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# How To Write Good Reports

By Ken Drummond & Rob Tonge



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Thank you for downloading the sample chapters of *How To Write Good Reports* published by Gull Publishing. This excerpt includes the Table of Contents, and the first chapter, which overviews the book.

We hope you find this information useful in evaluating this book

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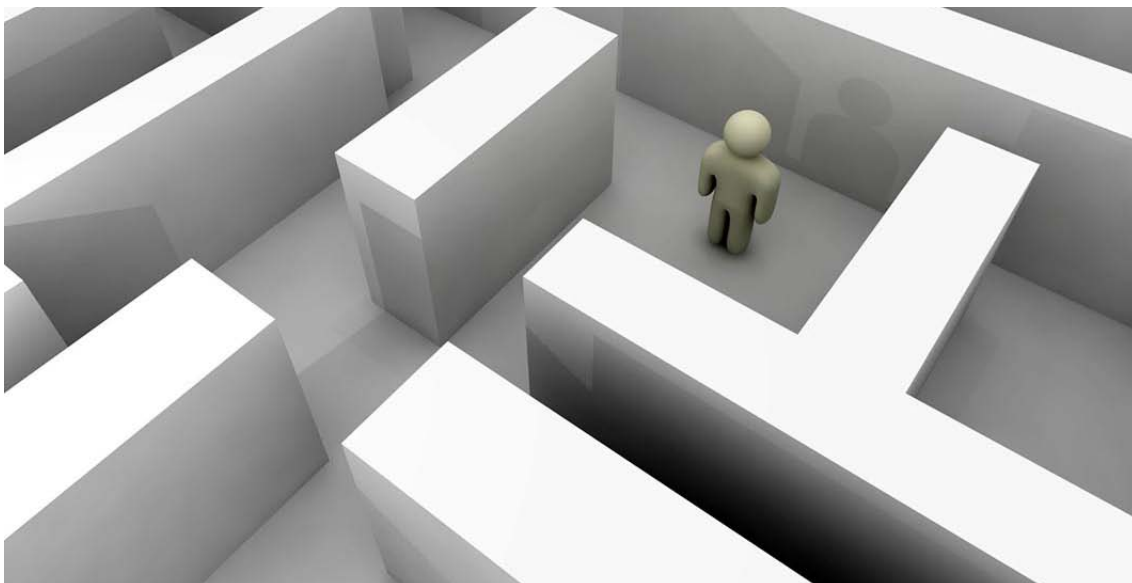
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## Introduction

### CHAPTER ONE



**M**uch communication involves writing – either in hard copy or electronic format. However, many educated adults cannot write well enough to successfully transmit their thoughts to others. Their message is often hidden in a mass of unclear, poorly structured material

Every communication has a sender and a receiver, but communication is only effective when there is the same understanding of the message between both parties.

It is essential that your written communications can be clearly understood by those receiving them. You will have done your job as a writer only when your thoughts or ideas are so clear that your reader cannot possibly misunderstand them.

The receiver of your communication wants to be able to absorb and assess the information in the shortest possible time. Therefore, as the writer, you need to convey as much information as necessary, as concisely as possible.

The way you express this information will have much to do with whether your reader accepts them with confidence. Using a 'heavy' style tends to imply to the reader that it conceals weak material and lazy thinking.

### **KNOW YOUR TARGET READER (The End-User)**

**A** report and its different parts is likely to be read by different types of people. The body of the report and the Appendix may be studied closely by those in the same technology as the writer. However, the Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions may also be read by others from different backgrounds.

Use of specialist terminology and jargon can be used freely and effectively when we are dealing with people who are involved in our specialised field, but when writing, you must ask yourself:

- Who is my reader;
- What is his/her experience; and
- Will he/she understand the words I am using.



## Principles Of Clear Writing

### CHAPTER TWO



**W**hen communicating orally, feedback is easily obtained from the receiver by reaction, or questioning to clarify or check understanding.

This is not the case with written communication. Therefore, every effort must be made to produce written communication that is clear, easy to read and easy to understand.

The following guidelines help to meet these aims:

- Plan your work;
- Gather all the information before you start writing;
- Get to the point quickly;
- Use clear, familiar, simple words;
- Keep sentences short;
- Give sentences and paragraphs a clear, logical structure;
- Use active verbs and avoid the passive; and
- Know your reader (the end user).

These guidelines will now be addressed in more detail.

### **OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INFORMATION BEFORE YOU START**

**T**o facilitate your writing it is important to gather as much of the information as possible that you will need before you start – the less often you have to break your train of thought to get more information, the better.

However, as you go through the writing process you may well find you need to obtain some additional item/s of information. This is not unusual, but the main issue is to approach report writing in a systematic manner, with the first actions being listing and obtaining the information you are likely to need.

It is better to have too much to start with than wasting time searching after the writing process starts.

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