

Introduction

People have their own judgements of writing quality, and those judgements vary over time and occasion. Scholars in Rhetoric and Composition have found that the best way to produce better writers is not to focus on writers' errors (current-traditionalism) but to build a consensus about what good writing is (social constructivism).

Writing Tips

Outlining (Foreshadowing)

For an intro, mention your point and say what you'll be expanding on below. In doing so, show the scope and tone of what you're going to say. Organize your sentences as your paragraphs will be organized, and make sure not to mention anything that you won't bring up in the body of your document.

Make Clear Subject and Verb

Unclear sentences come from overly complicated sentence constructions, so make sure that in all cases you have made clear what the character (subject) is doing (verb).

Revision: Edit Down, then Combine Sentences

It's overwhelming to worry about perfecting your writing when you revise. Just focus on simplifying it. Then when you look at your work again, you can combine sentences or add detail as necessary.

Move from Known to Unknown

Readers have to be confident that they're not confused, and the best way to ensure that is to link your new information with familiar information. At the sentence, paragraph, and even whole document level, consider starting your writing with the more familiar (or at least less-intimidating) content and move on to your new information from there. Then carefully use that new information (which now feels familiar) to introduce additional new information.

Job Ads

When responding to job ads, you certainly want for your resume, cover letter, and any other relevant documents to reflect the components of the job ad.

But to really knock it out of the park, you want to use the components of the ad to figure out the personality qualities needed for the job, then consider what personality qualities you have in common with those desired qualities, and then organize and write about your job experiences in terms of how they reflect those qualities. Thus:

Ad Language → Desired Job Qualities → Your Qualities → Your Specific Experiences