

WSIPC PRESENTS

**WASWUG**

# **The Modern Communication Journey: Crafting Emails, Texts, and Instant Messages**

## Discussion

- When is it best to use face-to-face?
- When is it best to use e-mail?
- When is it best to use text?
- What other forms of communication are desirable?
- What is the next big thing in communication?
- What are your pet peeves and preferences about each?

## Writing Activity

Pick any common item and write a short description of it. Don't name the object, but from your description, others should be able to tell what the item is.

## Scope

**What content and context will convey this *purpose* to this *audience* to achieve this *result*?**

- What will the information be used for? (Purpose)
- How many topics do you need to cover? (Breadth)
- How much detail is appropriate? (Depth)
- Who are the readers? (Audience)
- What is the desired outcome? (Result)

## Before You Respond

- Instead of, "What do I want to say?" Ask yourself,
- Who is my reader? Who is this for? (Audience Analysis)
- What are we trying to accomplish? (Result Questions)
- What do they need from me (information and actions)? (Scope Questions)
- What do I need from them (information and actions)? (Purpose Questions)
- What do I need to communicate now to accomplish the goal? (Response Draft)

**Strategize > Speak > Storm > Shape**

**Purpose** - Why are you having this conversation?

- The message is what you are writing
- The purpose is the reason you are writing it
- The result is the outcome you seek

Important considerations:

- The problem the document addresses
- The technical issues or major points to be made
- The wording and what the document will do for readers

**Audience** - What things should you know about your audience before you respond?

Some things you might want to consider:

- Why are they reading this? How will they use this information?
- What is their level of knowledge of subject matter?
- What is their attitude toward the topic?
- What level of formality and detail is appropriate?
- What is their communication style? What is their position?

**Result** - What would a successful outcome look like?

- What do they want you to do? What else?
- What do you want them to do? What else?
- Are you aiming toward the ultimate response? (Use if...then... statements)
- Are you making it easy for them to understand, respond, and act?

**Ways to Organize**

Chronological	General > Specific / Specific > General
Spatial	Priority
Sequential – Step-by-Step	Order of Familiarity
Compare and Contrast	Order of Agreement
Cause>Effect / Effect>Cause	Order of Usefulness

## **When the Message is Complicated, Try Mapping It**

- Start in the center with the topic
- Dump all the content randomly on individual lines, cards, or branches
- Look at the items and subgroup like things with like, creating subtopics and chunking into main points
- Flesh out each subtopic with key details
- Arrange in a useable order
- Convert the map to its final format: Document, Presentation, Task List, Gantt Chart, etc.

## Consistent Communication Outline

### Acknowledge – I hear you

Things to Acknowledge

Ways to Acknowledge

### Information – Here is your answer

### Interpretation – Hear is what it means

Interpretation Options

### Action – Here is what to do

## Do You Need All Four Parts?

**Acknowledge** - If all are true, you may choose to leave out the *Acknowledge* section or shorten it to a greeting

1. Do you have good rapport with them?
2. Are you sure they know what you are referring to in every part of your message?
3. Is everything you are referring to already written in the message thread in a location everyone can easily refer to?

**Information** - If any of these are true, you NEED the *Information* section

1. Is there anything they need to know?
2. Are they asking a question?
3. Do you need to inform or verify?
4. Do you want to ensure you're on the same page?
5. Should you keep the thread consistent?

**Interpretation** - If all three are true, you may choose to leave out the *Acknowledge* step

1. Are you both confident in each other's knowledge and abilities?
2. Are you sure they understand the message?
3. Is everything you are referring to already well explained in the message thread in a location everyone can easily refer to?

**Action** - If any of these are true, you NEED the *Action* section

1. Is there anything you need to do?
2. Are they asking for something?
3. Are you involving others?
4. Do you want to ensure or assure completed actions?
5. Should you keep the thread updated?

## Examples

1. **Acknowledge** - Hi Maria, I see you are requesting a transfer.

**Information** - I can do that as soon as the permissions are set up.

**Interpretation** - To do that, the legal guardian needs to sign the TRF.

**Action** - Please bring that into the office.

2. **Acknowledge** – Hi Maria, I got the form and submitted it to the transfer team.

**Information** – Your request is complete.

**Interpretation** – This means the movement was completed internally and you can transfer.

**Action** – You will now need to enroll in the institution you are transferring to.

## Activity

**Separate out the response into the AIIA Format**

1.

2.

# Relationships

## ASAP

## Hurry

## Right Away

Words mean different things to different people.

Ask for clarification > Offer definitions > Make requests

## Match Your Reader

Words, Tone, Formality, Directness, Detail, Familiarity, Organization, Layout

## Writing Style

Whom do we write to most of the time?

