

rhētorica[®]

**A toolkit of 21 everyday
writing techniques**

Scott Keyser

RETHINK PRESS

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For Annie, Oliver, Seth and Alice

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Thank you all.

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rhethorica® Technique #3:

Nail Your Message

In December 2014 I ran a short survey on writing skills. 92% of the respondents said the aspects of their writing they'd most like to improve were 'clarity and impact' and 'expressing complex, technical ideas simply'.

There's a sequence here.

Simple language aids clarity, and a clear message – if it's relevant to the reader – delivers impact.

But why is clarity elusive?

For me, it starts right here, with planning. Clarity starts in the head, not on the page. Amateur writers jump straight in to drafting and rely on that process to clarify their ideas. While I recognise that drafting can *sometimes* help to refine an idea, avoiding planning altogether is not clever, because that's where we get clear on our main message. Clear writing reflects clear thinking.

However technical or complex your document, you need to be able to 'nail' your main message(s). For several years I've trained

general field engineers in writing skills. This has included showing these highly qualified oil & gas technicians how to craft one-page abstracts for technical papers. Despite not understanding most of the content, however, I can spot from a hundred paces when the author has nailed the problem that the project will address and/or the project’s objective... and when they haven’t. Here are some examples of clear messages:

Problem/Opportunity	Objective
Staff attrition (43%) is higher than the industry average	To cut staff attrition by 14% within 18 months
We’ve developed the first generation of driverless cars, but surveys show that 65% of people polled don’t trust them	To convince the general public that driverless cars are safer and more reliable than human-driven cars
Oil production in the XYZ field has fallen by 20% in the last three years	To find the root cause for plummeting production in the XYZ field over the last three years
Teenage pregnancies in Townsville have risen by 35% in the last three years	To cut teenage pregnancies in Townsville by 50% by the end of the year

My experience with technical writing (e.g. law, engineering, audit/accountancy, architecture, IT consulting) is that the main messages get lost or buried in the undergrowth. Good writers unearth the message, scrape the mud off and buff it to a gleam

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so that the reader gets it in one go. I call this ‘nailing your message’ with a single, summary or ‘topic’ sentence that opens your communication. Subsequent paragraphs should then prove, describe, support or expand on that topic sentence. It might look like this:

The objective of this project is to cut teenage pregnancies in Townsville by 50% within three years.

We will achieve this by:

- *taking a road show into local schools to talk about safe sex and the impact on life chances of falling pregnant while in school*
- *making condoms freely available in every school and college*
- *setting up an online forum for teenage mothers to share with their peers their experience of having a child*
- *offering a signposting service to sources of help, advice and support*

Outlining your main message in a single, opening sentence makes it stand out and draws the reader’s eye to it. More importantly, it gives them a mental framework to understand the ensuing detail.

THE CLARITY BELL

You may find this odd, but clarity gets me emotional.

When I’m planning a piece of communication, I grapple with it. While the process I follow (i.e. the one I’m writing about in this section) is structured, my mental activity is messy and chaotic. I’m sparking with different ideas, exploring different avenues and options, hypothesising different scenarios. My mind is agitated. The research is often tedious, progress uncertain; sometimes all I have to show for a planning session is some

doodles and notes. But eventually a pattern of understanding emerges and I begin to see a path through the forest.

Maybe that's reflecting what is happening in my brain at that moment: the neurons have settled on a synaptic pathway, excluding all others. My mental agitation subsides and I get an overwhelming feeling of calm and peace. And that's when the emotion hits me. Relief, joy, excitement, anticipation – I'm not sure which it is, but my body tells me when clarity is present.

In NLP (NeuroLinguistic Programming) terms, I'm quite a kinaesthetic (emotions, feelings, touch) person, but your dominant sense may be sight, hearing, smell or taste. What does *your* clarity look, sound, smell, taste or feel like when it hits *you*?

Planning any activity can be challenging. It can feel like you're spinning your wheels. So the risk of getting frustrated and jumping to drafting is huge. But you need to resist that urge. Give your mind the time it needs to triage the information that will clarify your message. That's why ring-fencing dedicated planning time – ideally over several days to allow the unconscious mind to work on it while you're asleep – is vital (see Technique #2).

HOW DO WE MAKE THE CLARITY BELL RING FOR YOU?

