Writing Skills [3:01]

https://players.brightcove.net/2566261579001/HyuWsfFhb_default/index.html?videoId=6019492108001

About

Learn writing techniques to ensure your messages effectively reach their intended readers.

Transcript

One of the great benefits of written communication is that it gives us the chance to craft our message carefully and accurately to both small and large audiences. As educators who are in regular contact with all members of the school, from the principal to individual students, librarians can use strong writing skills to keep everyone informed, updated, and engaged with their community.

A few key tips can help maximize the effectiveness of your written communications: staying concise, focusing on the goal you and your readers share, and crafting the right tone.

First, remember to keep communication concise. Our inboxes are bombarded with emails every day, and readers are more likely to open and read a message if they know it will be direct and to the point. See if you can present core information in one sentence and use no more than three or four more to flesh out the point. If you're writing a weekly newsletter with more than one main topic, use bold headings and short summarizing statements for each one. Headings like "Book Drive this Saturday" or "New History Databases Available" can be followed up with a single overview sentence and no more than three short bullet points with the most relevant details.

Second, stay focused on your message's overall intention, and the goal you and your readers share. For example: almost all content in a memo to teachers will fall into a single category: "How are we benefiting our students?" Keeping that question in the forefront of your mind can help you shape the content of your message. It can also help explain to your readers why the information you're including contributes to shared professional objectives. Awareness of that shared value will help your readers recognize your email as relevant and worth reading carefully.

Third, craft the right tone in your writing. Whether you're writing to inform teachers about a new service, remind a student about an overdue book, or suggest a program change to your principal, you're far more likely to get the desired response if your tone is one that establishes mutual respect. Try to avoid language that could be interpreted as reprimanding. For example: a great tip is to avoid using the word "should" when making any kind of request or proposal. A sentence like "Students should follow proper book check-out procedures," can become "Follow proper check-out procedures so everyone can find the resources they need."

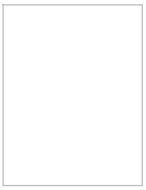
By staying concise, goal-focused, and respectful, your written communication can reach all of your intended readers and help strengthen your school community.

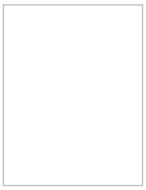
Activities

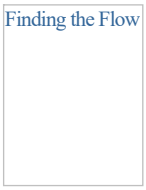
Model Writing

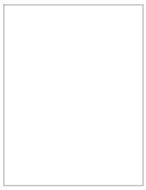
As a librarian, you know that one of the ways students can get better at writing is by reading exemplars. The same can be true for us! Take a look at the three articles in the Resources below written by the editors of *School Library Connection*, then complete the Reflect & Practice activity.

RESOURCES:









REFLECT & PRACTICE:

Each of these *School Library Connection* editors has a unique voice that is effective in its own way. After reading one or more of the articles, use the chart provided in the above form to help you identify their strengths and what takeaways you can bring to your own writing. Then think about some information that you'd like to share with your

Form

Game Plan Finding the Flow Are You a Library Pilot? audience and write a draft, incorporating something you learned from these writers.

Entry ID: 2196949

Recrafting the Message

In the "Writing Skills" video, three key tips were discussed to help you maximize the effectiveness of your written communication: staying concise, focusing on the goal you and your readers share, and crafting the right tone. With these three ideas in mind, complete the Reflect & Practice activity below.

RESOURCES:

REFLECT & PRACTICE:

Lucy Bibliophile, a new school librarian, needs help strengthening her written communication. Take a look at her three pieces below or in the form above, annotate the problem areas, identify the intended audience and shared goals, indicate what the appropriate tone would be, and then give Lucy a hand by rewriting her messages.

Form

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS

Dear 2nd Period Students,

You've left the library a mess. It's unacceptable. I expect each of you to report to the library during your lunch break to right your wrong.

Sincerely,
Lucy Bibliophile

NOTICE IN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Well, folks, it's that time once again. We're hosting a school book fair and you're going find all kinds of books at this fair. There will be books for young kids. Books for old kids. Maybe even books for adults. You should come. It will be a blast. And don't forget your wallet!

OVERVIEW MESSAGE ON LIBRARY WEBSITE

On this website, among other things, you will find that there are a really great number of resources for you to use when you have to conduct research for your classes or if you just want to come in and find a great new book to read. We have a really wide selection of books for you to choose from, if that's something that you want. Although the actual books aren't on this website, our online catalog is, plus you can also access eBooks directly through this site. We also have great online research resources for you. These include databases and a list of websites curated by your friendly librarians (that's us!). So welcome! Take a look and please come see us with any questions.

Entry ID: 2196950

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bibliography.

MLA CITATION

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