

# Writing Workshop #3

# Coherent and Effective Writing

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION :: KANSAS TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE CORPORATION :: NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION**

The University of Kansas | The Ohio State University | Pennsylvania State University  
The University of Maine | Elizabeth City State University | Haskell Indian Nations University

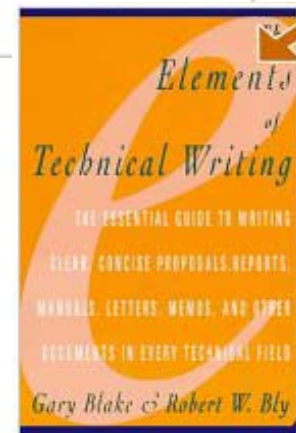
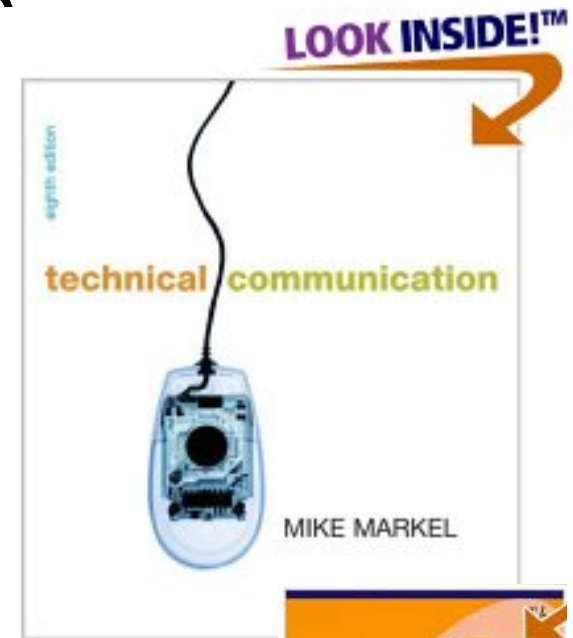
Centre for Polar Observation and Modelling | University of Copenhagen  
Technical University of Denmark | Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems CRC



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# Where We Are

1. Research and Planning (June 6)
2. Outlining and Organizing (June 13)
3. Coherent and Effective Writing (June 22)
4. Using Sources Properly (June 27)
5. Presenting Data; Writing Abstracts (July 5)
6. Presentations (July 11)
7. Presentation Feedback; Wrap-Up (July 18)



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# Effective Writing

How do you decide whether something you're reading is poorly or well written?



## "Politics and the English Language" - 1946

- Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.



*George Orwell*

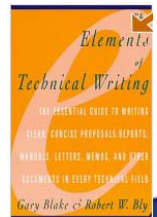


# Active vs. Passive Voice

"It was midday. The bus was being got into by passengers. They were being squashed together. A hat was being worn on the head of a young gentleman....A long neck was one of the characteristics of the young gentleman. The man standing next to him was being grumbled at by the latter because of the jostling that was being inflicted on him by him. As soon as a vacant seat was espied by the young gentleman, it was made the object of his precipitate movements and it became sat down upon." (From *Text Book: An Introduction to Literary Language*, eds. Robert Scholes, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L. Ulmer. New York: St. Martin's Press (1988) 138-142.)

- Rule 40: Use the Active Voice
  - Markel, pp. 236-237
  - Blake & Bly, pp. 63-64
  - [Passive Voice Handout](#)
  - [The "Choking Dog" Exercise](#)

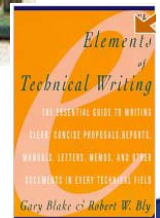
- Active vs. passive voice.
- Appropriate uses of passive voice.
- Using passive voice in scientific writing.



# Plain Language

- Rule 41: Use plain rather than elegant or complex language.
  - Markel, pp. 238, 241
  - Blake & Bly, pp. 64-65
  - ["Nuts and Bolts" Writing](#)

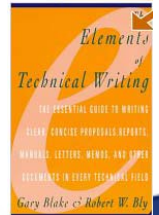
Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity...



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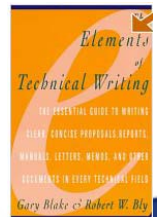
# Other Rules

- Rule 42: Delete words, sentences, and phrases that do not add to your meaning.
- Rule 43: Use specific and concrete terms rather than vague generalities.
- Rule 44: Use terms your reader can picture.
- Rule 45: Use the past tense to describe your experimental work and results.
- Rule 46: In most other writing, use the present tense.
- Rule 47: Make the technical depth of your writing [or presentation] compatible with the background of your reader.
- Rule 48: Break up your writing into short sections.



# Parallel Sentence Structure

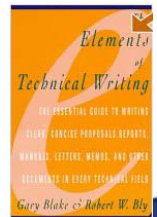
- Rule 49: Keep ideas and sentence structure parallel.
  - Markel, p. 232
  - Blake & Bly, pp. 71-72
  - [Practical Exercise #1](#)
  - [Practical Exercise #2](#)





# Formal vs. Informal Style

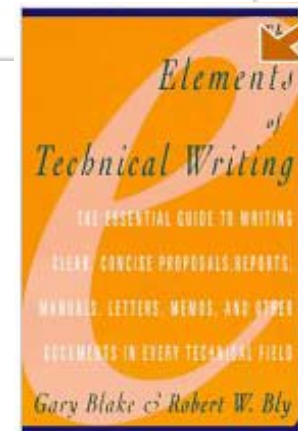
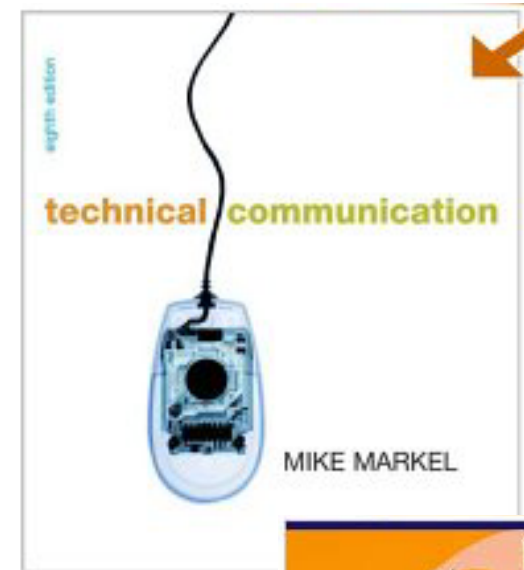
- Rule 50: Opt for an informal rather than a formal style.
  - Markel, p. 235
  - Blake & Bly, pp. 72-74
  - [Purdue Handout](#)



# Assignment

From your returned outline...

- Develop your refined/final thesis statement.
- Develop initial body paragraphs.
  - Outline into main ideas
  - Main ideas = body paragraphs
    - Supporting points
    - Elaboration



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*When we meet again...*



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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN



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