- If **you** like it, you're losing 3/4 of the audience
- Use the Hamburger Method to appeal to anyone

## Stop Writing about Stuff; Start Writing to People

What clues will tell me the reader's style? Look at wordiness, flow, friendliness, focus, organization, and thoroughness

Get it Done – Get straight to the point with just the bottom line

Get it Right – Follow a detailed logical sequence with inquiries

Get Involved – Are personable, big picture and may add extra details

Get Along – Use disclaimers: "Sorry to bother you." "This may be a silly question"

## What does each style prefer?

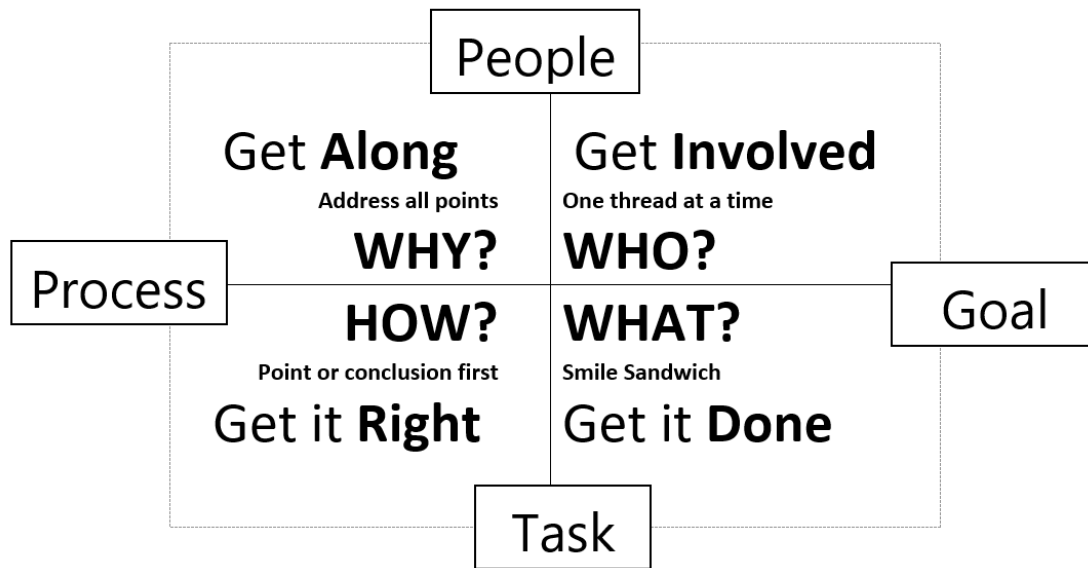
Get it Done

Get it Right

Get Involved

Get Along

Tips for consistency based on *your* style:



## The Hamburger Method for Reaching Anyone

If you are writing to a mass audience or someone you don't know, Build a Burger:

Start with the Meat: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How – Get It Done

Soften with a Bun: Acknowledge them as people – Politeness, etiquette, greeting, summary – Get Along

Include Relevant Detail: Avoid questions and confusion later – Get It Right

Add Some Sauce: What's in it for them? Context – Get Involved

Write it in the above order to overcome writer's block

The information should appear in the document in this order:

1. Bun
2. Meat
3. Extras
4. Bun

Sauce can go anywhere it is needed

Finish with a round of "So What?"



# Teamwork

## Avoid the TL;DR Trap

The American Library Association

The Makeup of the Reading Audience

- 10-15% non-readers
- 10-15% avid readers
- 70-80% skimmers

How can we be more “skimmer friendly” or deter skimming?

## Positive Tone: Focus in the Present and on the Solution

Feedback Method:

- Nice Job > Next Time
- Liked Best > Even Better

## Move the Conversation Forward

Where are we *now*?

What can we do differently *this time*?

How can we do even better *next time*?

Talk about what you can do.

## Clear, Active, Helpful Responses

*Who* does *what* vs *What* is done by *Whom*

- Change from passive to active by making the actor the subject.
- If no actor is provided, add one or choose to keep it passive.
- Use I, You, and We
- Define pronouns for clarity
- Talk about what you can do – offer help

## Change to Active, Helpful Language

- That is not our job.
- That is really easy to do.
- That’s not our policy.
- I don’t know.

## Edit

1. Edit for logic, organization, and clarity
  2. Edit for style
  3. Proofread for grammar and spelling
- Read the entire document for the purpose of editing
  - Scan backward using your finger as a guide
  - Proofread for errors (assume there is more than one)
  - Take advantage of technology (Spell Check, Autocorrect, Read Aloud)
  - Set it aside to refresh your mind
  - Change formatting to refresh your eyes
  - Ensure formatting consistency
  - Look for consistency of number, tense, subject, voice, angle, and formality
  - Watch short words
  - Double check names
  - Separate right- and left- brain activities

## What Frustrates Most Readers?

- Too long / wordy
- Too short
- Not to the point
- Not organized
- Overuse of passive voice
- Too much information
- Not enough information
- Lack of audience consideration
- Too technical (jargon)
- Inflated vocabulary
- Poor grammar and spelling
- No clear call to action
- Poor visual appeal
- Mistakes with names
- Long sentences
- ALL CAPS
- Inappropriate formality
- Buzzwords and cliches
- Negative tone
- Lack professionalism