



**statewide  
mutual.**

**Writing for  
impact,  
influence  
and action**



# **PRESENTATION**

## **AGENDA**



**Ice breaker**



**Why our words matter**



**4 pillars of effective business writing**



**Final quick tips**



 **communication  
skills academy**

**refresh  
marketing**

**Writing skills training**  
**Presentation skills training**  
**Storytelling skills training**  
**Media skills training**  
**Writing style guides**  
**Copy & content writing**  
**Content strategy**



QUICK

**ICE BREAKER**

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) Council will **organise** a community clean-up day next month.
- b) Council will **organize** a community clean-up day next month.

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) Council members are concerned about how the proposed changes will **affect** local services
- b) Council members are concerned about how the proposed changes will **effect** local services

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) **Whilst** some council staff supported the initiative, others had concerns about costs.
- b) **While** some council staff supported the initiative, others had concerns about costs.

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) The new policy resulted in **fewer** complaints from residents.
- b) The new policy resulted in **less** complaints from residents.
- c) Both options are correct.



## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) The park's fountains run **continuously** during summer.
- b) The park's fountains run **continually** during summer.

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) The GM **implied** the project would go ahead, but she didn't say so outright.
- b) The GM **inferred** the project would go ahead, but she didn't say so outright.

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) The municipality had significant growth in the 1990s.
- b) The municipality had significant growth in the 1990's.

## WHICH IS CORRECT?

- a) The deadline has been extended to the 1st of November 2024.
- b) The deadline has been extended to 01/11/24.
- c) The deadline has been extended to 1 November 2024.
- d) The deadline has been extended to November 1st 2024.