Planning is an abstract activity. It involves gathering and analysing data, thinking hard, exploring options, talking to people, using our imagination. In neural terms, it's a high-order function, which demands more mental processing power than something more visible, like drafting or editing. So the more we can engage the body in planning and make it more physical (and more *fun*), the likelier we are to do it. Here are two tips: verbalisation and Mind Maps®.

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VERBALISE: SAY YOUR THOUGHTS OUT LOUD

Research conducted in 2014¹ at two German universities into the neural activity of creative writers when brainstorming threw up an interesting finding (the italics are mine):

‘... expert brains showed increased activation... in several regions associated with speech production. Taking these findings together, they paint a picture of expert creative writers: ideas bubble up within them, already on the road from concept to expression, readily communicable, *almost rising into their throats.*’

I’d go one step further and suggest that we can help the writing process by expressing (literally ‘pushing out’) what’s in our throats. We can make the leap from idea to expression by verbalising our thoughts. It’s as if we’re speaking them into existence.

I regularly ask myself, *aloud*, ‘What am I trying to say here? What’s my main message?’ Then I answer it out loud. (I talk to myself a lot when I’m planning. I know: I need to get out more.)

But this works because it turns my abstract thoughts into audible words that either ring the Clarity Bell or they don’t. It’s binary. Try it for yourself and let me know how you get on. At the end of the day, you must find what works for you.

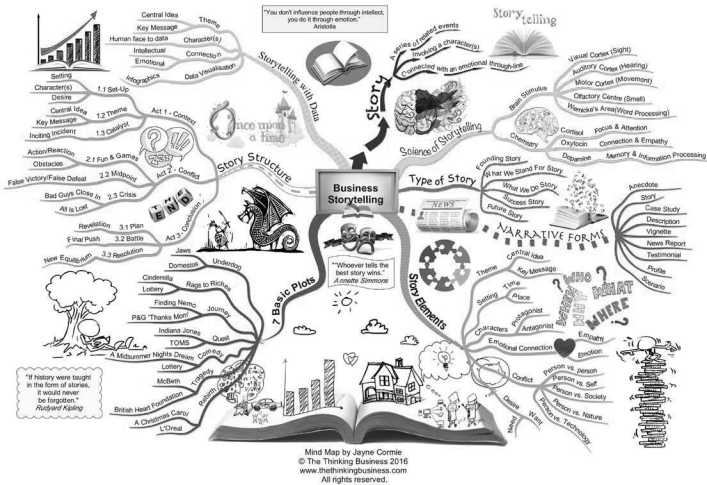
MIND MAP® YOUR WAY TO CLARITY

I’m a self-confessed mind mapper.

Developed in the 1970s by Tony Buzan, Mind Maps® are a powerful, ‘whole brain’ technique that allows you to capture a lot of

1 Erhard, K, Kessler, F, Neumann, N, Ortheil, H, & Lotze, M (2014). Professional training in creative writing is associated with enhanced fronto-striatal activity in a literary text continuation task. *NeuroImage*, 100, 15–23 DOI

information on one page using pictures, colours, words, shapes, symbols, lists and numbers.

