



**Write Words**

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# The Write Way to Reach our Members

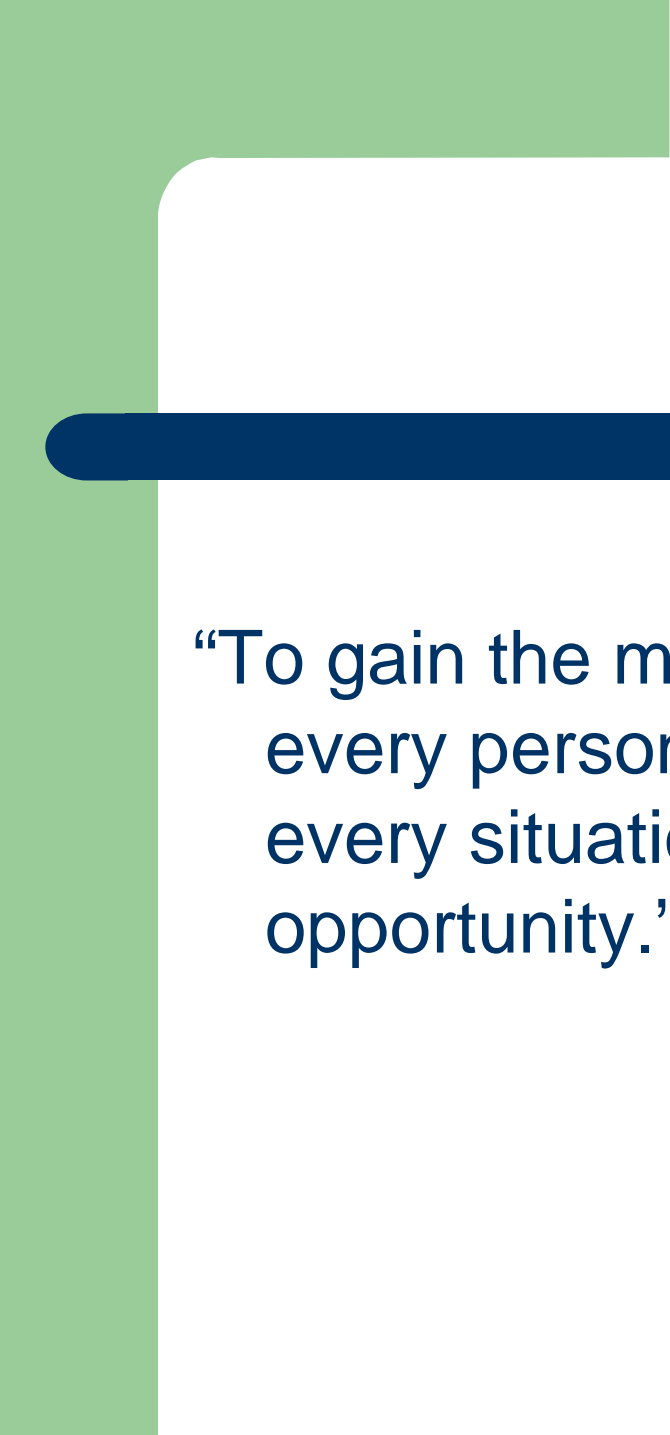
Teena M. Kennedy

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# Objectives You'll Meet:

- **To get a message across with less difficulty.**
- **To review basic principles of grammar.**
- **To punctuate properly.**
- **To gain the ability to write clear and concise.**
- **To understand Plain Talk.**

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a light green vertical bar and a dark blue horizontal bar with rounded ends.

“To gain the most from your life journey, treat every person you meet as a teacher and every situation you experience as a learning opportunity.”

--Eric Alenbaugh

# Taking a Hard Look at Grammar

**\*Give me one good reason to do so!**



# NO PARENT LEFT BEHIND

- *These are real notes written by parents in a school district. Spellings have been left intact.*

**1. My son is under a doctor's care and should not take PE today. Please execute him.**



**2. Please excuse lisa for being absent she was sick and i had her shot.**

- 
- 
- 3. Please excuse jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.**



# Where Did the English Language Come From?



**Anglo-Saxon Roots**



**Latin Grammar Rules**

# Fifty Percent of Our Business Words Come From:



Latin



French

# Good English Language References

- The Gregg Reference Manual
- Great book-- *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*

# Understanding Nouns

- Can you define the NOUN?