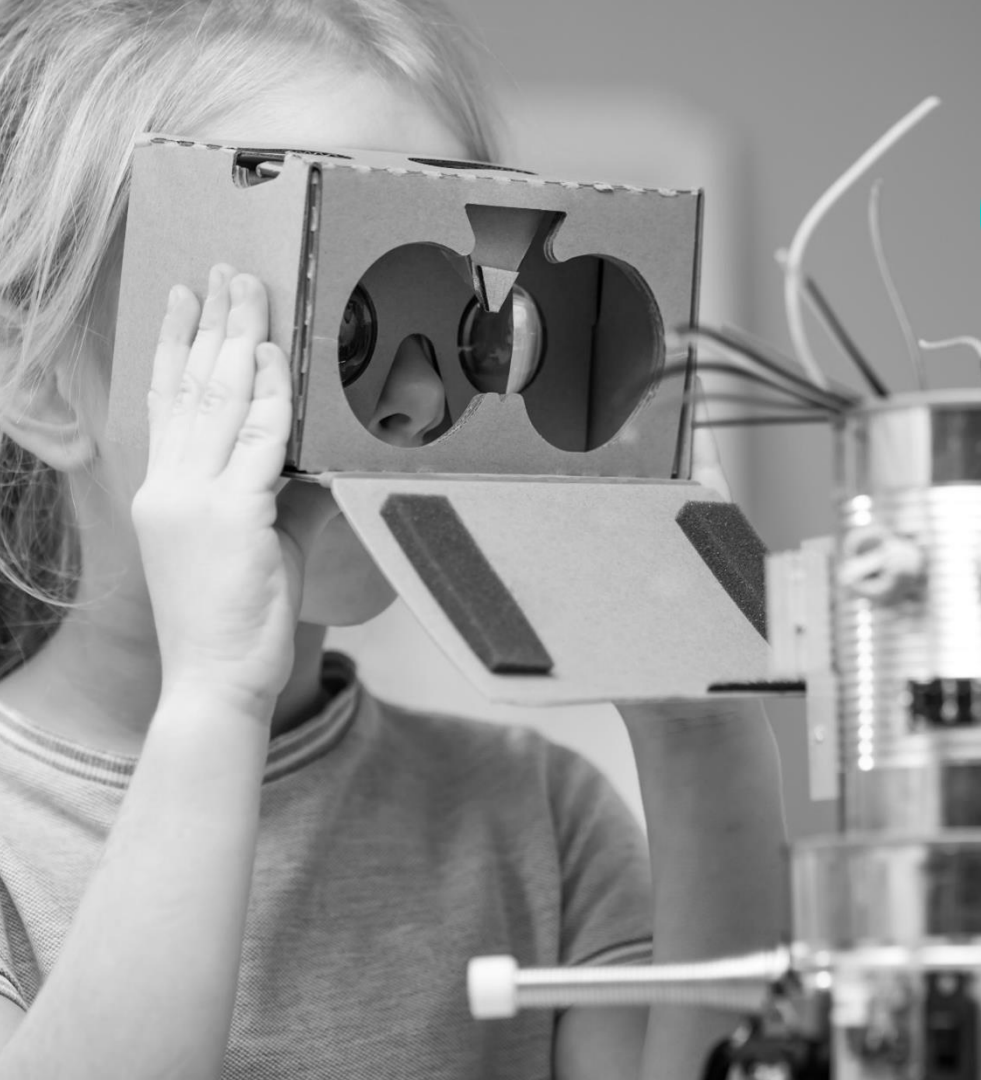


WHY DOES OUR WRITING  
**MATTER?**

# 6 BENEFITS OF FIRST-CLASS BUSINESS WRITING



1. It builds your council's brand (and our personal brands)
2. It improves workplace culture
3. It saves time (for *everyone*)
4. It protects from cost blowouts – and potential litigation
5. It enables you to achieve your goals faster
6. It benefits the community you serve



The single most  
critical element that  
separates **innovation  
success** from failure  
is **communication**

Alex Goryachev

Chief Innovation Officer

FORBES



“

Teams lose nearly  
an entire workday,  
or **7.47 hours a week**,  
to poor communication  
– that’s around  
**AUD \$19.6K** per  
employee per year.

Grammarly &  
The Harris Poll, 2022





**Three in four  
business leaders  
say they spend  
too much time  
resolving poor  
communication.**

Grammarly &  
The Harris Poll, 2022

# 6 SIGNS YOUR WRITING COULD BE INEFFECTIVE



1. You don't know your reader
2. You think people enjoy reading
3. You don't like white space
4. You're in love with big words and adjectives
5. You're suffering from sentence bloat
6. Your tone is overly stiff and formal

# FOUR PILLARS OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING



CLARITY



SIMPLICITY



BREVITY



HUMANITY

A close-up photograph of water being poured into a clear glass. The water is in motion, creating a dynamic surface with ripples and numerous small, clear bubbles. The background is a plain, light color, making the water and glass the central focus. On the left side, there is a dark blue circular graphic element that serves as a background for the text.

PILLAR 1

**CLARITY**



# CLARITY



If it's not clear, you may as well not write it

Clarity must always be the goal in your writing

Clarity is surprisingly hard to achieve

Illumination is required to be extinguished on these premises after nightfall.



Lights out after dark.





A significant proportion of the youth sector are (sic) prematurely disengaging from educational opportunities.



A lot of young people  
are leaving school early.



A lot of young people  
are not completing high  
school.



PILLAR 2

# SIMPLICITY





**For licensed premises, we will now allow vertical consumption outdoors.**

Steve Marshall  
1 October 2020



**Nick Harmsen** ✓  
@nickharmesen



Vertical consumption sounds like something which might be needed to help horizontal fiscal equalisation

12:00 PM · Oct 1, 2020





communication skills academy

**What do you  
recall seeing?**









Council has decided to implement a series of measures that are aimed at reducing the overall environmental impact that is caused by the activities and operations that take place within the community, which includes but is not limited to, waste management, public transportation, and energy consumption



Council will introduce measures to reduce environmental impact. Focus areas will include waste, energy and transport.



# SIMPLICITY



- Unnecessary words
- Pompous frills
- Clichés, buzzwords and jargon

# SIMPLICITY



- We're not writing for the sake of writing.
- We're writing to get our message across – and usually, to get ACTION.
- Use words you are sure your reader is familiar with.

Methodology



Alternatively



Finalise



Frequently



Regarding



Accompanying



Construct



Expiration



Sufficient



Requirement



Fundamental



Endeavour

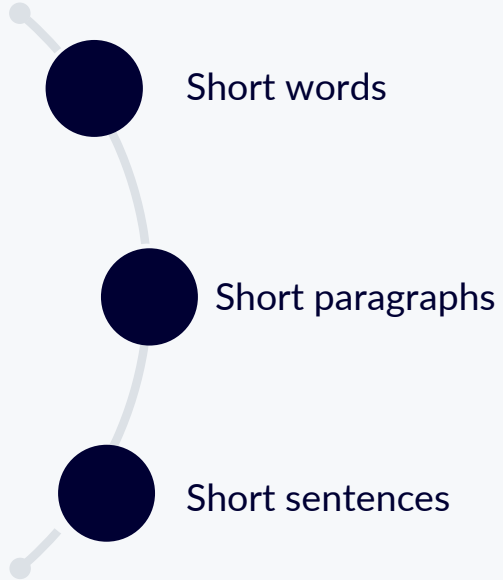




PILLAR 3

**BREVITY**

# BREVITY





Given the time it can take a staff member to complete a training program, the lack of structure and central coordination of on the job training, the non-completion of mandatory training noted and the limited oversight of training due to the limitations of the current platform and framework, the risk that staff members undertake work for which they are not competent is increased.

