The **Write** Stuff

## Writing for **instructional design**

Who is this for?

- Instructional Designers who want to improve their writing.

- Writers who want a refresher.

Instructional Designers = Writers

- Working with SMEs

- Identifying performance, skillset, and knowledge gaps

- Identifying training objectives

- Design training interventions to close gaps

- Design assessments to measure learning
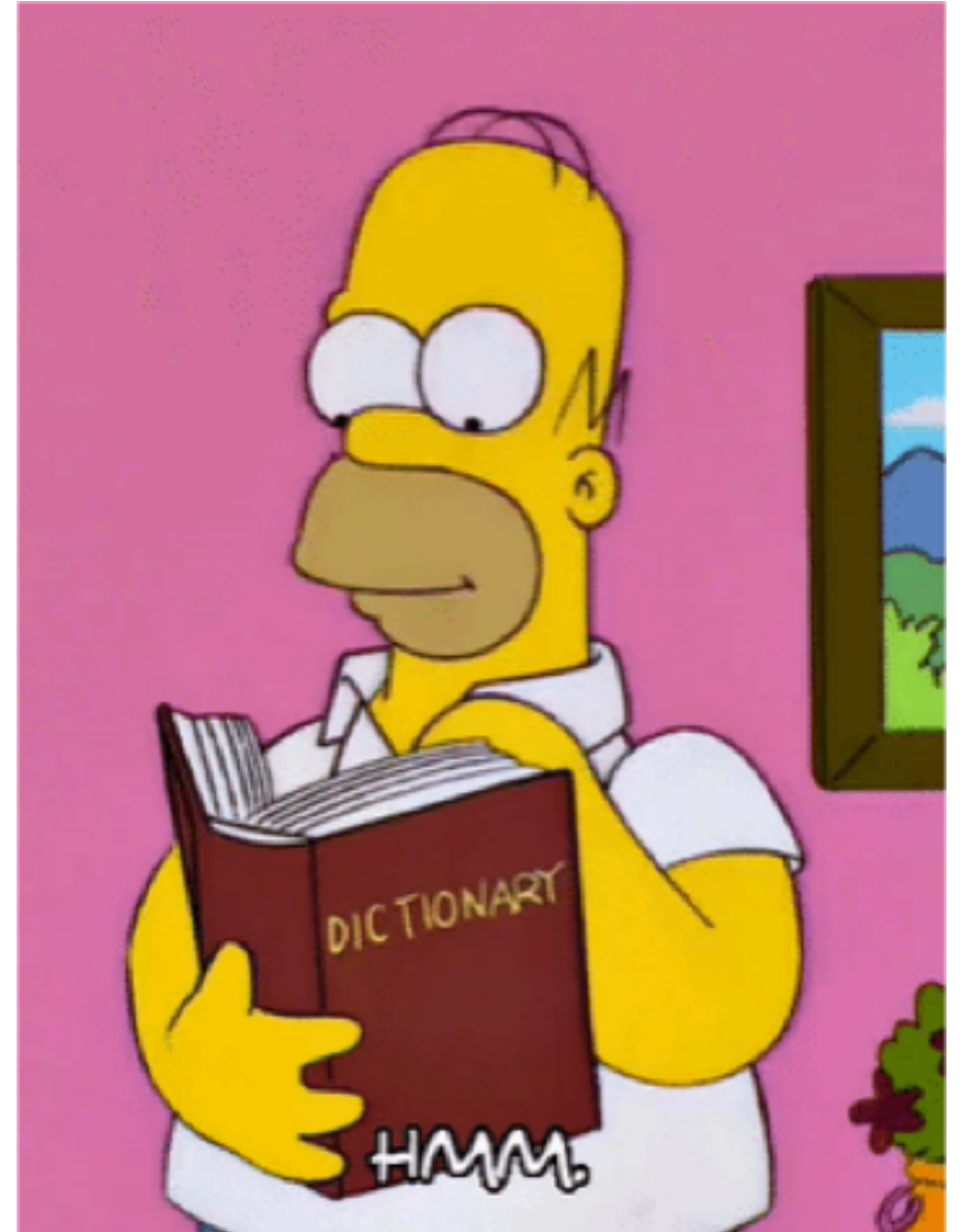
Why is writing important?

