**3 Questions to ask before you start writing:**

1. What is the purpose of this information?
2. What is the desired user response of this information?
3. Who is the audience?

**2 Types of language arts:**

LAFI – Language arts for information

LAFPR – language arts for personal response

General writing rules

**Special characters**

Avoid special characters, spell out words instead. Remove parentheses, colons and dashes. Avoid using quotation marks and slashes.

**Effective sentences**

One main agent, action & outcome. Use active voice and simplest tense possible. No more than 7 sentences per paragraph. Use lists and tables.

**A block** is a bite-sized chunk of information about one main idea that allows the writer to organize the material into logical sections.

**A topic** is a group of related blocks with a title. Use the chunking principle to group together relevant blocks.

**A map** is a file that organizes topics into structured collections of information. Maps specify hierarchy and relationships among topics.

Quick Reference Card

**Titling**

Name everything. Name every block, every topic, every map and every table column.

Sub-Block

Map

Primary Block

Topic

Sub-Block

Primary Block

Topic

**Relevance**

Group similar items together. Separate relevance? Separate block. Irrelevant? Delete it.

**Chunking**

Maximum of nine (7 +/- 2) items in a list, rows in a table, blocks in a topic, or topics in a map.

**Consistency**

Use similar terms and structures. Pick a term and stick with it. Use the same sequence of blocks. Use consistent styles.

4 Cognitive Principles

**Plain language**

Write in short sentences. Provide useful titles. Use clear familiar words. Avoid excess words. Be consistent.

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