63 words



# SENTENCE LENGTH



VERY EASY



EASY



FAIRLY EASY



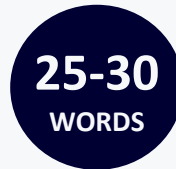
STANDARD



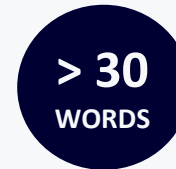
FAIRLY DIFFICULT



DIFFICULT



VERY DIFFICULT



**DON'T  
EVEN GO  
THERE**

We are at risk of staff performing work they're not trained to do. This is because:

- It takes a long time to complete our training programs
- On-the-job training is poorly structured and coordinated
- Staff do not complete mandatory training
- No one is overseeing our training function due to limitations with the platform and framework



In a timely  
manner



During the  
course of



The vast  
majority of



In the normal  
course of events



In the event  
that



Prior to the  
commencement of



On a daily  
basis



The month of  
September



It would be  
appreciated if



We are of the  
belief that

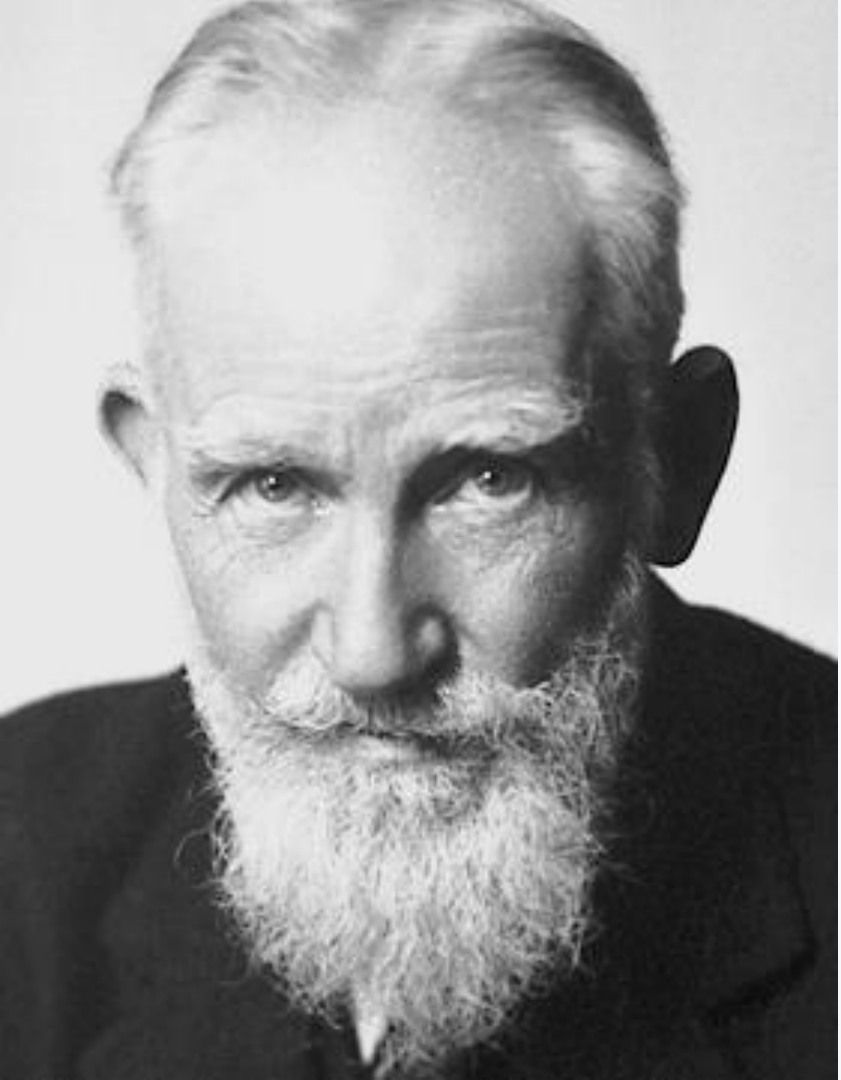


Perform an  
analysis of



With the  
exception of





**Sorry about the length of this letter, I didn't have enough time to write a shorter one.**

George Bernard Shaw



PILLAR 4

**HUMANITY**

# HUMANITY



- Tap into the humanity of you council's brand – and your own verbal communication style
- Never say anything in writing you wouldn't comfortably say in conversation
- Don't be afraid of contractions



# HUMANITY



- Use YOU, YOUR, WE, US and OUR wherever possible
- Draft it as you would say it, then go back and edit
- Read it aloud. Does it sound natural?

Clare Valley's Youth Counselling Service provides counselling for young people aged 12-25 years who live, work, study or recreate within the municipality.

Counselling is a free and confidential service available to young people. As part of this service, a youth counsellor can provide information and referrals to other services for the young person.



Would you like someone to talk to?  
Someone you can confide in?

If you're aged 12 to 25 and live, work or  
study in the local area, our youth  
counselling service is for you.