Scripts for audio. Storyboards. Proposals. Learning objectives. Learning content. Post-course evaluations. Analysis reports. Internal and external communications. Proposals. Scripts for video. Learning objectives. Emails. Visual directives. Development notes. Interactive descriptions. Memos. Training manuals. Outlines. Meeting minutes. Agendas. Record keeping. Project management directives.

D'oh!

The Plan

I. The Writing Process

II. 10 Nut & Bolts of Style

III. Tips for Technical Writing

IV. Tips for A/V Scripts

V. Style Guides

The Writing Process

1.Prepare

- Know your purpose and goal.

- Know the target audience: identify age, culture, education, and interests.

- Identify the scope: understand the objective and define project limits.

2. Research

- To explain a subject, you must understand it.

- Work with SMEs to the degree that you know enough to meet project goals.

- Immerse yourself in the subject language, with your audience always in mind.

3. Outline

- Outlines develop the logical structure and sequence of your project.

- Storyboards are a more detailed, team-friendly version.

- Consider and reconsider the best way to present information to your learners.

Learning Objectives

- It's not fluff; why good writing matters.
- Rely on rhetorical basics to enhance course development
- Tips of the writer's trade for creating effective learning content

Talk Outline

I. Why writers?

A.   As the e-learning industry grows, corporations are seeking out talented writers with a knack for creativity to help them provide engaging, well-written, and easy-to-understand content. There are even new instructional design team models in which IDs take on specialized roles, the ID Writer being one of them.

B.   *Instructional Design Writers may:*
1. Work with subject matter experts (SMEs) in the relevant discipline.
2. Identify goal performances
3. Identify performance, skill, and knowledge gaps between what is expected and what is
4. Identifying training objectives
5. Designing training interventions to close gaps, including instructional strategies, media approach, and training delivery method, and
6. Designing assessments to measure learning.

C.   *Types of Writing for Development*
1. Storytelling
2. Scenario writing
3. Screenwriting
4. Scripts for audio
5. Storyboards
6. Proposals
7. Learning objectives
8. Content

Title Scene 1/14 - *Navigating the Supermarket*

Audio	On-Screen Text	On-Screen Graphics	Graphic Notes & Navigation	Reviewer Comment
TITLE	NAVIGATING THE SUPERMARKET	Follow Baptist branding guide.		
Lucette Have you ever roamed a supermarket determined to bring home nutritious food only to come out with less than healthy choices? Supermarkets can be intimidating when you're trying to make healthier food choices. In this module, we'll learn some helpful strategies that will make your next trip to the grocery store less overwhelming.		Lucette on-screen talking. Backdrop of supermarket. See sample images: http://www.istockphoto.com/collaboration/boards/Hc2biJeDeka5k	Continuous to scene 2	

4. Draft

- Go with the flow at first, putting all of your ideas down within the outline.

- Aim for logic and connections between topics; old before new.

- Writing is an iterative process.

5. Proofread

- Spelling and grammar checkers are not enough. (Style guides!)

- Read line by line—focus on clarity, punctuation, and formatting.

- Read aloud and get other eyes.

Counselors

Comment [U1]: This should be counsel
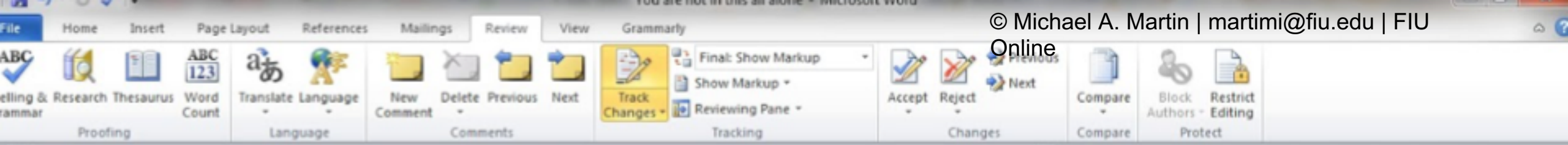
We have lawyers who provides services in a number of different settings as well as dealing with clients facing marital, relationship, mental, lifestyle or family problems. Counselors may work in schools, colleges, hospitals, private clinics and mental health facilities.

