

10 Tips for Better Writing

By Tim North

10 Tips for Better Writing

Tim North
info@betterwritingskills.com

Better Writing Skills <http://www.BetterWritingSkills.com>

TITLE: 10 Tips for Better Writing
AUTHOR: Tim North
LENGTH: 650 words
E-MAIL: <mailto:info@betterwritingskills.com>
RESTRICTIONS: Not to be sold. Please inform me of any usage.
Please make the URL in the resource box a
clickable link. Thanks.
-----CUT HERE-----

10 TIPS FOR BETTER WRITING

Tim North, <http://www.BetterWritingSkills.com>

As a proofreader of business writing, I see many of the same errors made again and again. Errors in your writing (be they in advertising copy, correspondence, or a web site) are more serious, I believe, than most people realize.

Why? Well, the standard of your writing has always been important. Today, though, more than ever before, **FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT**. We are bombarded by the written word in its many forms -- books, pamphlets, magazines, signs, e-mail, web sites and many other media.

We are all suffering from information overload and are forced to find ways of screening out as much as we can. We thus tend to make quick decisions on what to read and what not to. First impressions increasingly determine what we read and what we don't, and poor writing leads to a poor first impression.

The following list of tips should help you to avoid some of the most common slip-ups.

1. Capitals: Avoid the temptation to capitalize words in the

middle of a sentence Just To Provide Emphasis Like This. If you want to be more emphatic consider using bold face, italics, color or larger text.

2. Commas: The most common use of the comma is to join together short sentences to make a single longer sentence. We do this with one of the following small joining words: and, or, but, yet, for, nor, or so. For example:

We have finished the work, and we are looking forward to the weekend.

Notice that the two halves of this sentence could each be sentences in their own right. They thus need to be separated with a comma and joining word. In the next example, though, we don't need a comma:

We have finished the work and are looking forward to the weekend.

The halves of that sentence could not stand alone, so no comma was used.

3. Ellipsis: The ellipsis is a series of three -- and ONLY THREE -- full stops used to mark missing words, an uncertain pause, or an abrupt interruption. Avoid the temptation to use six or seven dots -- it looks amateurish. For example, we write:

Niles: But Miss Fine's age is only ...

Fran: Young! Miss Fine's age is only young!

4. Excessive punctuation: Only one exclamation mark or question mark should be used at a time. Consider the following over-punctuated examples:

Buy now!!!
Great bargains!!!!!!!!!!!!

Excessive punctuation looks too much like hysteria and detracts from your credibility. Avoid it.

5. Headings: For long works, establish a clear hierarchy of headings. Microsoft Word's heading styles are great for this. (They also allow you to automatically create a table of contents.)
6. Hyphenating prefixes: Most prefixes don't need a hyphen; i.e. we write "coexist", not "co-exist". There are exceptions, though. The prefixes "self-" and "ex-" are almost always hyphenated.
7. Numbers: Numbers of ten or less are normally written as words.

8. Quotation marks: Users of American English should use double quotes (" "). Users of British English should choose either single quotes (' ') or double quotes and stick with them for the whole document. Incidentally, British English usage is increasingly moving towards single quotes.

9. Spaces: Modern style is to use a single space at the end of a sentence, not two. Also, most punctuation marks (e.g. commas, full stops, question marks) are not preceded by a space.

10. Tables: Set table text one or two points smaller than the main body text and in a sans-serif font such as Arial or Verdana. Avoid vertical lines as they tend to add unnecessary clutter.

Armed with these simple guidelines, your business writing should be well received every time. Good luck!

You'll find over 200 tips like this in Tim North's new e-book BETTER WRITING SKILLS. It's just \$19.95 and comes with a 90-day, money-back guarantee. Download a FREE CHAPTER now.

<http://www.betterwritingskills.com>

[Get-Articles.com](http://www.get-articles.com) : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)