

Clear Writing for the Workplace



- Concise, scannable, and action-oriented communication



- Links to productivity, compliance, and decision speed



- Course roadmap: Diagnose, Structure, Rewrite, and Sustain



- Leave with a repeatable clarity workflow and action plan



CLARITY LENS

The High Cost of Unclear Writing



80% of professionals lose 1+ hour weekly to inefficient writing.



Large companies lose over \$60M annually to unclear communication.



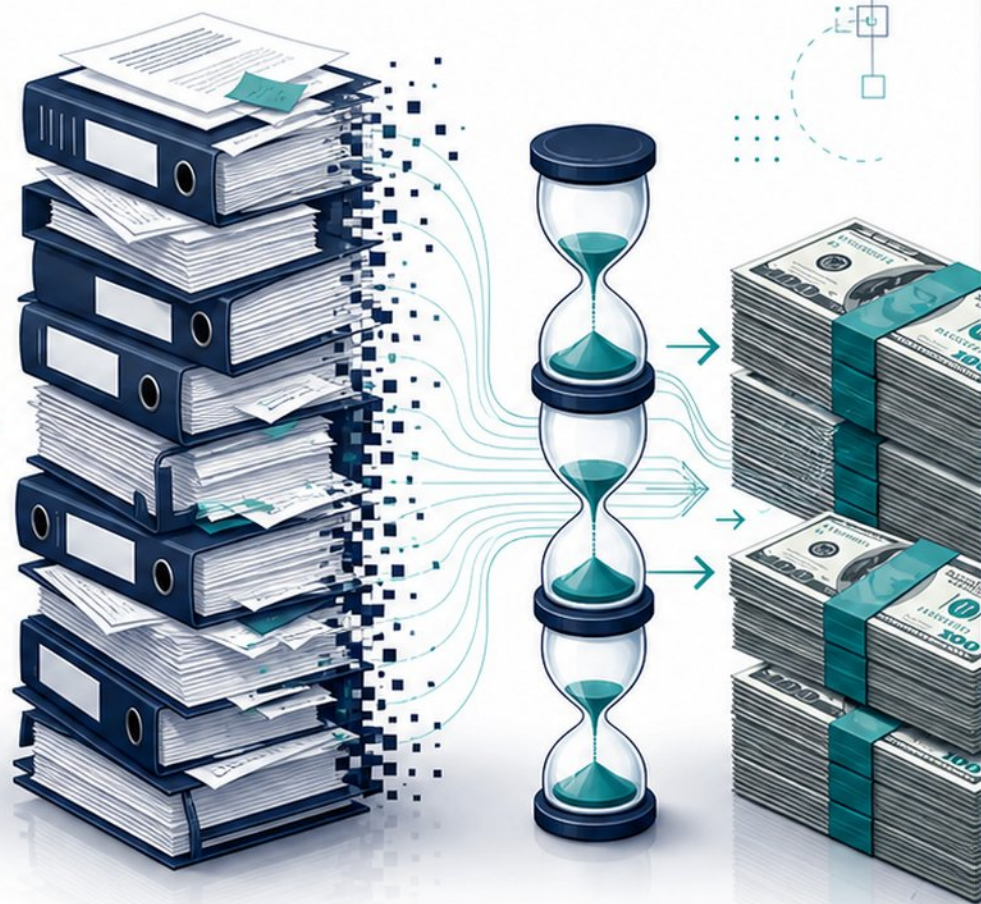
Ambiguity causes delays, misalignment, and wrong decisions.



Writing is operational infrastructure, not a soft skill.



Clear communication can boost productivity by 25%.



Diagnosing the Root Causes

A DENSE PARAGRAPH, DISSECTED



JARGON

Complex words that create distance.



PASSIVE VOICE

Focuses on the action, not the actor.



BURIED REQUEST

The actual ask is hidden deep in the sentence.



LONG SENTENCE

Too much in one sentence makes it hard to follow.

In order to leverage synergies and ensure alignment across stakeholders, it is imperative that the deliverables associated with the initiative are appropriately prioritized and tracked on an ongoing basis, with updates communicated to the relevant parties, so that informed decisions can be taken in a timely manner.



CLARITY LENS

Prioritize the initiative deliverables.

Track progress regularly.

Share updates with stakeholders.

This helps us make timely, informed decisions.



WHO DOES WHAT?

We prioritize.
We track.
We share.
We decide.



PLAIN-LANGUAGE TRANSFORMATION

Short sentences.
Active voice.
Clear ask.



The Big Five clarity blockers: jargon, passive voice, hidden verbs, buried requests, long sentences



Dense paragraphs hide meaning; plain language surfaces it



Plain language standard: clear, concise, well-organized, audience-appropriate



One-page Clarity Blocker checklist for immediate use



ONE-PAGE CLARITY BLOCKER CHECKLIST

Use it. Fix it. Clarify it.



1. JARGON

Can I replace complex words with plain, familiar ones?

☐

2. PASSIVE VOICE

Can I put the actor in the sentence and use active voice?

☐

3. HIDDEN VERBS / BURIED REQUESTS

Is my main ask or action stated clearly and up front?

☐

4. LONG SENTENCES

Can I break this into shorter, easier-to-read sentences?

☐

5. OVERALL CLARITY

Is the message clear, concise, well-organized, and audience-appropriate?

☐

Audit Your Own Writing



- Scan your document for the **Big Five** clarity blockers



- Use readability scores as **diagnostic tools**, not rules



- Trade a short email for a 5-minute **peer audit**



- **Diagnose** your writing before you rewrite it

FIELD GUIDE

Subject: Proposed Timeline for Product Launch

Hi Team,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to touch base regarding the upcoming product launch and align on next steps. ?

The project is progressing well overall; however, there are a few risks we should monitor closely. WORDY

Please review the timeline ^{the} below and share your feedback by EOD Friday.

Thanks,
Alex

Clarity Check

- ☒ Jargon
- ☒ Long Sentences
- ☒ Passive Voice
- ☒ Unclear Referents
- ☒ Redundancy

READABILITY SCORE

72
GOOD

Structure for Scannability



BLUF: Approve the proposed plan to increase on-time delivery by 12% in Q3.



BACKGROUND

- _____
- _____



ANALYSIS

- _____
- _____
- _____



RECOMMENDATION

- _____



NEXT STEPS

- _____
- _____



- Lead with **BLUF**: Put the action or conclusion in the first sentence.



- Guide the eye with headers, lists, and generous white space.



- Reduce cognitive load on screens by chunking dense text.

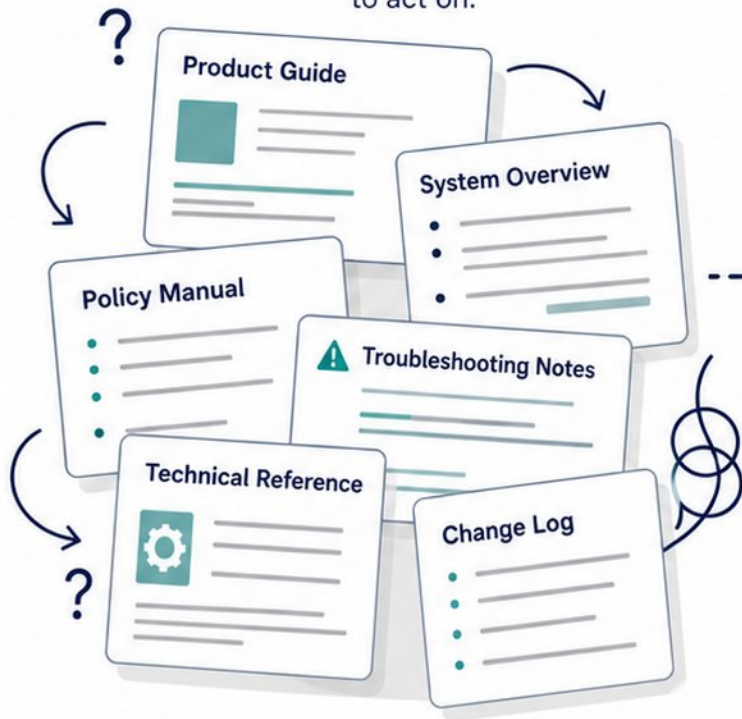


- Scannability respects the reader's time and drives faster decisions.

Writing Clear Instructions That Work

REFERENCE DOCS EXPLAIN

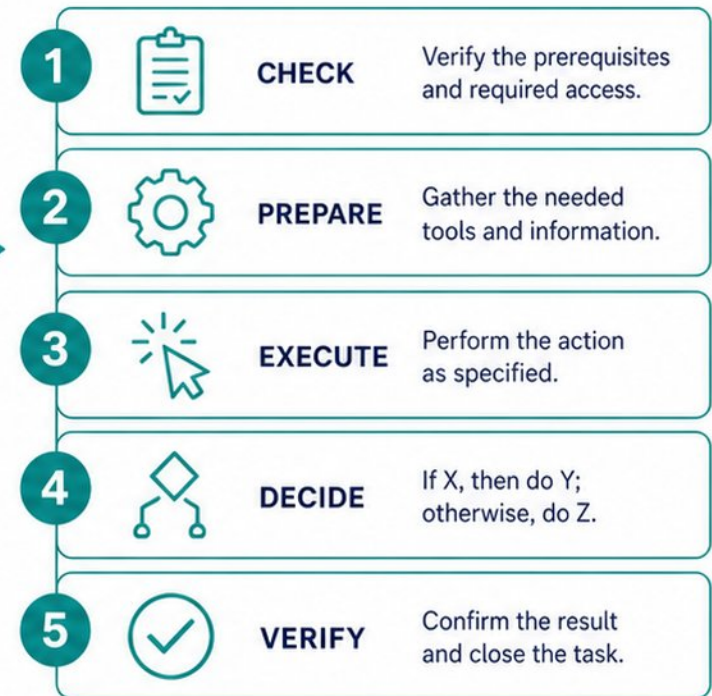
Information exists, but it's hard to act on.



Clear instructions turn information into action.

INSTRUCTIONS GUIDE

Clear steps show exactly what to do.



- Reference docs explain; instructions guide step-by-step.
- Start each step with a strong, imperative verb.
- Add precise conditions: "If X, then do Y."
- Use the "naive reader" test to catch gaps and assumptions.
- Avoid dense SOP text; break it into user-ready actions.

Emails That Drive Action



Signal intent with specific, question-based subject lines



Open with context; close with one clear ask and deadline



2-4 word subjects achieve 46% open rates



Specificity can boost reply rates by 3-4x



Maintain direct tone while managing reader sentiment



Writing for the Busy Leader



Tailor depth for executives, peers, and direct reports



Synthesize complex info into a one-page decision brief



Use clear writing to reduce back-and-forth and status meetings



Practice: condense a multi-page report into a single brief



Practice Lab, Part 1: Audit and Structure



- Bring a real, unedited internal document for hands-on practice



- Step 1:** Audit using the Clarity Blocker checklist to diagnose issues



- Step 2:** Restructure with scannability principles and BLUF format



- Goal:** Make the document's purpose and main action visible in 5 seconds

BEFORE

AFTER

Q2 Initiative Update

May 2, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (BLUF)

- Purpose**
Provide a status update on Q2 initiatives and confirm next steps.
- Key Update**
3 of 5 initiatives are on track. Two at risk due to resource constraints.
- Main Action**
Approve reallocation of two resources to Initiative C by May 10.

KEY INITIATIVES

Initiative	Status	Owner	Key Update
A. Customer Onboarding	On Track	J. Lee	Pilot complete; rollout begins May 15.
B. Data Platform	On Track	R. Patel	Warehouse live; dashboard in build.
C. Process Automation	At Risk	M. Chen	Resource gap impacting timeline.
D. Reporting Upgrade	On Track	T. Nguyen	UAT in progress.
E. Security Enhancements	At Risk	A. Johnson	Vendor delay; mitigation in progress.

RISKS & MITIGATIONS

- Resource constraints for Initiative C — Mitigation: Reallocate two analysts.
- Vendor delay for Initiative E — Mitigation: Use interim controls.

NEXT STEPS

- Approve resource reallocation by May 10.
- Review progress in weekly stand-up on May 13.

DECONSTRUCT
Find what's getting in the way.

STRUCTURE
Organize by priority and clarity.

DELIVER CLARITY
Make purpose and action unmistakable.

Practice Lab, Part 2: Rewrite and Test



Rewrite using plain language, active voice, and action steps



Validate clarity with a partner using the naive reader test



Share rewrites and get feedback: Observe, Describe, Suggest



Debrief common themes and build your personal takeaway list

REWRITTEN VERSION



Goal



Action Steps



Key Outcomes

FEEDBACK CHECKLIST



OBSERVE



DESCRIBE



SUGGEST

Building a Clear-Writing Culture



Create lightweight style guides and templates to simplify writing



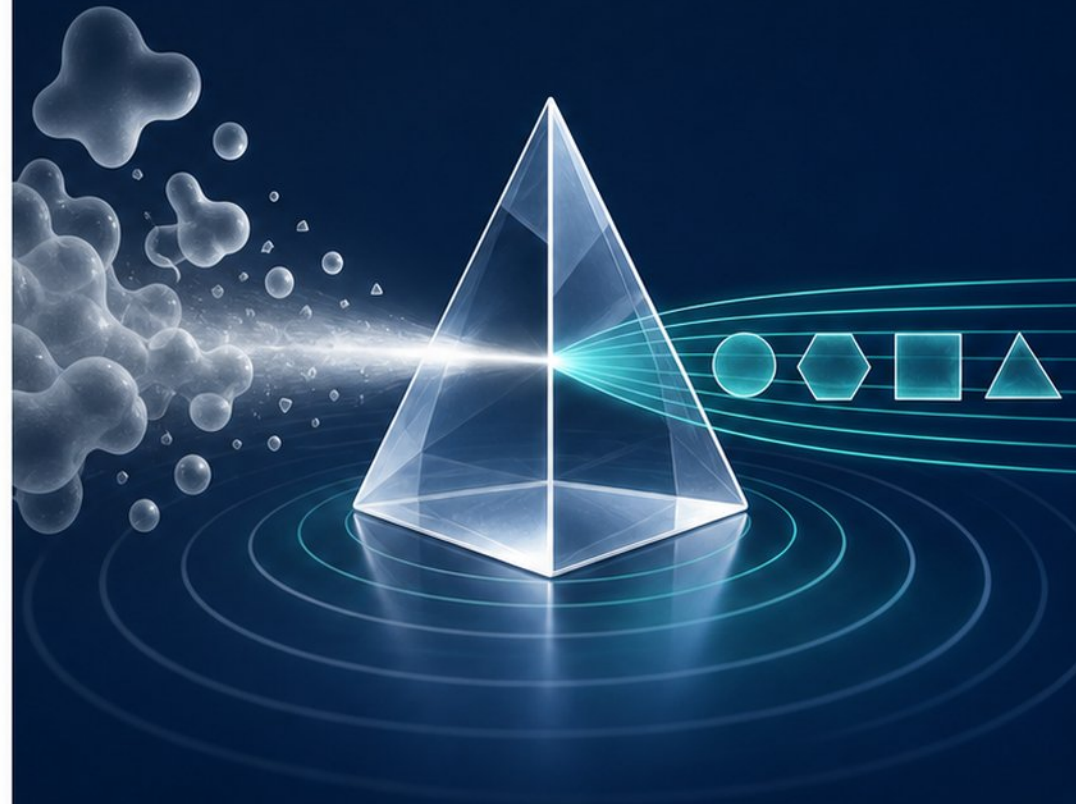
Use the peer coaching model: Observe, Describe, Suggest



