

My Rules for writing technical matters
Use the rules to build trust between you and your audience.

1. Respect your audience.
 - a. Write clearly.
 - b. If you are clear your audience may understand.
 - c. Assume you have a great audience on a bad hair day.
 - d. Assume the audience will not want to work to understand you.
 - e. Assume it is you who must make reports clear to the audience.
2. You already speak and read.
 - a. Give in to the notion you can also write.
3. Writing is hard work.
4. Better writing comes by correcting a lot of bad writing.
5. Use short words when available.
6. Use words from the immediately previous sentence in the following sentence if you can. When you use words from one sentence to the next, you will connect the ideas in the sentences. Connected ideas are easier to follow.
7. The word "and" is often present. Get rid of and. Check the sentence. Perhaps the sentence is two sentences.
8. Do not start sentences with the words "this, it, or that". If you feel however that you must use "however" to start the sentence, don't.
9. Remove fuzzy words.
10. Avoid jargon except for the hard data (e.g. bearing pressure, lumens).
11. Remove adjectives and adverbs as much as possible.
12. Remove repeated ideas.
13. Avoid absolutes such as none, never, etc., least, most, maximum, minimum, average, best, 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: "All giraffes are over 3m tall". You did not measure all giraffes.
14. Use shorter sentences. Ten (10) to fifteen (15) words in one sentence is plenty.
15. Use short paragraphs. Four(4) to six (6) lines in one paragraph is plenty. Two (2) to four (4) sentences is enough.
16. 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.

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17. I think a good report is written to a Grade 6 to 8 level audience.
 - a. Tools to keep in mind are the Fleisch-Kincaid Index and the Gunning Fog index.
 - b. A Fleish-Kincaide Index is 9 is thought to be readable to a person with a Grade 9 education. Most of us made it to Grade 9 and we all still used the same words. Beyond that grade level we specialized. Use a Fleish-Kincaide Index of 6 to 8.
 - c. News papers read often read at a Grade 3 or 4 level.
18. 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 thought of as an elaborated "sentence". Each sentence of the paragraph 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. If you have two ideas use a sentence for each idea 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?
 - e. A sentence, in mathematical and science terms, is an equation.
 - i. The equation of a sentence states, when you do something to another thing a new thing else happens, or
 - ii. y is a function of x , or $y=f(x)$.
19. Enjoy yourself writing. Take breaks. Adjust my rules so your writing works for you and your audience.
20. If you make a mistake in writing, try again. Failure can be a great teacher.