Deleted:

Deleted: counselo

We provide complete patient care using individual, group and family therapy concepts. Also, we manage the clinical care for the assigned patient caseload as an important aspect of our service. Other day-to-day duties include conducting client screenings, providing individual assessments, developing initial treatment plans, conducting individual and group level counseling sessions, providing care and discharge planning and maintaining necessary program documentation including various types of reports and associated paperwork. Our Counselors are skilled in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), psychotherapy, clinical psychology and behavioral psychology.

Marriage Counseling

Marriage counseling, also called couples therapy, is a type of psychotherapy. Marriage counseling helps couples of all types recognize and resolve conflicts and improve their relationships. Through marriage counseling, you can make thoughtful decisions about rebuilding your relationship or going your separate ways. Marriage counseling is offered to support people in relationships who may be considering

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Grammarly

provides → provide

a number of → some

Inflated phrase

The phrase *a number of* may be wordy. Consider changing the wording.

⌄ MORE   ✕ IGNORE

group,
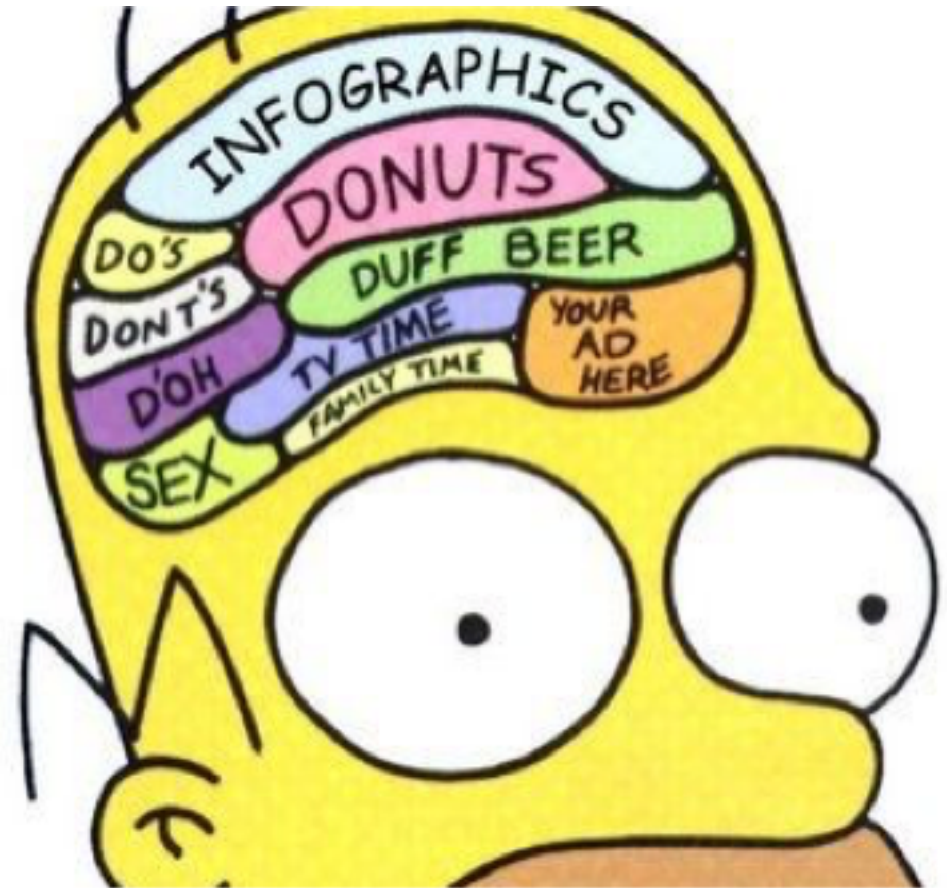
284 critical issues

Recap of Writing Process

1. Prepare

2. Research

3. Outline

4. Draft

5. Proofread

Can you repeat the part of the stuff where you said all about the things?