80% of teams lack a shared definition of good writing



Run 15-minute clarity reviews for high-impact documents



FOCUS



CLARITY



COLLABORATION



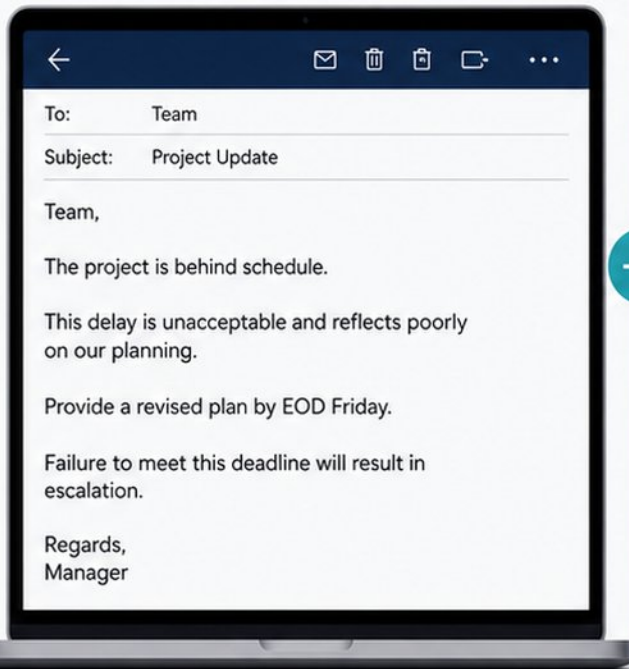
IMPACT

Managing Tone and Trust



COLD & SHARP

Feels distant, defensive, and final.



Defensive language



Short, clipped sentences

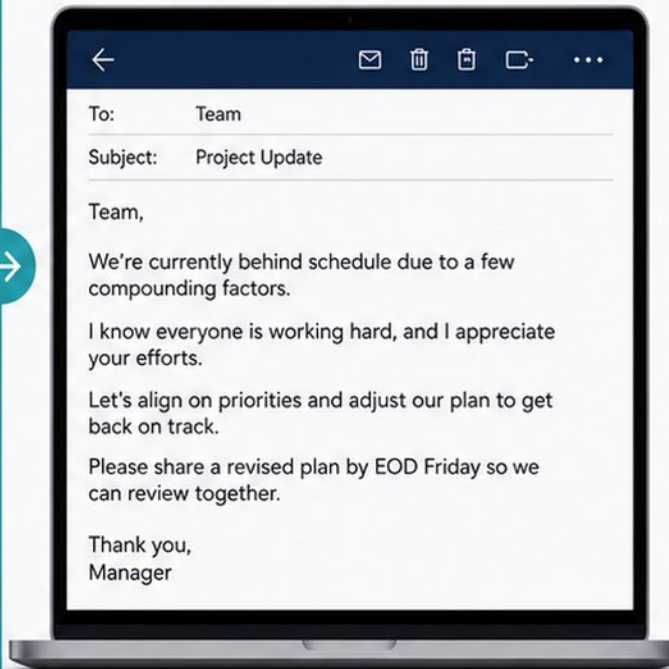


Creates distance



WARM & DIRECT

Shows respect, clarity, and partnership.



Respectful tone



Clear, flowing sentences



Builds trust



- Word choice and sentence length directly shape reader sentiment and trust



- Adjust tone for bad news, critical feedback, and escalations



- Ask: Will this message build confidence, create anxiety, or confuse?



- Before sending, check: Is it clear, respectful, and actionable?



Sustaining Clarity with AI and Tools



- Integrate AI tools like Copilot and Acrolinx for real-time feedback



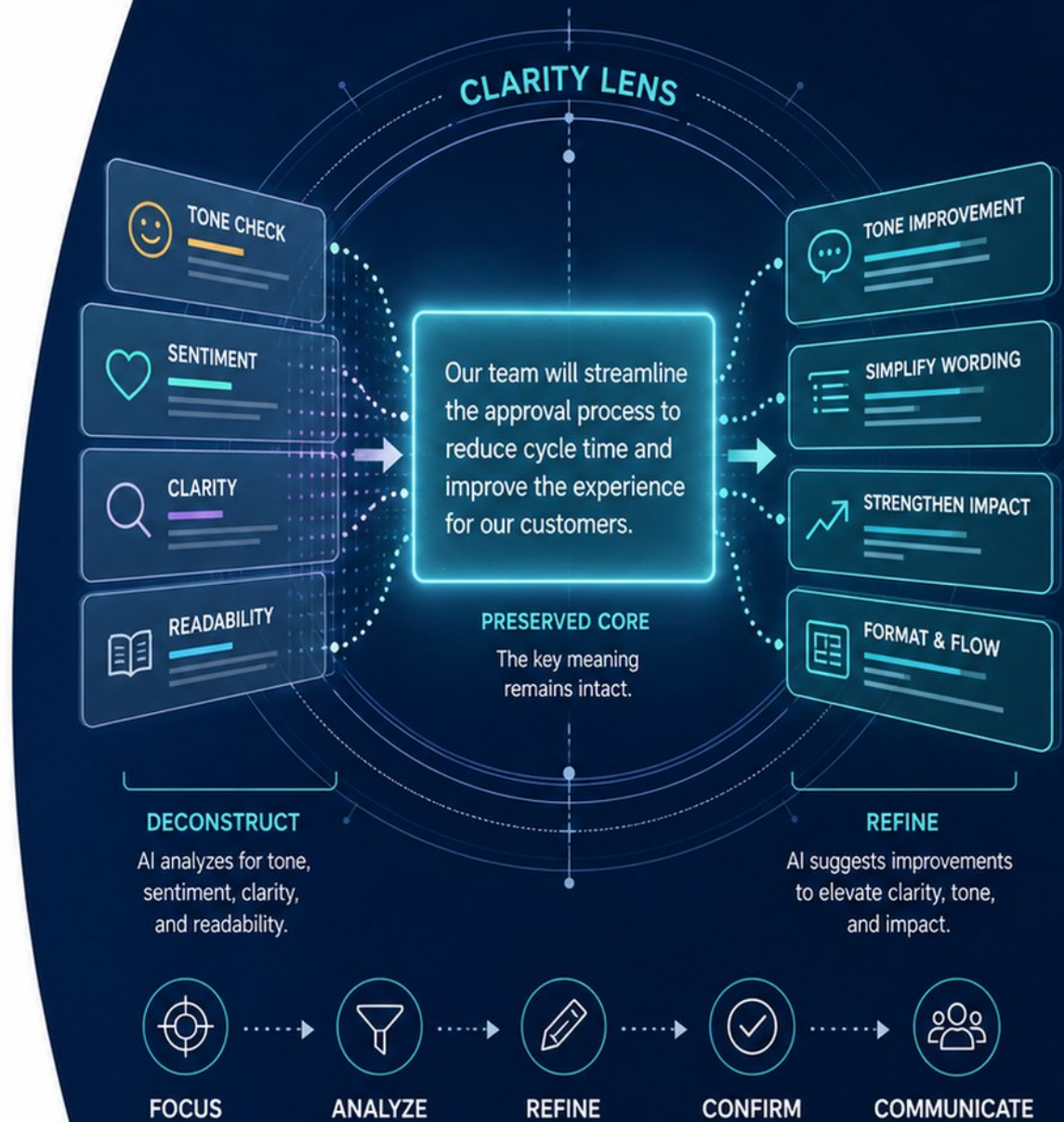
- Use Outlook coaching features to check tone and reader sentiment



- Explore free and enterprise tools for ongoing clarity improvement



- Remember: AI assists, but clear thinking and voice remain essential



Action Plan: The First 30 Days



- Adopt a personal clarity checklist for daily emails and documents



- Schedule recurring 15-minute clarity reviews before sending high-impact documents



- Stop one writing habit, start one, and continue one



- Apply BLUF to every manager email for the next two weeks



ROADMAP COMPASS

Stay focused. Keep it clear. Make an impact every day.



Course Wrap-Up and Resources



Recap: Diagnose, Structure, Rewrite, Sustain



Clear writing saves time, reduces risk, and speeds decisions



Key resources: Clarity Checklist, BLUF, Tone, and tools



Treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own



Assessment and Next Steps



Clarity Framework



Complete a short knowledge check to reinforce key concepts.



Submit your final rewritten document for instructor feedback.



Explore next-level resources: advanced courses, coaching, style guides.



Share your biggest clarity challenge you will tackle first.



My Biggest Challenge



PersonWise.

PersonWise • AI digital-human course platform



Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/7f5fde92/public