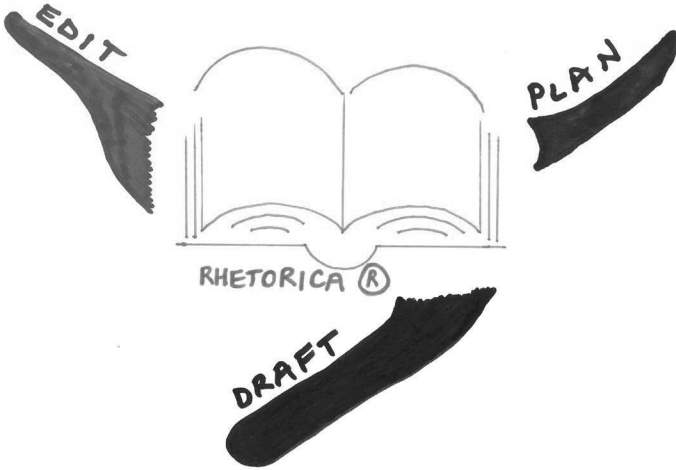


Published with the kind permission of Jayne Cormie, of The Thinking Business

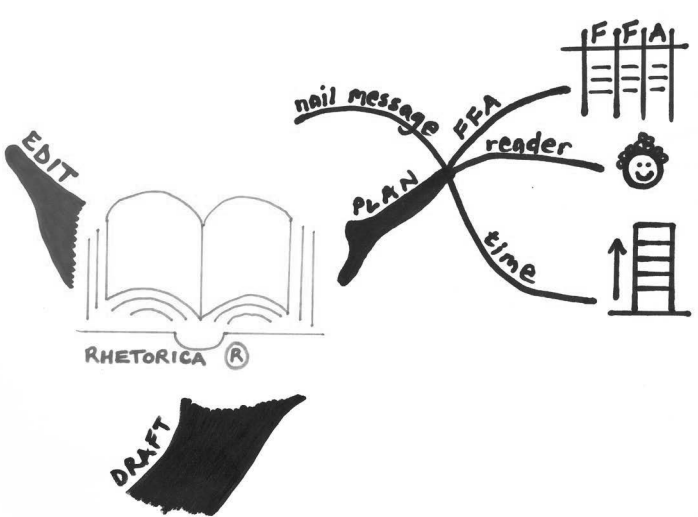
To plan any major document or communication, I get out my magic markers and a large piece of white paper or card and settle myself down on the sofa in my office. I start playing with ideas, using the naturally associative tendency of the brain to trigger more ideas.

In the centre of the paper I create a picture of the topic and start drawing lines radiating out from the centre like the branches of a tree, with each branch a different colour. These thick, central branches represent high-level ideas. So if I was mind mapping this book, there might only be three central branches: one for each of planning, drafting and editing, like this:

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Let's say I got on a roll, brainstorming the subject of planning. I might come up with lower-level ideas that would sit on the 'Plan' branch, adding them as thinner branches to show the hierarchy, like this:



As you can see, it's rudimentary and I'm not the world's best draughtsman, but that doesn't matter. I'm capturing ideas with words and pictures as they come to me. The beauty of Mind Maps® is that you don't have to stay on one branch at a time: you can jump about from one topic or sub-topic to another, following your thoughts. By mirroring the brain's associative thinking process, it frees up your natural creativity. And it captures the output of brainstorming on any subject.

Externalising on one page what you know about a subject and grouping it meaningfully gives you a map of that subject — but a map that includes mountain ranges *and* the contours of individual hills. It gives you the fine grain *and* the broad sweep. That combination of big picture and detail makes it much easier to see the whole territory and pick the messages that will most resonate with your reader. In fact, more often than not, when I mindmap a piece of communication, the main message naturally falls out of the exercise. The Mind Map® makes it explicit and obvious.

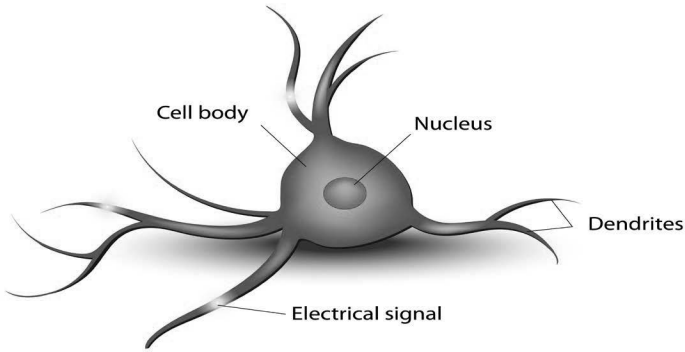
WHY ARE MIND MAPS® SO POWERFUL?

Because they mimic the human brain.

We don't think in straight lines or sequences like a computer, but in an organic, multi-dimensional, radiant way where one idea or stimulus sparks a number of associations, which in turn trigger more ideas and connections, and so on.

This radiant structure reflects many structures in nature – from our own bodies (e.g. our hands and limbs) and central nervous systems to the branches of a tree or the petals of a flower. It's no coincidence that a brain cell ('neuron') resembles a Mind Map®:

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Mind Maps® appear to reflect, reinforce and encourage our natural thinking patterns.

PIXEL OR HAND?

Excellent mind mapping programs exist that make mind mapping easier and quicker than doing it manually. But the Mind Map® purists would probably put a contract out on me for saying this. And they might have a point.

Mind Maps® work best when they're a personal representation of your thoughts and ideas; that's what makes them unique. The best way of representing the inner workings of your mind is to use your own fair hand, not some pre-designed, prescriptive computer graphical user interface.

And that claim is backed up by the science behind the brain/hand link.