10 Nuts & Bolts of Style

1.Cut the clutter!

- Say as much as you can in the fewest words possible.

- Get rid of redundant verbiage.

2. Write to express, not impress.

- Keep the language simple so learners can focus on content.

- Avoid using a big word when a shorter, more familiar word will do.

3. Six lines per screen.

Try to keep

the text

to no more

than six

lines

per screen

4. Simple sentences.

Ex 1: A long, complex sentence—though quite possibly a remarkable feat of modern English prose—will risk confusing your learner and deterring them from crucial information they need to achieve the learning outcomes you devised for them.

Ex. 2. Keep it simple.

Bold   Italic   H1   H2   H3   Quote   Bullets   Numbers   Link

Write   Edit

Hemingway App makes your writing bold and clear.

The app highlights lengthy, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow sentence, shorten or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

You can utilize a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over them for hints.

Adverbs and weakening phrases are helpfully shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick words with force, perhaps.

Phrases in green have been marked to show passive voice.

You can **format** your *text* with the toolbar.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button and compose something new.

Hemingway *Editor*

Readability

Grade 6
Good

Words: **133**
Show More ▾

2 adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.

1 use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.

1 phrase has a simpler alternative.

1 of 11 sentences is hard to read.

1 of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

www.hemingwayapp.com

5. Stick to the point.

- No need for more detail than necessary.

6. Chunks!

- If you want your content user friendly, make it digestible.

- Break information down into smaller parts.
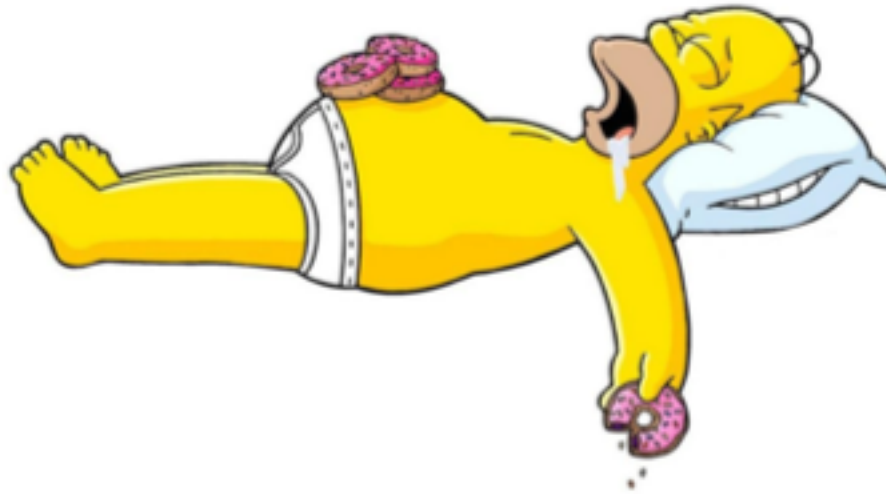
- Improves readability and recall.

7. Avoid jargon.

- If you must use jargon, define it!

- Be consistent with your terms.

8. Write in active voice.

Homer eats a donut. (active)

A donut is eaten by homer. (passive)

9. Use strong verbs.

- Avoid *scribbling* forms of "to be" i.e. "is," "are," and "were."

- Not as memorable as strong verbs.

Examples:

Weak and Wordy

"Homer is loud when his donuts are gone."

Strong and Specific

"Homer *bellows* when his donuts *disappear*"

Weak and Wordy

"The beer at Moe's Tavern is gross."

