“Writing is easy. All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your forehead.”

-Gene Fowler

How many of you like to write?

Examples of unclear writing
- I cannot get sick pay, I have six children. Can you tell me why?
- I am glad to report that my husband who is missing is dead.
- I am forwarding my marriage certificate and my three children; one of which is a mistake as you can see.
- I am very much annoyed to find that you have branded my son illiterate. This is a dirty lie as I was married a week before he was born.

Revise the following sentence
- Our goal is to bring the two systems together in a merger that will lead to the creation of a more efficient and effective process and to make it more cost-efficient than any of those that have been tried by us in the past.
- We intend to merge the two systems to create a more effective and cost-efficient process.

Source: Communication Briefings (January, 1996, p. 6).

Gender-Neutral Writing
- Henry Bach is a brilliant lawyer and his wife Ann is a beautiful blond.
- Henry Bach is a brilliant lawyer and his wife Ann is an accomplished researcher.
- The Bachs are a handsome couple.
Objectives
- Incorporate the principles of clear writing in your writing.
- Edit documents thoroughly and accurately.
- Practice proofreading techniques to improve writing skills.
- Write without bias.

Principles of Clear Writing
- Keep sentences short
- Prefer the simple to the complex
- Prefer the familiar word
- Avoid unnecessary words
- Put action on your verbs
- Write like you talk, except when writing technical materials

Principles of Clear Writing
- Use terms your reader can picture
- Tie in with your reader’s experiences
- Make full use of variety
- Write to express not to impress
- Use list and illustrations

Shorten Sentences
- You can break up long sentences by replacing "although," "while," and "if" with "however" and "therefore."
- Original: Although forecasters had predicted a drop in interest rates during this quarter, they still see no long-term effect on growth.
- Revised: Forecasters had predicted a drop in interest rates in this quarter. However, they still see no long-term effect on growth.

While ↔ However
- Original: While small companies certainly can borrow big ideas and techniques from larger firms, it’s a mistake to create the illusion that your company is large.
- Revised: Small companies certainly can borrow big ideas and techniques from larger firms. However, it’s a mistake to create the illusion that your company is large.

If ↔ Therefore
- Original: If your primary goal is to communicate with your audience, not impress it, you should choose a vocabulary and use a tone consistent with your image.
- Revised: Your primary goal is to communicate with your audience, not impress it. Therefore, you should choose a vocabulary and use a tone consistent with your image.
Stand Tall with Short Words
- give
- total
- choice
- expect
- explain
- group
- basic
- sign
- most
- chance
- orderly
- use
- administer
- aggregate
- alternative
- anticipate
- articulate
- association
- fundamental
- indication
- majority
- possibility
- systematic
- utilize

Eliminate Wordy Phrases
- consideration
- empty
- tube
- until
- in fact
- use
- active consideration
- completely empty
- hollow tube
- until such time as
- as a matter of fact
- utilize

Guide for Neutral Writing
- Avoid focusing on physical appearance
- Avoid using special female gender specific words or forms
- Try to avoid using gender (racial) modifiers altogether
- Reword to eliminate unnecessary gender pronouns

Guide for Neutral Writing
- Refer to a woman in the same way as a man
  - Both should be referred to by their full name, by first or last name, or by title
- Avoid unnecessary reference to or emphasis on a woman’s marital status

Guide for Neutral Writing
- Males should not always be first in order of mention
- Replace the masculine pronoun with one, you, he or she, or hers or his, where appropriate
- Alternate male and female expressions and examples

Solutions
- Original: If the researcher is the principal investigator, he should place an asterisk after his name.
- Solution: Write the sentence without pronouns. Try to avoid conditional structures, generally introduced by "if" or "when," which often require the use of pronouns.
- Gender-fair: Place an asterisk after the name of the principal investigator.
**Solutions**

- **Original:** Repeat the question for each subject so that he understands it.
- **Solution:** Use plural nouns and pronouns if they do not change the meaning of the sentence.
- **Gender-fair:** Repeat the question for all subjects so that they understand it.

**Solutions**

- **Original:** Each supervisor will be at his workstation by 8 a.m.
- **Solution:** Use a double pronoun, i.e. s/he, he or she, he/she, him and her.
- **Gender-fair:** Each supervisor will be at his or her workstation by 8 a.m.

**Solutions**

- **Original:** After filling out his class schedule, the student should place it in the registrar’s basket.
- **Solution:** Use an article instead of a possessive pronoun as a modifier.
- **Gender-fair:** After filling out a class schedule, the student should place it in the registrar’s basket.

**Gender-Neutral Terminology**

- professional
- average person
- big task
- student
- work force, personnel
- nurse
- workers, employees
- sales agent, salesperson
- family
- career woman
- common man
- man-sized task
- coed
- manpower
- male nurse
- workmen
- salesman
- man, wife, and children

**Common Grammatical Errors**

- **Inconsistent or mixed tenses**
  - “She is writing for working mothers and presented her information to meet their needs.”
  - Writes and presents
  - “Mary walks outside and started to weed the flowers.”
  - Walked and started
- **Repetition**
  - “Gardeners annually produce tons of produce each year.”
  - “Gardeners produce tons of produce each year.”
- **Dangling or misplaced modifiers**
  - “To profit from a long meeting, the seats must be comfortable.”
  - Do the seats benefit?
  - “To profit from a long meeting, we need comfortable seats.”
- **Growth was measured for each oyster using a binocular microscope.”
  - The oysters were using microscopes???
  - “Oyster growth was measured using a binocular microscope.”
Common Grammatical Errors

- Back-door approach
  - “This trip will not cost employees any money.”
  - “This trip is free to employees.”

- Excess Baggage
  - “The nursery owner blamed low rainfall and a lack of moisture for causing the poor landscape.”
  - “The nursery owner blamed the drought for the poor landscapes.”

Application

- Complete assignments using
  - Principles of clear writing
  - Bias-free writing

Evaluation

- Assignments
  - Midterm Examination
  - Technical Report
  - Final Examination

The End

- Extra Review Follows

Shorten the passage

- My advice to you, especially but not exclusively to be followed during the period of time when, as a student, you are attending an institution of higher learning (such as Texas A&M University, also known as a land-grant institution) is that you be, in all instances where appropriate and in all situations of a communicative nature, brief, in the sense that you constantly speak to the possibility of creating meaningful dialogues using a contextual framework the ideation relevant to the fewest (in the sense of least) possible units of linguistic transfer of meaning from one conscious entity to another.

Edited version

- Be brief.
Solutions

Original: If a student wishes to avoid sex bias in his writing, he should examine these alternatives.
- Solution: Sparingly use the passive voice.
- Gender-fair: These alternatives should be examined by any student who wishes to avoid sex bias in writing.

Bias Sensitivity

- The ladies in our organization out perform the men.
  - Constancy—men/women, ladies/gentlemen
- We hired a person who is wheelchair bound.
  - Illness—wheelchair user
- He said one of the girls in the office must have typed the document.
  - Secretaries—support staff

Do you recognize these statements?

- Be not lachrymose when the fluid secreted by certain bovines unintentionally flows over.
- If keeping a vigil over a metallic vessels containing an aqueous solution, said liquid will, under no circumstances, generate bubbles of vapor.

Common Sayings

- Conveyances with small, circular frames turning on their axes should never precede members of the equine family.
- Ingesting the pome fruit of a rose family tree will prevent the ministrations of a specialist in the healing arts.
- Woody pieces in conjunction with rock pieces will undoubtedly fracture my osseous infrastructure; however, the spewing forth of linguistic forms will, at no point in time, be detrimental to my persona.