Neuroscience has proven that more neurons (brain cells) are connected to our hands than any other part of the body. So creating Mind Maps® manually engages more of the brain than being tethered to a computer screen. Childish pictures on our

Mind Map[®] (see above!) may be a small price to pay for greater mental engagement.

HOW DO MIND MAPS[®] HELP US? A SUMMARY

- They keep us engaged in the planning process, because they're fun to create
- They're memorable, because they're unique and personal to us
- They capture a lot of information on one page, giving us an overview of the entire document or subject
- They allow us to see connections between disparate elements of the topic that we might not see in traditional linear notes
- They can help structure a document
- By using words, images, shapes, symbols, colours, codes, dimensions, associations, lists and numbers, they engage and stimulate our whole brain
- They help clarify, develop and refine our message

'PAGE FRIGHT' BE GONE!

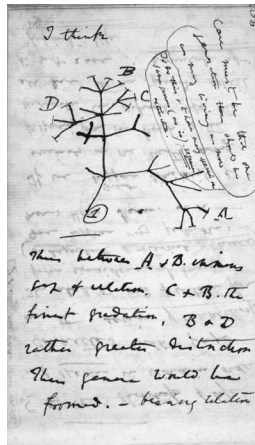
Mind Maps[®] offer another vital benefit, too. If you suffer from writer's block or 'page fright' — where the blank page or screen sends you running for the hills — then think about using a mindmapping program to create your document.

Not only can you plan and structure your document as described above, but you can also use it to draft your text. In any mind mapping software, simply type your text into the Notes section of each topic or branch. As the Mind Map[®] is radiant and not

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linear, it doesn't matter where you start; you can start drafting anywhere. That freedom will liberate you from the mindset that says you must draft sequentially.

Finally, geniuses like Charles Darwin and Leonardo da Vinci instinctively used proto-Mind Maps[®]. Here's Darwin's sketch of the tree of evolution in his 1837 notebook, which appears to follow the natural architecture of a Mind Map[®]:



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you're not already a Mind Map[®] convert, check it out. Look at Tony and Barry Buzan's excellent *The Mind Map Book* (BBC, 2010), or the website <http://imindmap.com>. Then buy a Mind Map[®] program or get a large sheet of white paper or card and some coloured crayons, pens or markers, and have a go. Revert to childhood for a while.

Find what works for you. Having banged on about Mind Maps[®] for the last few pages, I recognise they're not for everyone. An alternative is to use Post-it notes: simply write ideas as they come to you — one idea per note — and stick them on a

wall or large piece of paper. Then play around with them and re-arrange them in a way that makes sense to you. Whatever method you use, your goal is to get clear about your topic, sub-topics and the connections between them.

The bottom line: in my humble opinion, planning is the most creative — and the most cerebral — part of the writing process. So the more fun and engaging you can make it, the likelier you are to do it. Map out your thoughts and ideas to clarify your understanding of the topic and your message to the reader... till your Clarity Bell rings.

rhetorica® Technique #16:

Dramatise Your Writing

There are points in our writing when we need to add some drama and spike the reader's attention. Here are five devices you can use:

DRAMA DEVICE #1 — CUTTING A DASH

The em-dash is a simple punctuation mark that can add spice to your writing. Use it for your punchline or to add a twist of lime at the end of your sentence:

*High-achievers don't watch TV
— they're too busy achieving.*

*The young boy recognised the old man
— it was his father.*

*Bi-sexuality is great — it doubles your chances
of a date on Saturday night.*

My advice on how to use the em-dash? Sparingly. If you insert it into every other sentence, you'll irritate the hell out of your reader.

And don't confuse the em-dash (—) with the en-dash (-), which, as you can see, is shorter. We use the en-dash to convey a range of values, e.g.

0900–1700, 2m–7m, 13–17 November etc

Worst of all, don't use a hyphen (-) instead of a dash. We use dashes to connect or separate *phrases* and *sentences*, as above; we use hyphens to connect or separate *words*, e.g. semi-circular, half-hearted, anti-Apartheid. They do different jobs.

DRAMA DEVICE #2 — STARTING SENTENCES WITH AND AND BUT

You can.

Despite what your primary school teacher drummed into you, it's grammatically OK.

You were probably told: 'Never begin sentences with a conjunction (a joining word) like *And* or *But*.' But sometimes they're the perfect way to switch from one topic to another. And you can do that efficiently by using a single word.