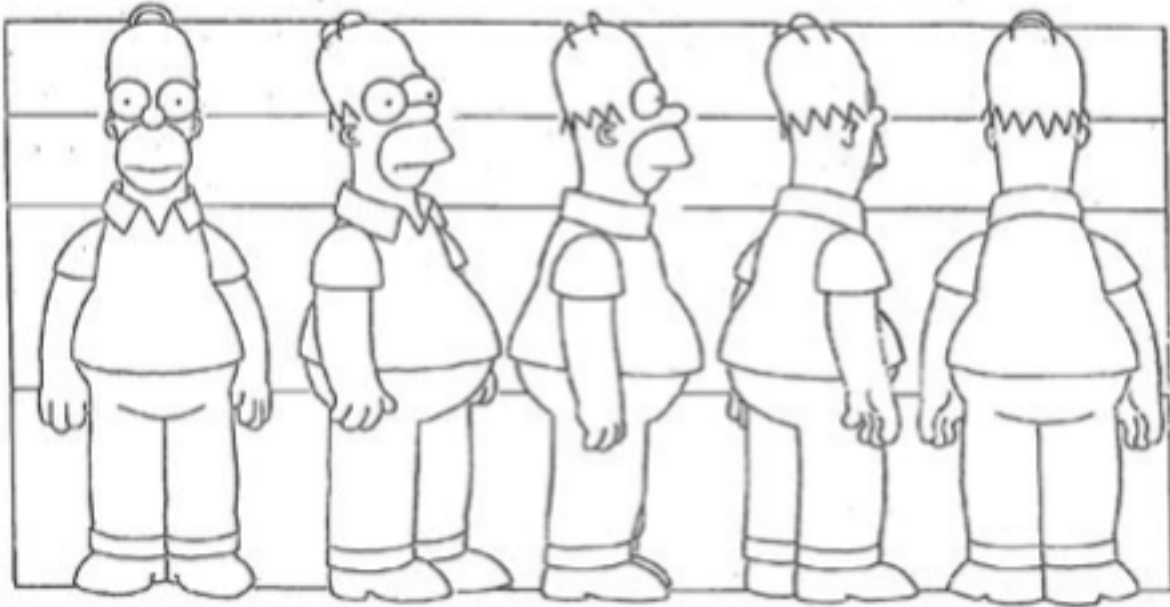**Strong and Specific (rearranged sentence)**

"Moe's Tavern *serves* gross beer."

10. Avoid ambiguous pronouns.

- Cut back on "he," "she," "it," "that," and "they."

- Keep pronouns specific!

Nut & Bolts of Style

Recap: 10 Nuts & Bolts of Style

1. Cut the clutter.

2. Write to express, not impress.

3. Six lines per screen.

4. Simple sentences.

5. Stick to the point.

6. Chunks.

7. Avoid jargon.

8. Active voice.

9. Use strong verbs.

10. Avoid ambiguous pronouns.

Tips for Technical Writing

What is technical writing, exactly?

- Technical writing is "procedural."