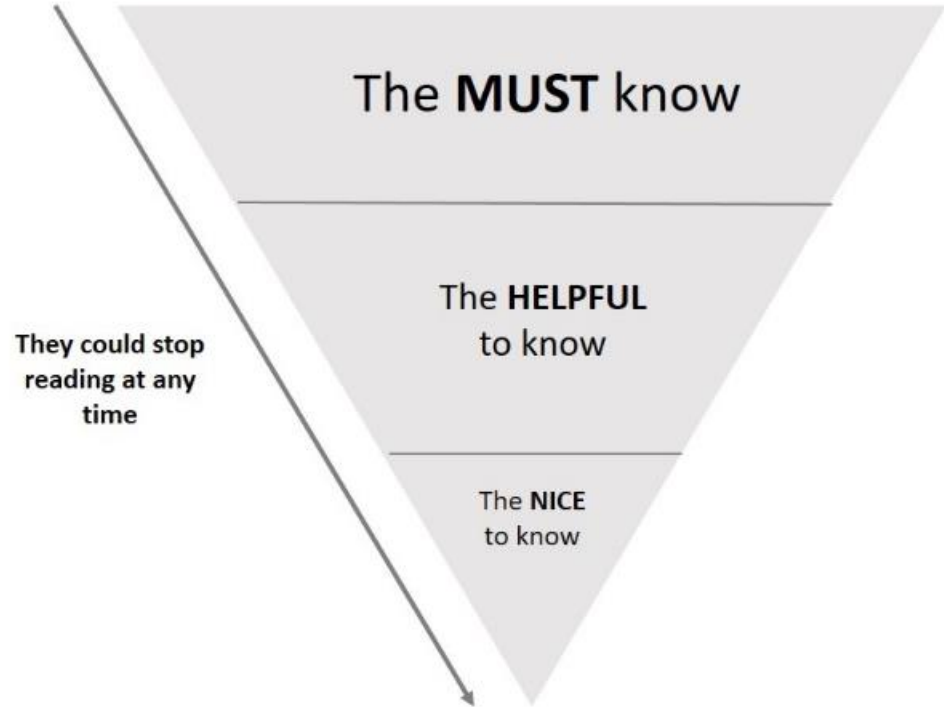
Counselling is free and confidential.



FINAL  
**QUICK TIPS**



# THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST



# THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST



- Nail the headline / subject line
- Sort the 'nice to know' from the 'need to know'
- Don't expect your readers to be gold miners

# WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE



- Active voice is stronger, more direct and more confident
- Passive voice makes your writing weak, wordy and convoluted
- In business, we want to write actively  
**AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**

# WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE



## PASSIVE

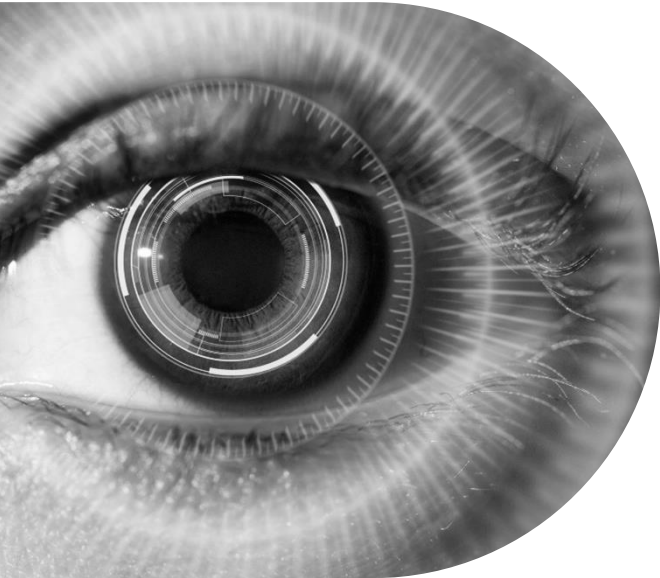
The planning and implementation of the new community garden was done by Council to promote local sustainability.

## ACTIVE

Council/We planned and implemented the new community garden to promote local sustainability.



# MAKE IT SCANNABLE



Use bullets and numbered lists where possible

Scatter with sub-headlines

Learn how to LINK!

# MAKE IT SCANNABLE



- A Apply for a parking permit at <https://www.clarevalley.nsw.gov.au/Services/Roads-transport-parking/Parking/Parking-permits/Resident-parking-permit>
- B [Click here](#) to apply for a parking permit.
- C To apply for a parking permit, go to the [Clare Valley Council website](#).
- D Apply for a [parking permit](#).
- E [Apply for a parking permit](#).

# PROOFREAD WITH PRECISION



- Allow time to forget
- Become obsessive about detail
- Change it up

QUESTIONS?