# Identify Parts of Speech

## Noun

Person, place, thing, or idea—has changed.

Person, place, thing, quality, concept, or activity.

- Tom, Olympia, computer, patience, communication, or reading.

# Understanding Capitalization



# When do I capitalize?

- Capitalize the first word in every sentence.
- An independent question within a sentence after **IS** or **WAS**.

Ex: The question is, Does the staff agree with your proposal?

- Each item displayed in a list or outline.
- Every proper noun.

# Don't Capitalize

- Titles when the personal name follows the title and is set off by commas.

EX: Last Monday, the president, Teena Kennedy, explained her plans for the new quarter.

- Organizational terms when described by a word other than THE.



# Don't Capitalize

- state by itself to mean Washington State.
- names of the seasons except in poetry.
- north, south, east, and west when they merely show direction or general location.
- names of decades and centuries.
- sun, moon, and earth unless used with other planets or stars.

# Seven Deadly Verbs

**is**

**are**

**was**

**were**

**be**

**been**

**being**



# Plain Talk

Ask: What is really happening?

To find: verb

Ask: Who or what is making it happen?

To find: subject

# Use Personal Pronouns

- We or our – avoid I, my.
- You or your.

Write in *Plain Talk* at 9<sup>th</sup> grade level.

# Rewrites

- Through this proposal program a number of urgent needs are addressed.

**11 WORDS**



**This program addresses three urgent needs.**

**6 WORDS**

# Rewrites

- It is hoped that such a center would bring together people with common needs and problems.

**16 WORDS**



Our center should bring together people with common needs and problems.

**11 WORDS**



# Rewrites

- *The proposal to develop a new program is based on this organization's experience over the past five years.*



***Based on our experience, our proposal will develop a new and workable program.***

# Punctuation Skills

How do you take the guesswork out of when, where, and how to punctuation?



# Consequences of Incorrect Punctuation

1. A woman, without her man, is nothing.

-OR-

2. A woman: without her, man is nothing.

*Eats, Shoots & Leaves (9)*

# Consequences of Incorrect Punctuation

1. King Charles the First walked and talked half an hour after his head was cut off.

**-OR-**

2. King Charles the First walked and talked. Half an hour after, his head was cut off.

# **Yes, punctuation does matter!**

**A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots in the air.**

**“Why?” asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder.**

**“I’m a panda,” he says, at the door. “Look it up.”**

**The waiter turns to the relevant entry, and sure enough, finds an explanation.**

**“Panda. Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.”**

**Should say:**  
**Eats shoots and leaves.**

*Eats Shoots & Leaves (jacket cover)*







# Writing Documents in Plain Talk . . .



## Sound Familiar?

- Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents.

# Sound Familiar?

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- Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.

## Sound Familiar?

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- Miners Refuse to Work after Death.
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges.
- How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

## **Plain Talk Defined:**

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**Plain Talk requires using plain language or writing that the typical customer can understand and act upon after a single reading.**

# First Guideline

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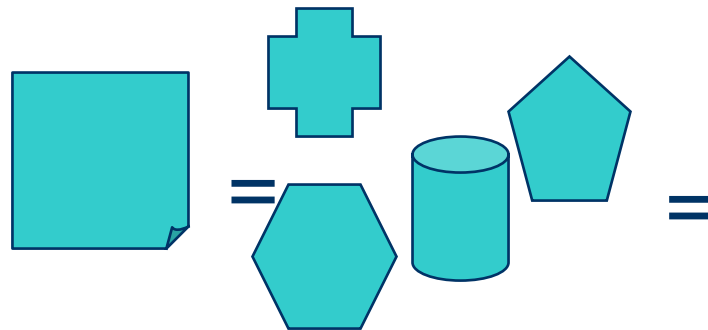
**Write your documents in a common language that meets customer needs.**

**ASK: Who are your customers?**

**“Doers”**

# Plain Talk's ugly truth:

**One size does not fit all!**



- Multiple documents
- One document many chapters
- One document many sections
- One document many headings
- Different reporting formats



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