- Puts step-by-step directions into words.
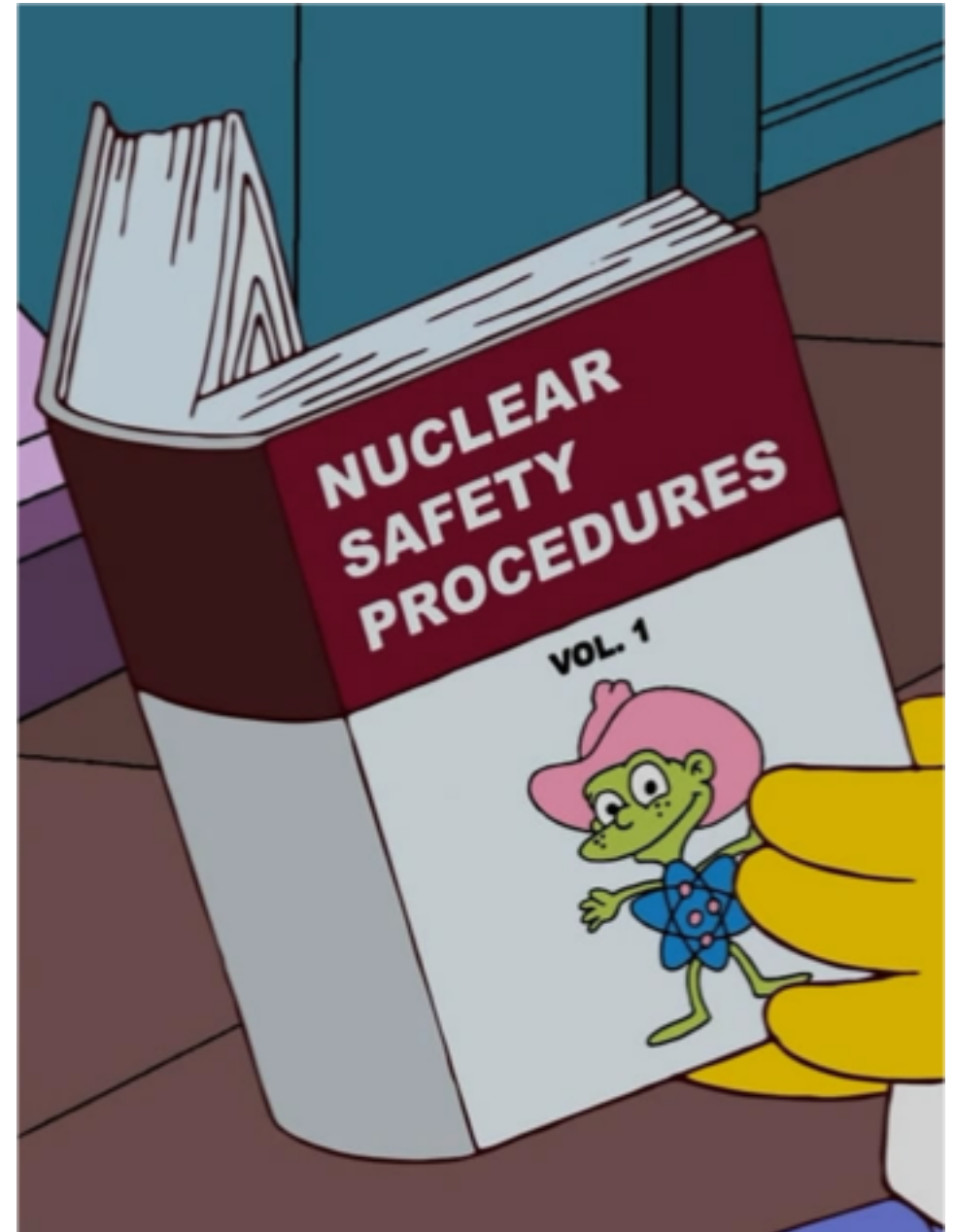
Understand the skill.

- Identify the specific knowledge and skills of your target audience.

- The results determine technical depth of the writing.

Subtopics.

- Organize content into multiple sections.

- Use a logical "scaffold" structure.

- Formatting matters!

Tips for Technical Writing

Present tense.

- Present tense clarifies ideas and brings immediacy.

  ○ Ex. "After you login to your account, a new page will display."

  ○ Present Ex: "After you login to your account, a new page displays."

Purpose reminders.

- Learners may get lost in technical details.

- Remind them of the final goal to keep them motivated.

- Ensure audience understands benefit of the instruction.

Tips for Technical Writing

Concision.

- Check that sentences are as succinct as possible.

- Avoid redundancies and digressions.

- Replace big words with simple alternatives.

Tips for Technical Writing

1. Understand the skill.

2. Suptopics.

3. Present tense.

4. Purpose reminders.

5. Concision.

Writing Scripts for Audio & Video

A/V Scripts for Instruction

- Writing for ear is quite different than writing for eyes.

- Unlike readers, listeners do not stop and replay something.

- It's vital to clarify ideas with short, simple sentences.

- Use conversational tone no matter the subject.

