human Attention



◆ Transient Attention - Eight Seconds

See “You Now Have a Shorter Attention Span Than a Goldfish” by Kevin McSpadden. <http://time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/>

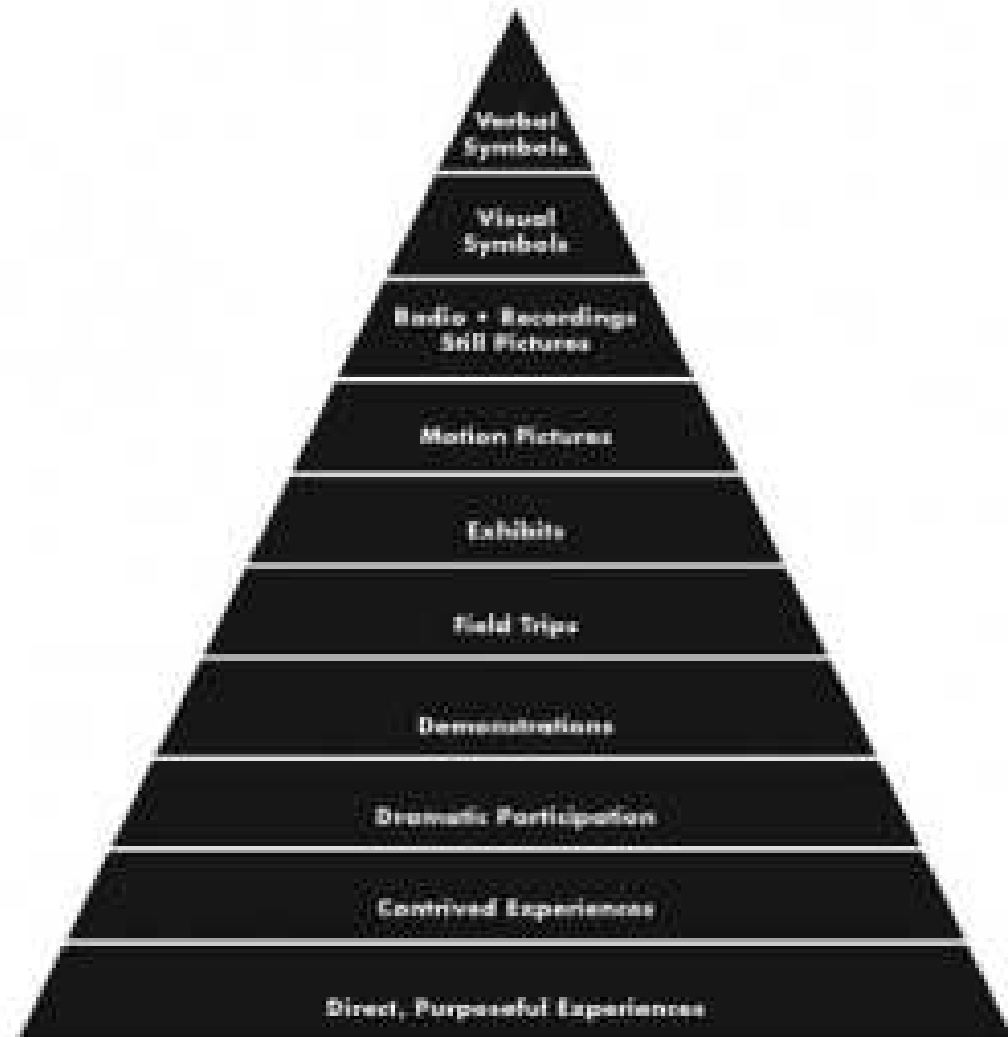
◆ Selective Sustained Attention – Twenty Minutes

Also known as focused attention, is the level of attention that produces the consistent results on a task over time. Some state that the average human attention span is approximately 8 seconds; others state that most healthy teenagers and adults are unable to sustain attention on one thing for more than about 20 minutes at a time, although they can choose repeatedly to re-focus on the same thing. This ability to renew attention permits people to "pay attention" to things that last for more than a few minutes, such as long films. From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention_span

How effective is reading on retention?

The intuitive answer is that it is not as effective as other methods.

See Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience (1946).



It's complicated.



But studies show that active learning tends to be more effective than passive learning.