Separating the two clauses that *And* or *But* would normally join together calls attention to the new sentence created and spikes the reader's interest.

Here's what Webster's *Dictionary of English Usage* has to say about *But*:

Part of the folklore of usage is the belief that there is something wrong in beginning a sentence with But: many of us were taught that no sentence should begin with 'But'. If that's what you learned, unlearn it — there is no stronger word at the start. It announces

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total contrast with what has gone before, and the reader is primed for the change.

I like that idea: a simple word priming the reader's brain for a change in tone, content or concept. Here's another example:

The law has changed. The RSPCA [Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] can now undertake the biggest animal rescue ever. But we need your help.

It's a pattern-breaker, a change of direction, sudden and abrupt, that wakes the reader up. Pick up any issue of *The Economist* and I guarantee you will find more than one sentence beginning with *And* or *But* in the leader article alone. If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me.

However — and it's a big *however* — if there's a good chance of your reader having a stroke when they see a sentence beginning with a conjunction, then don't do it. You always have a choice. Just know in your very being that it's grammatically acceptable to do so.

DRAMA DEVICE #3 — USING POWER WORDS

I touched on this in Technique #11, Write Plain English, but it's worth repeating.

'Power' words are everyday, conversational, mid-register words that have greater emotional impact than their more formal counterparts. This is because, like all plain English words, they're concrete and visual; we can see them in our mind's eye. For example, we could say:

*Public sector budgets have been heavily **reduced** this year.*

But if we wanted more of a reaction, we could say:

*Public sector budgets have been **slashed** this year.*

Slash is more visual, more violent, more shocking (and we lose the adverb *heavily*, too).

Another example:

*Profits have **fallen significantly** this quarter.*

But this is more powerful:

*Profits have **plummeted** this quarter.*

And we lose the word *significantly*, so we gain brevity.

Or we could say:

*Profits have been **dented/knocked/bashed** this quarter.*

We can all picture something being dented, knocked or bashed; the sentence doesn't force us to process an intellectual abstraction.

Or:

*Accessing the internet on my new phone **uses lots of** battery.*

But I prefer:

*Accessing the internet on my new phone **hammers** the battery.*

Again, we all know what a hammer looks like, so we can picture a battery being smashed with one; our brain conjures up that image quickly and easily.

The closer to the middle of the register you go, the less formal your language and the closer you get to real-life language that

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readers can relate to. Not only is plain English simple and clear, it's also more visually evocative and therefore more powerful.

DRAMA DEVICE #4 — PLACING YOUR POWER WORDS

Once you've decided which power word to use, you need to know where to put it.

Where's the hotspot of any sentence? Where will your power word most affect the reader?

Imagine that the line below represents a sentence: it doesn't matter how long it is or what it's about. We know that most sentences begin with a capital letter and most end with a full-stop. With a big, fat, bold X, mark where on this line you would place your power word:

A _____

Based on the theory of *recency* — that the last thing the reader sees will most affect them — the hotspot of any sentence is the very last word:

A _____ **X**

If you wanted to stress the word *free*, for example, you might say:

*For the next seven days we're offering this service **free**.*

If you wanted to stress the word *die* (a terminal word if ever there was one), you might say:

*If you don't sell now, the business may **die**.*

If you wanted to stress the word *now*, you might say:

The time to act is now.

THIS WORKS FOR SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS, TOO

The idea of holding our chilli peppers back to the end applies equally to the sentences of a paragraph and to the paragraphs of a document section.

But if you can't or don't want to place your power word at the end, where's the next best place? The beginning! Based on the theory of *primacy*, the very first word or group of words that the reader reads will stand out:

A ✕ _____

To reverse the above examples, we could say:

Now is the time to act.

Unfortunately, if you try it for the other two examples, you end up sounding like Yoda from *Star Wars*:

Free will be our service to you.

Die the business will if sell you don't now.

So it doesn't always work. But it's better than burying your key word in the middle of the sentence, where it will get lost. (See, I've just done it there: I ended with *lost* to emphasise it.)

As with the em-dash, please don't try and shoe-horn your power words into the end or the beginning of every sentence, otherwise your writing will sound contrived and unnatural. Choose where and when you most need to deliver that killer blow to the reader. Wield The Force responsibly.

