

10 habits of highly effective writers

• Get your message across •

Are you creating a slide presentation? Writing a report? Asking for an increase in budget? Follow these 10 principles to ensure your audience understands your message, the logic behind it, and what you want them to do next.

Be clear, concise, and conversational.

Is this how I actually talk?



Focus on the most critical issues.

Show that you did your research. Talk about what's most important—to you and to them.

What are the "big wins"?



Have an opinion.

Don't hide behind extra words. Be direct and share your opinion.

Am I saying something original?



Put the research in context.

What is the issue? Why is it important? Put the topic in perspective, but keep the introduction short so your audience stays engaged.

Am I explaining why the reader should care?



Frame your argument.

Break the discussion into sections and use that framework to make your case.

Can my audience follow what I'm saying?



Show results.

Hard data is the best evidence. Make sure they believe what you're saying.

Am I proving my point?



Use real examples whenever possible.

Show that your idea is practical, not just theoretical.

Am I telling a story the reader can picture?



Make a document easy to scan.

Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Call out critical points with bullets, headers, highlighting, etc. Make your message easy to understand.

Am I pulling out the main points?



Illustrate main points with graphics.

Use tables, charts, and icons if they enhance your argument. Add visual interest—but only when it advances your argument.

Does every graphic serve a purpose?



Always provide a call to action.

What do you want your reader to do next? Make sure your next steps (or requests) are completely clear. Make your audience want to act.

Am I whetting the reader's appetite for more?



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