My experience

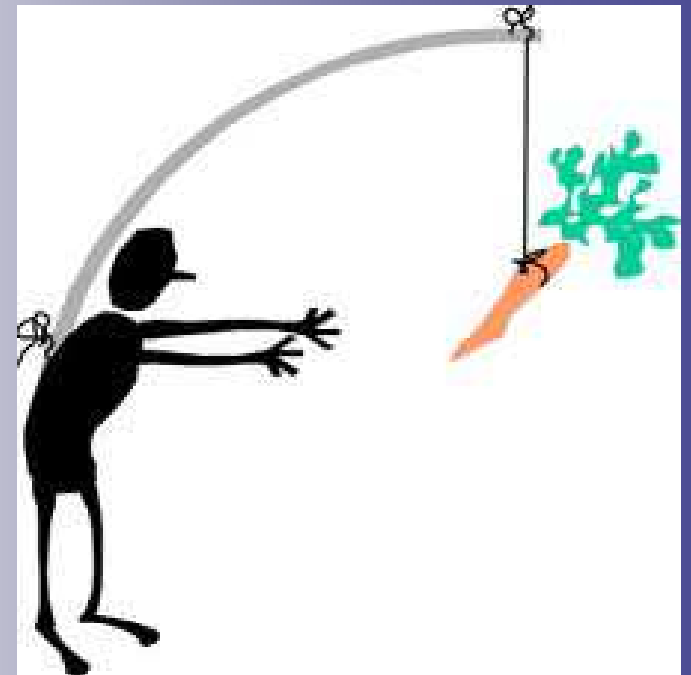


- ◆ Less active learning (like reading) is not as effective as active participation.
- ◆ Think GPS: How well do you learn a route when you just follow your GPS?
- ◆ However, writing is scalable in a way that in-person interaction is not.

Thinking time: Getting started with HP-based writing

Why are you writing?

- ◆ Compliance
- ◆ CYA
- ◆ Raise awareness
- ◆ *Because you need someone to do something*



Who is your audience?

- ◆ Not lawyers
- ◆ Not robots
- ◆ Real humans



What is important?

- ◆ Just “one thing” ... if possible.
- ◆ If providing reasons to justify a position, pick your best three or four.
- ◆ If writing a long paper, break up your ideas into three to four themes.
- ◆ What, when, where?

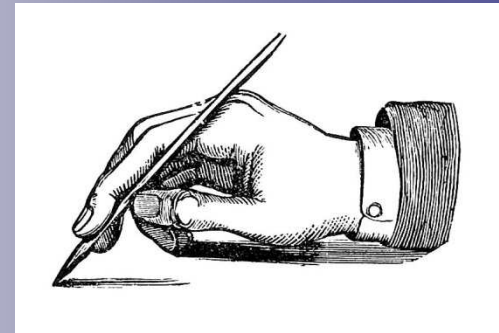


How will you send your message?

- ◆ Email
- ◆ Policy or procedure
- ◆ Meeting
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Never mind...



Writing Tips: General



**This statement should not apply to
your HP-based writing**

**Ts'i mahnu uterna
ot twan ot geifur
hingts uto.**

Be Brief

- ◆ Consider:
 - Advertising
 - Twitter (140 characters)
 - Haiku (17 syllables)
- ◆ Use bullet points, tables and graphs where appropriate.



The challenge of being brief

More is less they say
But writing makes me happy
I cannot stop now

What's important comes first

- ◆ Think newspaper article.
- ◆ Conclusion or request comes first – do not keep your audience in suspense!
- ◆ Example:

To: Employees

From: HR

Required Action: Sign the attached benefits form.

Background: [narrative explanation of who, what, why, etc.]

Signpost

Introduction

Brazos appreciates the opportunity to ... Brazos does not support the revised standard because:

1. The revised standard will be too costly to implement.
2. The revised standard will be too difficult to implement.
3. The current standard sufficiently addresses the concerns raised by FERC.

Note: The body of your paper should match the organization in your introduction.

Proof your writing

- ◆ Get a second opinion on anything important if at all possible.
 - Must be someone who is not afraid to give feedback.
- ◆ If no one is available to review your writing, take a second look later.
- ◆ If you are writing a procedure, exercise it.



Exercise: How would you present this definition to employees for CIP training?

BES Cyber Asset: A Cyber Asset that if rendered unavailable, degraded, or misused would, within 15 minutes of its required operation, misoperation, or non-operation, adversely impact one or more Facilities, systems, or equipment, which, if destroyed, degraded, or otherwise rendered unavailable when needed, would affect the reliable operation of the Bulk Electric System. Redundancy of affected Facilities, systems, and equipment shall not be considered when determining adverse impact. Each BES Cyber Asset is included in one or more BES Cyber Systems.

Exercise: One solution

BES Cyber Asset: **A Cyber Asset that if rendered unavailable, degraded, or misused would, within 15 minutes** of its required operation, misoperation, or non-operation, adversely impact one or more Facilities, systems, or equipment, which, if destroyed, degraded, or otherwise rendered unavailable when needed, would **affect the reliable operation of the Bulk Electric System.** **Redundancy** of affected Facilities, systems, and equipment **shall not be considered** when determining adverse impact. Each BES Cyber Asset is included in one or more BES Cyber Systems.

Writing Tips: Email



Make taking action easy

- ◆ Include links if you are referencing something posted on a website
- ◆ Write numbers in a way that people can read and make sense of them.
 - 1234-654-2001, not 12346542001
 - Conference calls: 234-567-8889;12345#
(allows dialing from mobile without entering any digits).