DRAMA DEVICE #5 — THE POWER OF THREE

Lists of three have been used in the earliest human communications, as they relate to how we process information. We recognise and respond to patterns, and three is the smallest number of elements needed to create a pattern. Known as a *tricolon*, this rhetorical device combines pattern and brevity to create impact:

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
(1966 spaghetti western with Clint Eastwood)

‘Veni, vidi, vici’ — ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’
(Julius Caesar after invading Britain in 1st century BC)

Blood, sweat and tears
(misquoted from Winston Churchill, who actually said
‘I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat’)

One of the greatest orators and champions of rhetoric is Barack Obama, who often uses tricola. This is from his election night speech in November 2008 in a drizzly Chicago:

*‘Hello Chicago. If there is anyone out there who still doubts that **America is a place where all things are possible**, who still wonders if **the dreams of our founders are alive in our time**, who still questions **the power of our democracy**, tonight is your answer.’*

Note, too, Obama’s use of *anaphora*: repetition of words or a phrase (‘who still...’) at the start of a clause or sentence.

Further back in time, Elizabeth I’s speech to her troops at Tilbury in 1588, as they prepared to face the Spanish Armada, uses two tricola in one sentence:

‘Not doubting by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and by your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over the enemies of God, of my kingdom, and of my people.’

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Read a recent document out loud. Are you instinctively using any of these dramatic devices? If so, great. Now you’re aware of them, you can consciously choose which is the best to use where. And if you need inspiration, just read *The Economist* to see how they use the em-dash, how many sentences they launch with *And* and *But*, the number of power words they use, where they place them and the number of tricola. Study the best writers and your own writing will improve.

The bottom line: these five drama devices may sound like parlour tricks, but they work. If you did a functional MRI scan of your reader’s brain as they were reading your copy, you’d want to see it ‘lighting up’, wouldn’t you? That would mean vital parts of the brain were being engaged, with synapses firing like New Year celebrations. Using these devices will ignite your reader’s synapses and keep them reading.

SECTION III:

Editing

Write in white heat; edit in cold blood.

Dr Edna Manlapaz, Creative Writing Professor,
Ateneo de Manila University

rhetorica® Technique #18:

Read Your Writing Out Loud (ROL)

This probably sounds like a very simple technique... and you know what? It is.

I can safely say there are few simpler but more effective writing techniques than this one. Strictly speaking it's an editing/checking technique, but it will improve your drafting, too.

WHY IS ROL SO EFFECTIVE?

ROL slows you down and allows you to judge your tone of voice. After all, we don't read tone of voice, we *hear* it. This auditory aspect of writing is what makes ROL so important, and so effective.

Besides tone of voice, ROL also catches the clumsy phrase or the sentence that runs on and on and on (you'll know, when you start getting breathless).

When we read text to ourselves (aka 'sub-vocalising' or reading under our breath) or scan it, our brains tend to go on auto-pilot and insert what we want to be there or think is there, but which

actually isn't. ROL stops that self-deception in its tracks. It's such a simple technique, so there's no excuse for not doing it. (If you work in an open-plan office and worry about disturbing your colleagues – or making *them* worry about your sanity – then find an empty meeting-room, go for a walk in the park or find a quiet corner in your local coffee shop.)

And if you're responding to a bid or tender, doing a written test or completing an application with long, rambling questions, ROL each question to ensure you understand what it's driving at. That way, you won't mis-read or mis-interpret what you're being asked for.

Listening aloud to what we've written allows us to tune into the words and their likely effect on the reader. It helps us to get on the reader's wavelength.

HOW DO WE USE ROL WHEN TONE OF VOICE REALLY MATTERS?

ROL comes into its own when we have a difficult or delicate message to deliver and we need to get the clarity and tone of voice spot-on. Here's an example.

Imagine that a junior member of your team, John, has been under-performing on an important project. Following his annual appraisal with you, you have to send him an email that delivers the objectives expressed below in F.F.A. (Facts, Feelings, Actions):

What I want John to know...	What I want John to feel...	What I want John to do...
He has under-performed on project XYZ	Remorseful Scared (of the consequences)	Create an action plan to raise his game
The client has complained about him	Motivated (to change)	
This email is a formal warning, based on his recent performance appraisal	Supported	
He has my support to change/improve his performance		

Here are three different versions of the email, all of which I've read out loud to strike the tone of voice I wanted:

VERSION 1 — FORMAL

Your performance appraisal: formal warning

Scott Keyser scott@scottkeyser.com

Sent: Sun 06/05/2014 09:38

To: john@ROL.com

John, further to your annual appraisal on the 3rd May and the client's complaint about you, this is a formal warning under the terms of your contract that your performance on Project XYZ has not attained the standards of service, responsiveness and time-keeping expected of this firm's Associates.

