



The Technical Writing Company

CIWMB Administrative Writing

Presented by WVS
The Technical Writing Company

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Who is WVS?

- We're writing consultants:
 - Barry Schoenborn and Jim Collins.
- We help you achieve your mission:
 - Great writing persuades industry.
 - Great writing persuades the legislature.
 - Great writing pleases your management.



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Why you're here today

- Top down program for all CIWMB staff.
- Outside feedback that CIWMB writing needs improvement.
- Help management and employees achieve quality communication together.
- Trend in government to use plain English.



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The Plain Talk Project

- Washington state government initiated “plain talk” throughout all departments.
 - Requires agencies to use clear language that can be read and understood quickly.
 - Plain talk uses common words, rather than jargon, acronyms, or unnecessary legal language.
 - That means your customers will comply faster and more accurately with regulations.
 - Their website offers some excellent information:
<http://www.accountability.wa.gov/plaintalk/default.asp>



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Why clear writing is important

- Improves your credibility with internal and external audiences.
- Helps the public understand your ideas.
- Improves compliance because there are fewer misunderstandings.
- Saves readers time and reduces your time spent answering questions.



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Why clear writing is challenging

- Clear writing consists of simple concepts that are challenging to do.
- Clear, effective writing takes daily discipline and effort.
- This course will remind you of the concepts, but you supply the effort.



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An inspiring idea

“I have fiercely maintained one personal rule in all my so-called “popular” writing... The concepts of science, in all their richness and ambiguity, can be presented without any compromise, without any simplification counting as distortion, in language accessible to all intelligent people.”

From: *Wonderful Life: the Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. Norton, NY, 1989, page 16.
© 1989, Stephen Jay Gould.



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What we'll cover in this class

- Common writing problems.
- Writing in the active voice.
- Writing for the right audience.
- Organizing and planning.
- Choosing words: tone and style.
- Layout: highlighting what's important.
- Punctuation, proofing, and editing.



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