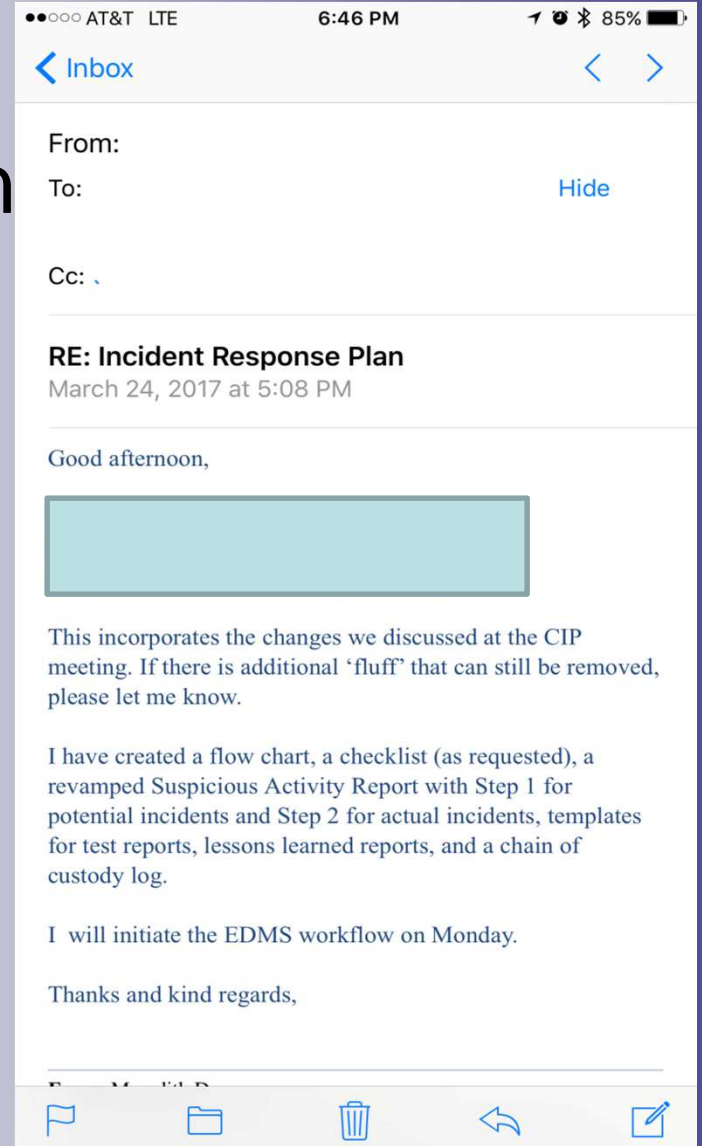
STOP SHOUTING!



- ◆ When all capital letters are used, reading speed 13 to 20 percent slower (Breland & Breland, 1944).
- ◆ Reading speed is best when uppercase and lowercase letters are used; tap into familiarity (Poulton, 1967; Rickards & August, 1975).
- ◆ When extra emphasis is needed, bold has been found to be a better cue than uppercase (Coles & Foster, 1975).

Email and Smartphones: Less is More

- ◆ Limit important text to an amount that will likely fit on one smartphone screen.
- ◆ For mass emails, use email lists so recipients do not have to scroll through pages of names to get to the message.





Writing Tips: Legal Documents

Speaking of unicorns: the understandable contract

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. Confidentiality Agreement

Effective Date: 3/27/2017

Disclosure Period: 6 months commencing on the Effective Date

Confidentiality Period: Two Years from the end of the Disclosure Period.

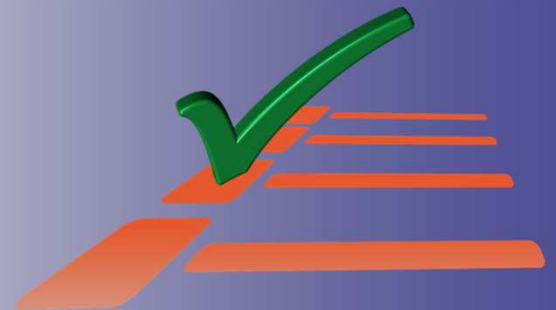
Purpose: To enable discussions between the Parties concerning potential business arrangements.

Parties:

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.	Party Name:
Signature: _____ 	Signature: _____
	Name:
	Title:
	Address:
	Fax:
	Email:
Disclosing Party: Yes	Disclosing Party: Yes
Receiving Party: Yes	Receiving Party: Yes

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **HP-based writing starts with you, and it can start now.**
- ◆ **Remember that you are writing for humans.**



Recommended Reading

- ◆ *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath
- ◆ *Hereof, Thereof and Everywhereof – A Contrarian Guide to Legal Drafting* by Howard Darmstadter
- ◆ “You Won’t Finish this Article” by Farhad Manjoo:
http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/technology/2013/06/how_people_read_online_why_you_won_t_finish_this_article.html