ARG Workshop
Tips on Solid Writing

Presenters: <xxx>

NSF DUE-0920300; CNS 0837556

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	DEPENDENT 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.
	• 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

Clause

CONJUNCTIONS: SEPARATING TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES	SETTING OFF INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS
• She lectured her class on ethics, and she expected every student to listen closely. • He would have dropped out of school, but his uncle persuaded him to stay.	• If Stephen King had written songs, they would have been just as terrifying as his novels. • Exhausted, Mario staggered across the finish line. • Finding no one at home, Kelly returned to her car and drove home. • What Peggy disliked is being called "Piggy."

Commas

SEPARATING ITEMS IN A SERIES	SEPARATING MULTIPLE MODIFIERS
• The colors purple, orange, blue, and green are never used in his artwork. • He wanted workers who were well trained, properly dressed, and eager learners.	• The dirty, dented car was found in an abandoned lot. • She was a faithful, sincere friend.

Commas

Exercise 2

- Underline the dependent clauses.
- Double underline the independent clauses.
- Punctuate the sentence.

SEPARATE TWO CLOSELY RELATED INDEPENDENT CLAUSES	CONNECTING TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH "HOWEVER"
• 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.	• 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

Semicolon: Series Containing Commas

- The report named Cyndy, Roberto, Buster, and Nacho; their instructors, Dr. Philbum, Dr. Calderon, and Dr. Garcia; and the reviewers, Mr. Mora, Ms. Keene, and Ms. Liu

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.
  - X They try painting realistic scenes and to sculpt abstract figures.
- Echoes
  - They roamed the <u>desert</u>, knowing that the <u>desert</u> was hospitable to <u>desert</u> people, but hostile to those not familiar with the desert.
  - 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.