

Writing Under Pressure: Making it Easy

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Heading

I request permission to attend the 2021 AFDO Annual Meeting on June 12 -16 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Heading

Over 700 from state regulators and representatives from industry organizations will attend this meeting. My job involves interacting with industry. The meeting will allow me to meet industry members and learn about their concerns. When I return to the office, I'll distribute a trip report, so the other staff members can learn about the material that was presented.

Heading

The regular registration fee is \$675. The early bird registration fee is \$550. The cost for travel and lodging will be \$1600. I'll be out of the office from June 12 – 16.

Heading

The deadline for early registration is Friday, May 21. If you're able to approve my request, I would appreciate your letting me know by that time, so I can pay the reduced fee of \$550.

Active Versus Passive Voice

Select the sentences that contain the active voice.

- 1. I have scheduled a staff meeting for tomorrow at 10:00 AM.
- 2. I will circulate an article written by experts who will explain how repetitive negative publicity can ruin the reputation of our organization.
- 3. During the meeting, each staff member will be asked, "What can we do to get the disreputable media to cease making negative comments about our activities?"
- 4. The same brainstorming activity, which was used during a crisis last year will be used at this meeting. At that time, we created an action plan for dealing with similar incidents.
- 5. If the snowy weather requires that the office be closed, the meeting will be rescheduled.

Goal for the Passive Voice

When writing documents, try not to use the passive voice more than 10% of the time.

Best Guess

Average number of words in a sentence: _____

Average number of words in one of your sentences: _____

Readability

Jyoti Sanyal, a noted author, on his website refers to studies that correlated sentence length to readers' comprehension. An analysis of the data revealed that readers found:

___ words or less to be very easy to read

___ words, easy

___ words, fairly easy

___ **words, standard**

___ words, fairly difficult

___ words, difficult

___ words or more, very difficult

Professor Edward Bailey, professor at Marymount University recommends:

- Trying to write each sentence with _____ words or less.
- Including several sentences that have _____ words or less.

How to Shorten Your Sentences:

1. Remove adverbs (extremely, very, really)
2. Remove redundant phrases (each and every one of you)
3. Take out adjectives (conducted an excellent study, wrote an outstanding report)
4. Write in the active voice
5. Change a long sentence into two shorter sentences
 - Separate independent clauses joined by "and" or "but"
 - Make new sentences out of "which" clauses

Readability tests are designed to analyze the difficulty of document.

Two tests:

- Flesch–Kincaid Grade Level
 - Determines grade level who will understand the document
 - Lower number is preferable
- Flesch Reading Ease
 - Determines the proportion of the population who will understand the document
 - Higher number is preferable

Facts from writing Websites

- The average best-seller: Grade _____.
- The average newspaper: Grade _____.
- Business books: Grade: _____.
- Flesch - Kincaid Grade Level should be between _____ - _____ grade .
- Flesch Reading Ease should be _____ out of 100. (*The higher the number, the easier it is for your reader to understand the material.*)

Points to Remember

1. The purpose of writing is to enable the reader to understand what you have written.
2. When writing a document under a tight deadline:
 - Write the questions that the reader would want to know
 - Write the answers
 - Group the questions and answers under headings
 - Write the document
 - Proof the document
 - Check readability statistics
 - Improve the document
3. Use the word that best conveys your meaning.
4. In general, try to use the active voice.
5. Use the passive voice when appropriate.
6. Use headings and white space.
7. Use the Text to Speech function to help proofread your documents.
8. Use the Flesch-Kincaid tool to analyze the readability of your documents.
9. Avoid inflammatory words.
10. Leverage suggested techniques to increase email responsiveness.
 - Text to Speech <https://ttsreader.com/>
 - Text Fixer:
 - <https://www.textfixer.com/tools/remove-white-spaces.php>
 - <https://www.textfixer.com/tools/remove-line-breaks.php>
 - Test Readability (Copy and paste link into your browser)
 - https://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp