

Writing effectively

Noting & drafting

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Importance of Noting

- Noting is for internal communication and shows how and why a particular decision was made and what had been the contribution of the functionaries
- Noting is first thinking and second composing.
- It requires knowledge of facts, rules so as to put facts in systematized sequence
- It will help in reducing the cost of processing of cases because backtracking would be avoided
- Their prompt disposal would be ensured

Completeness

- Answer all possible questions of the matter under consideration
- Note can be interpreted on its own
 - What is the Issue/Problem?
 - How has it originated the case?
 - What is the nature of the case?
 - Does any part involve any other Department/ agency?
 - Is there any rule/policy/guideline/precedent available?
 - What are possible alternative solutions?
 - What should be its implications?
 - If not worth detailed examination, is there any standard process sheet?
 - Who will finally take the decision?

Organise your note/draft

- Start with your most important and move to lesser important point
- Arrange paragraphs into blocks of information rather than scattering ideas throughout the note
- Stick to one idea for each paragraph-Keep it short
- Keep your sentences short- 20 to 25 words
- Use headings, if necessary
- Use bullets or other lists
- Allow for plenty of white space-a visual break for reader
- Underline important steps or dates

How to write a note

**“Reading makes complete man
Speaking a ready man
Writing an exact man”**

-Francis Bacon

Be concrete, Not Abstract

- A large number of respondents believe that a majority of road accidents are caused by drivers with poor driving skills (Abstract)
- 75% of respondents believe that 55% of road accidents are caused by drivers with poor driving skills (Concrete)
- **How can you be concrete:**
 - Use “such as” or Make comparisons between two variables
 - Check Accuracy of facts, figures and words

Coherence

linking sentences and paragraphs to express intended meaning

- Use transitions and connectors
 - Transitions:

signposts help to follow your logic, your flow of ideas

 - Ex: however, accordingly, therefore, provided that, so that
 - Sequence: First, second, third etc.,
- Use reference words to connect new ideas with points made earlier
 - Ex: this, that, these, those, etc.,

• Subordinating conjunctions

- Time: when, while, before, after, till, since
- Place: where, wherever
- Reason: because, since, as
- Condition: if, unless
- Concession: though, although
- Consequence: so....that, that
- Purpose: that, lest
- Comparison: than

Use of Transition words

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>When adding a point</i> | also, and, in addition, besides, what is more, similarly, further |
| <i>When giving an example</i> | for instance, for example, for one thing, for another thing |
| <i>When restating</i> | in other words, that is, in short, put differently, again |
| <i>When introducing a result</i> | as a result, thus, therefore, accordingly, then, so that |
| <i>When contrasting</i> | but, however, on the other hand, still, nevertheless, conversely |
| <i>To indicate time, place or order</i> | Above all, after all, again, finally, in the first place, meanwhile, next, then |
| <i>When summing up</i> | to summarize, to sum up, to conclude, in conclusion, in short |
| <i>When sequencing ideas</i> | First,...Second,...Third,...Finally,... |

Why do we write in passive voice?

- **Active: Put action in your verbs**

- The CPR & RE has supported the contention of the officer
- The Finance Department **who has been consulted in this matter**, has agreed with the views of Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI

- **Passive: Reasons:**

- To avoid using personal pronouns- I, You, we
- Use passive voice when the law is the actor

Ex: If applicant fail to pay royalty on mineral production, his lease will be terminated...

- When the emphasis is clearly not on actor but on the acted upon
 - Ex: It has been brought to the notice of the Government.....
 - The information was given to the police

Some Examples

| Passive voice | Active voice |
|--|---|
| The lake was polluted by the company | The company polluted the lake |
| Regulations have been proposed by the Women & Child Welfare Dept | Women & Child Welfare Dept proposed new regulations |
| The permit must be approved by the State office | State office must approve the permit |

Reporting Statements in the Note file

| Original Statement | In reporting speech |
|---|--|
| It is not true that I have misused the funds earmarked for Women Welfare | The A.O. denied the charge that he had misused the funds earmarked for WW |
| Employees should take up programmes under Swatch Bharath | The Chief Secretary to Govt called upon the employees to take up programmes under Swatch Bharath |
| It is important that we take urgent steps to check the fall in standards of education | The Chief Minister emphasized the need to take urgent steps to check the fall in standards of education |
| I have no intention to deviate from the rules issued by Govt. | The A.O. declared that he had no intention to deviate from the rules issued by Govt. |
| As you all know, the government gave free rations to the flood-affected people | The District Collector pointed out that the government had given free rations to the flood-affected people |

Concise:

- **Eliminate Wordy Expressions**

Ex1: a. There are four rules to be observed

b. Four rules should be observed

Ex2:

a. It is difficult to reconcile the differing views expressed by the management team

b. It is particularly difficult to reconcile the somewhat differing views expressed by the management team

- **Use a shorter name after mentioning long one once**

- **Use pronouns or initials rather than repeat long names**

Parallelism

- Present parallel ideas in parallel form
 - The agenda for the meeting is as follows:
 - Calling the meeting to order
 - Set the date for the next meeting
 - Taking the opinions for the new project
 - Electing new office bearers

Use the same term consistently for a specific thought or object

- senior citizens
- the elderly
- the aged

OR

- The applicant
- The petitioner

Consistency

- Consistent in tense, in agreement of verb with subject, and use of pronouns
 - The attention of the Commissioner, PR and Commissioner, RD **is** invited to the reference cited.....
 - He is one of the critics who **are** joining the argument
 - He is the only one of the critics who **cares**

Consistency in tense

Ex: Economists hope the budget will continue to be balanced in the year 2012. They are projecting an even more dramatic increase in employment and foreign exports.

The sentences move logically from the present, *hope*, to the future, *will continue*, and back to the present, *are projecting* and *increase*. This shift from present to future and back to present tense is logical and thus appropriate.

Avoid hidden verbs

- A hidden verb is a verb converted into a noun. It often needs an extra verb to make sense.

Ex: 1

- a. Please **make an application** for a personal loan
- b. Please **apply** for a personal loan

Ex:2

- a. **The collection** of accurate statistics is important for the committee in the assessment of our Housing policy
- b. **Collecting** accurate statistics is important to the committee in assessing our policy on Housing

If an exception or condition is *long* and the main clause is *short*, put the main clause first and then state the exception or condition.

Don't say

Except when you submitted an identical application for an education grant in the previous year and you received full or partial grant for that year's program, we will schedule a hearing on your application.

Say

We will schedule a hearing on your application, *except when you submitted an identical application for an education grant in the previous year and you received full or partial grant for that year's program.*

Use a variety of punctuation

- Punctuation marks like gestures in speech
 - Comma (,)
 - STOP, NOT HANG HIM
 - STOP NOT, HANG HIM
 - Semi-colon (;)
 - It can separate items in a list, when these are either clauses or extended phrases:
 - **Ex:** There were several important reasons why the initiative was a failure; a serious lack of funds; the unwillingness of many groups to participate; and a general lack of confidence in the leadership.

- Colon (:)
 - It introduces a list or points as part of that paragraph
- Inverted commas (“.....”)
 - To reproduce the verbatim orders of officers or rule position
- dash (—) : In informal English, instead of a colon or semicolon, to indicate that what follows is a summary or conclusion of what has gone before;
 - **Ex:** Men were shouting, women were screaming, children were crying- it was chaos
- Dots (.....) : to indicate that words have been omitted, especially from a quotation or at the end of a conversation.

Focus on Run-on sentences:

- Primitive people have myths that reflect group consciousness, **and** modern people have television (*Use comma & coord. conjunction*)
- Primitive people have myths that reflect group consciousness; modern people have television (*Use a semicolon*)
- Primitive people have myths that reflect group consciousness. **Modern** people have television (*Separate the clause*)
- **Although** primitive people have myths that reflect group consciousness, and modern people have television (*Subordinate the clause*)

USE:

Logical Organisation

Be concrete not Abstract

Coherence-Transitions- (conjunctions)

Active Voice

Parallelism (uniform idea in uniform language)

Consistency in sentences-subject & verb, tenses, etc.,

Use proper punctuation

AVOID:

Hidden Verbs

Passive Voice

Long sentences or paragraphs

Abbreviations

wordy expression (be concise)



Thanks