ARG Workshop
Tips on Solid Writing

Presenters: <xxx>
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Ice Breaker
- Stand up
- Take 10 steps
- Find two people near you
- Introduce yourself
  - Where are you from
  - What is your rank/year/job/…
  - Give one reason why you are a good person to work with

Overview of Solid Writing-1
- Structure
- Content
- Appearance

Overview of Solid Writing-2
- Structure
  - What is the purpose?
  - Who is the audience?
  - How will you organize your content?
- Content
  - How well do you support your ideas/premise?
  - Is the content accurate?
  - How do you differentiate your work from others?
  - What is the appropriate level of detail?
- Appearance
  - Is your writing professional and precise?
  - Is your sentence structure solid?
  - Have you used correct punctuation?
  - Are you using the proper words and correct spelling?

Main Types of Technical Writing
- Selling Your Ideas
  - Proposal
  - White paper
- Analysis
  - Article summary
  - Survey article/literature review
- Dissemination of Results
  - Journal and conference publications
  - Technical report
  - Thesis/dissertation

APPEARANCE
- Is your writing professional and precise?
- Is your sentence structure solid?
- Have you used correct punctuation?
- Are you using the proper words and correct spelling?
Appearance Counts

- Creates a positive first impression (or not)
- Assists dissemination and documentation (or hinders)
- Builds credibility (or not)
  - Poor spelling
  - Awkward sentence structure
  - Incorrect punctuation
  - Inconsistent formatting
  - Incorrect use of technical terms

Exercise 1

- Read the document
- Identify credibility problems
  - Awkward sentence structure
  - Punctuation
  - Formatting
- Provide reason for error

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
- Group of related words that contains both a subject and a verb and can stand on its own as a complete sentence.
  - Julio laughed.
  - She is older than her brother
  - Karen can stay out later.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE
- Group of words that contains both a subject and a verb, but depends on other words to give it grammatical meaning.
  - When the dog barked
  - While Julio laughed
  - Because she is older than her brother

Exercise 2

- Underline the dependent clauses.
- Double underline the independent clauses.
- Punctuate the sentence.
SEPARATE TWO CLOSELY RELATED INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Writing cheap fiction was only one of his hobbies; he also liked to play handball.
- I was inclined not to date as a youth; I knew romance would arise later.

CONNECTING TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH "HOWEVER"

- Blue jeans have become fashionable everywhere; however, some cultures disapprove.
- My friends all deserted me; nevertheless, I continued on my journey.
- Blue jeans, however, have become fashionable everywhere.

Semicolon

Colon

- Used as an introducer
- Preceded always by an independent clause
  - He can make at least three comfort foods: meat loaf, enchiladas, and soup.
  - Chocolate has one glaring drawback: calories.

Other Common Errors-1

- Parallel Construction
  - ✓ They enjoy painting, sculpting, and singing.
  - ✗ They try painting realistic scenes and to sculpt abstract figures.
- Echoes
  - ✓ They roamed the desert, knowing that the desert was hospitable to those familiar with hot climates, but hostile to those from cooler parts of the country.
  - ✗ They roamed the desert, knowing it was hospitable to those familiar with hot climates, but hostile to those from cooler parts of the country.

Other Common Errors-2

- Possessives
  - ◦ The dog’s hair was matted and dirty.
  - ◦ Henry James’s novels are difficult to read.
  - ◦ The five workers’ incomes were subject to the new tax.
  - ◦ The children’s books were all destroyed.
- Active/Passive voice
  - ◦ We thought the exam unfair and too lengthy.
  - ◦ The exam was thought by us to be unfair and too lengthy.

Commonly Misused Words

- Specially, Especially
- Principal, Principle
- There, They’re, Their
- Compliment, Complement
- That, Who
- Between, Among
Exercise 3

- Read and correct the following passage
- State the rule that applies to the error.

Summary

- Know your common errors and place attention on them
- Seek critical review from peers, mentors, and advisors
- Understand that good writing requires many iterations of rewriting

Check and double check your document.