Scene 4/14 - *Nutritional Facts Panel*

Audio	On-Screen Text	On-Screen Graphics	Graphic Notes & Navigation	Reviewer Comment
Voice Over I have my list and I'm ready to shop. But what about nutrition labels with those long, confusing charts, numbers, and ingredients. Lucette, can you help us make sense of those?	How do we read nutritional facts labels?	Interactive nutrition label with information provided after clicks and activating audio.		
Lucette Nutrition labels are easy to read by following a few simple steps. Click on each marker to learn how to read each part of the Nutritional Facts Panel. 1. First, You should always check the serving size. It is typically found at the top of the panel directly under Nutrition Facts. The Nutrition Facts are based on the serving size indicated. It is important to keep in mind that a single food package may contain more than one serving! So, eating two	Nutritional Facts Panel. 1. Serving Size • Found at the top of the panel directly under Nutrition Facts Nutrition Facts are all based on the serving size indicated. • A single food package may contain more than one serving! 2. Calories • One-hundred calories is considered moderate, while more than 250 is considered high. • Keep in mind that calories alone do not			

A/V Script Writing

Scene 4

Voice Over

I have my list and I'm ready to shop. But what about nutrition labels with those long, confusing charts, numbers, and ingredients. Lucette, can you help us make sense of those?

Lucette

Nutrition labels are easy to read by following a few simple steps. Click on each marker to learn how to read each part of the Nutritional Facts Panel.

1. First, You should always check the **serving size.** It is typically found at the top of the panel directly under Nutrition Facts. The Nutrition Facts are based on the serving size indicated. It is important to keep in mind that a single food package may contain more than one serving! So, eating two servings from one food package doubles your intake of calories and both good and bad nutrients.

2. Next, check the **calories. When snacking,** a good rule of thumb is that one-hundred calories is considered moderate, while more than 250 is considered high. Keep in mind that calories alone do not determine if a product is healthy or not.

3. **Let's look at nutrients as the last step in analyzing the Nutrition Facts. Potassium, fiber, vitamin D, iron, and calcium** are nutrients you want to get more of. As reviewed in module one, you will want to limit **sodium, saturated fats, and added sugars.** A good rule of thumb is the 5/20 percent rule. For example, aim low for saturated fat and sodium, like 5 percent, and high at 20 percent for vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Another important part to look at is the **ingredients list:** Read it closely! The ingredients are listed in order of weight, with the first item being the highest. For example, if you buy whole grain bread, you want to make sure the first ingredient includes the word "Whole" before the grain. That not only means it truly is a whole grain, but that it is also the main ingredient.

Write like you speak.

- Speak in short sentences using everyday words and contractions.

- Avoid sounding too academic or stiff.

Brevity.

- Cognitive overload comes from cramming too much information in a short time frame.

- Get to the point quickly.

Repeat key points.

- "Experts say ninety three percent of our communication is nonverbal. You heard right-- ninety-nine percent!"

- Words that work for one learner may not work for another.

Connection.

- Use language that cultivates connection with the learner.

- Refer to learners directly, i.e "you,"we" and "us."

- Be on your learner's team.

Notate silence.

- Place an ellipses ("…") in your script or add a direction that says "wait one beat."

- Make sure audio is aligned with other factors in a multimedia course.

Sentence length.

- Mix short sentence with those that are a *little* longer to create a rhythm.

- Avoid stiffness of too many short sentence or the rambling confusion of long sentences.

- Balance and natural rhythm is key.

Read your script aloud.

- Best way to find awkward phrases, odd word combos, tough pronunciations, and breathless sentences.

