

recommended book: the craft of scientific writing

logical, conventional structures should be followed (reduce mental energy wasted on parsing)

–“why was this missing”

–e.g. abstract should include results and impact

Audience

what do they know

what do they need to know

why are they reading this

how can I make their job easier

ask questions in order to engage the reader (even if rhetorical)

clarity–story analogy

character (little red riding hood) noun

action (walking, frightened) verb

“in bad writing, the char and act don’t match up. the action is noun, the char is not the subject”

–despite her knowledge of → although the governor knew

–her veto of...aimed at giving encouragement → she vetoed...to encourage

skim the text for the important actions

put the character right next to its action

passive bs saps energy from your proposal

“are presented” “is revealed” “are discussed”

–was used to confine → contained

–is dependent on → depends on

–in general avoid putting verbs at the end of a sentence

ok but ‘we discuss’ is equally shifty as a way to avoid showing you don’t know what you’re talking about

just go straight for the throat

avoid abstract nouns

–ability, approach, capabilities, environment, factor, nature, model, use

if you have to use one, ground it with concrete examples

Latin-anglo

Kingly help was given

- Anglo-Saxon

Royal aid was presented

- French

Regal assistance was provided

- Latin, formal, technical

one sentence, one idea

- but keep the story going
- ”begin each new sentence in a way that connects with the one before”
- put the link (usually subject) early in the sentence, even if this requires passive voice

types of paragraphs

- 1 intro, conclusion, transition between ideas
- 2 signpost (review what was said, preview what will be said) ‘keep the reader grounded’
- 3 main body – one paragraph one topic

paragraph structure

- topic sentence (claim)
- restrictive sentence (scope)
- illustrative sentences (examples and reasoning)
- restrictive sentence (optional) (analysis of what has been said, its importance)

Other tips

- Good flow also requires variable sentence length and style
- Some reviewers skim by reading only first sentence of each paragraph

send draft as .doc or .docx

Style: Ten lessons in Clarity and Grace by Joseph Williams, 2000
for moving out of passive, into active writing

empty slides, three per page

write main points of proposal as notes in each slide

talk through the slides

do you need to change the order of slides? is there a missing slide?

can be done for part or whole proposal