

Abbreviations and Acronyms	Avoid these whenever possible. Include a Glossary with them in or clarify their meaning at the first mention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BBC – could mean to a foreigner – Bat-lovers of British Columbia.</li> </ul>
Active Voice	This is often the single biggest thing that will give a report some ‘oomph’. An example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clumsy: Allowances were made by the trainer for late arrivals!</li> <li>Replace with: The trainer allowed for late arrivals.</li> </ul>
Ampersands (&)	Avoid these at all costs, unless it forms part of a company name: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marks &amp; Spencer or Ernst &amp; Young</li> </ul>
Bullet Points	Use initial capital letters, especially if the bullet point is a full sentence, then also end with a full stop / period.
Consistency	These elements must be visibly consistent – font, spacing and indentations.
Exclamation marks	Use one - and only one at the end of a sentence – most especially in formal writing
Fonts	Avoid Serif fonts – Times New Roman and Garamond. These are unsuitable for readers with a sight-impairment. Sans Serif fonts are clearer and easier to read – Arial, Helvetica, Calibri, etc. For the reader’s comfort, the minimum font size should be 12 pitch.
Hyphens	Use to join two or more separate words together. State-of-the-art . face-to-face . one-stop . one-to-one
Italics	Use sparingly. Suitable for short quotes, and for foreign phrases, titles of books, publications, newspapers - and for emphasis in order to make a distinction.
Keep It Short and Simple!	Write what you mean by saying it aloud – and then edit rigorously.
Layout	Headings help to give readers an immediate overview and keep them interested. Make sure that the headings actually say something about the content.
Nouns created from a verb	These make the writing clunky and boring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider/think about, rather than ‘give consideration to ...’</li> </ul>
One sentence, one idea!	To avoid ambiguities, keep sentences short. Aim for 13-15 words per sentence in order to keep the reader with you. However, relevant punctuation may be used to ease the problem – dashes, colons and semi-colons.
Splitting paragraph content	Avoid. This is when two lines, under a heading, are found at the end of one page, and two lines at the top of the following page.
Singular Collective Nouns	KVA, Superhighways, Eco-op and RBK, for instance, are Singular Collective Nouns. Each should be referred to as ‘it’.
Third Person	Reports should always be written in the third person. Avoid using the first and second person (I) and (we).
White Spaces	This is a key part to design and create a visual hierarchy. Sometimes, it’s not what you include, but what you leave out. A document with white spaces is much easier to read.
Widow and Orphans	Avoid these. This is when one or two lines of a paragraph are at the bottom of one page, and/or at the top of the following page.
Quotes	Indent quotes.

# Format, Design and Readability ...

Be direct – Use active voice – Keep it short and simple (KISS) – One sentence, one idea – Proof it

It has recently been proven that humans have a shorter attention span than goldfish – having fallen from 12 seconds in 2000, to 8 seconds today. A goldfish has an attention span of 9 seconds!

*Microsoft Study 2015 . The Independent . The Telegraph, May 2015*

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/our-attention-span-is-now-less-than-that-of-a-goldfish-microsoft-study-finds-10247553.html>

The first draft of anything is shit.

Ernest Hemingway

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.

*Leonardo da Vinci*

Editing might be a bloody trade. But knives aren't the exclusive property of butchers. Surgeons use them too!

*Blake Morrison*

I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon, I put it back again.

*Oscar Wilde*

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.

*Thomas Jefferson*

Get rid of half the words on each page, then get rid of half of what's left.

*Steve Krug*

Only Kings, Presidents, Editors, and people with tapeworms have the right to use the editorial 'we'.

*Mark Twain*

No author dislikes to be edited as much as he dislikes not to be published.

*Russel Lynes*

Writing is one of the most time-consuming tasks we perform at work. It is also one of the most critical. Meetings come and go. Telephone calls are forgotten, but documents and emails last. Much of what we do receive is misguided or just plain