

DO:

- A brainstorming activity to get started or just write all your thoughts to get started
- Start with a Crappy First Draft (CFD)**
- Identify the main reason for your writing at the top of the document – BLUF – Bottom Line Up Front
- Insert as many responses to 5Ws and the H (who, what, when, where, why, how) at the top of your document (often in one sentence).
- Use Plain English
- Use active voice unless you've got a good reason to use the passive voice
- Get the formality and tone right for that audience member
- Respect your audience by respecting their time (not by using overly formal language or titles)
- Know your grammar / style weaknesses
- Create a Cheat Sheet so you can check my writing for my usual errors
- Modify other pieces of writing rather than starting from scratch
- Collect other people's writing as samples and as a way to find new vocabulary and phrases
- Structure your message –**
 - **Allow ONE IDEA only per paragraph,**
 - **Use HEAD-ON sentences as often as you can for greater assertiveness – i.e. having he sentences start with the most important SUBJECT followed by a strong VERB.**
 - **FRAME your message**
- Get to the needs of your audience directly and try to avoid explaining yourself (you'll likely sound defensive)
- Be authoritative and confident, not apologetic.
- Keep things linear, clear and logical
- Vary sentence length
- Use personal pronouns e.g. I, we, etc. – be one human being talking to another
- Edit – ALWAYS! At least read it out (quietly) to yourself to get a sense of the flow**
- Leave your writing overnight – or at least walk away and give it some space – grab a coffee

DON'T:

- Stare at a blank page or screen
- Write the final draft first
- Send out writing without reading it first**
- Write in overly complex styles or formal tones
- Use cliché phrases and sentences. Think, what would I really say to that person?**
- Try to make yourself sound too clever
- Explain yourself in a defensive way
- Be apologetic and weak with your words
- Procrastinate (easier said than done)
- Ignore that feeling in your stomach that tells you your message isn't quite right (get a buddy to read it or leave it and read it again in half an hour)