Please develop a structured action plan by mid-day this Friday 17th May to address these issues, which I will review. You need to be aware that if your performance does not improve markedly in the next three months, we will be forced to take disciplinary action against you, which could include terminating your contract.

Scott

You'd probably agree that this version is über-formal and cold, aloof, impersonal and not very motivating for John. I don't know about you, but if I got an email like this I'd probably jump before I was pushed! While it delivers the objective of giving John a formal warning, it probably fails to make him feel supported or to motivate him to change.

VERSION 2 — INFORMAL

Our recent meeting

Scott Keyser scott@scottkeyser.com

Sent: 06/05/2014 09:38

To: john@ROL.com

Hi John, thanks for the meeting with me last week to chat through your annual appraisal.

As I mentioned, I have to give you a formal warning over your recent performance on Project XYZ (it's an HR requirement), especially after the client complained. Consider yourself warned! But I have every confidence you will turn things around.

On that note, my door is always open to you and your colleagues, so feel free to pop in and discuss how to improve your performance. I know you can do it!

Cheers, Scott

This one's chummy, like I'm trying to be John's best mate rather than his boss. The jaunty, breezy style is weak and lacks authority. Ironically it could be as de-motivating for John as Version 1: he may feel little or no compulsion to change his behaviour.

VERSION 3 — NORMAL

Your performance appraisal

Scott Keyser scott@scottkeyser.com

Sent: Sun 06/05/2014 09:38

To: john@ROL.com

Dear John, following your annual appraisal last week, this is a formal warning under the terms of your contract that your performance on Project XYZ has not reached the standards we expect of an Associate. The client's recent complaint about you made this warning inevitable. This is frustrating for me, as I know you are capable of so much more — as you showed on the ABC project. But the motivation and desire to fulfil that potential must come from you.

As I said when we met, I am ready to give you the help and support you need. With that in mind, please draft by early next week an action plan for improving your performance over the next three months, for us to review and finalise together. We can then see how you do against that plan.

The firm is giving you a chance to show me and your team-mates that you can raise your game. Please don't throw it away.

Scott

In this version, I've tried to strike a balance between being firm/authoritative on the one hand and collaborative/supportive on the other. The tone of voice is altogether more measured.

My point is this: when communicating potentially conflicting or difficult messages, we must ROL to check we're getting the tone of voice right and saying what we mean.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Find a recent document and picture the reader in your mind's eye. Spend a few moments thinking about them. Read the document out loud and then answer these questions:

- How might your words have sounded to the reader and made them *feel*? (Remember the oft-neglected Feelings in F.F.A.)
- How would you describe your tone of voice?
- Were your words as clear to your reader as they are to you?
- Have you varied the rhythm of your text, or is it a bit monotonous, or even dull?
- Would you change anything after ROL?

The bottom line: every professional writer does ROL. And so should you.

Here's a quick reminder of the technique:

Read Out Loud.

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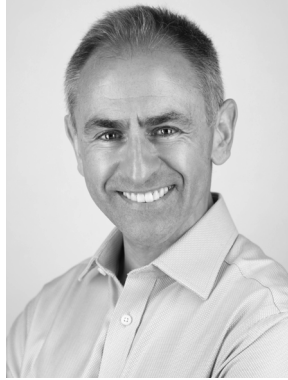
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The Author

Scott Keyser is The Writing Guy™.

Trainer, consultant and coach, Scott helps professional services firms around the world produce written communications that are clear, concise, compelling, confident and convincing.

His career includes stints at J Walter Thompson, Saatchi & Saatchi, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Ernst & Young (now EY). He trained staff of an international weekly news magazine in writing skills for ten years and helped one of the Big Four accountancy firms to double its tender win-rate.



Now he shows other high calibre organisations — including Magic Circle law firms — how easy it is to write well and get a better return on their investment in the written word. Even tough Texan oil & gas engineers have been moved to tears by the tectonic shift in their writing.

Thought leadership pieces, blogs, articles, client alerts, newsletters, sales letters, emails, reports, business cases, appraisals, bids, tenders, pitches, proposals — all can be improved with his rhetorica® techniques.

Writing is a life skill and Scott has solved the riddle of how to do it well.

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