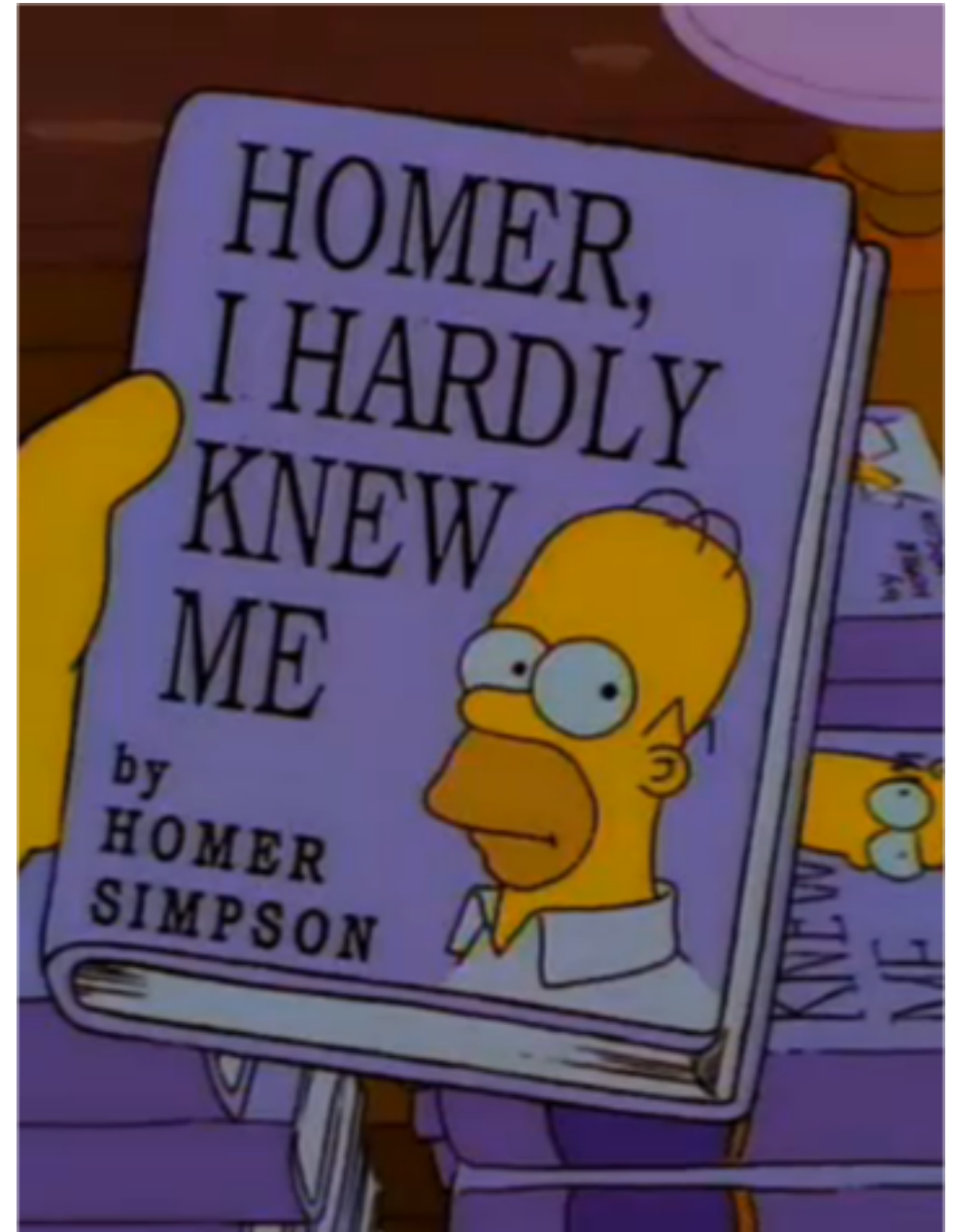- Revise sore spots and read aloud again. Trust your ear!

Recap of A/V Scripts

- Write like you speak.

- Brevity.

- Repeat key points.

- Connection.

- Notate silence.

- Sentence length

- Read your script aloud.

A note about stories.

- Humans are hardwired to learn from stories.

- Include learners in a story built into modules.

- It's a creative and effective way to gain audience buy-in.

Style guides.

Barr, C. (ed.) **The Yahoo! Style Guide: Writing for an Online Audience**. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2011.

Carroll, B. **Writing for Digital Media**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

The Chicago Manual of Style. The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Style guides cont'd.

Froke, Paula, et al. **The Associated Press Stylebook 2017** and briefing on media law. The Associated Press, 2017.

Strunk, William. **Elements of Style**. Ithaca, N.Y.: Priv. print. [Geneva, N.Y.: Press of W. F. Humphrey], 1918; Bartleby.com, 1999.

Purdue Online Writing Lab
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

Thank you.