

# Writing for social media: a summary

## Why it's important

You have to engage your audience fast on social. So you need to do a lot with a little.

**Remember:** "Easy reading is damn hard writing." Maya Angelou. Give yourself a break, you're doing great.

There are four principles to remember.

## 1. Write more naturally

### a. Be active

Choose the active voice over the passive to avoid sounding distant or suspicious.

You can spot you're in passive voice by adding the phrase 'by zombies' to the end of a sentence.

'New members can be enrolled at any time....by zombies.' Passive

'We can enrol new members at any time...by zombies.' Active, you can't add 'by zombies'

### Reasons to choose passive voice

1. The action is more important than the actor
2. To hook the reader

### b. Talk naturally

**Let's contract:** make your work sound more natural by contracting words.

'We'll' instead of 'We will'. 'I've' instead of 'I have'. 'You've' instead of 'You have'.

**Start with 'And':** Begin sentences with conjunctions ('and' or 'because'), it just sounds natural.

"The belief that 'and' should not be used to begin a sentence is without foundation. And that's all there is to it." *Bill Bryson, Troublesome Words*

### c. Remove redundancy

Cut phrases that just inflate your writing without adding anything.

~~In order~~ to start the process.

The offer is valid for ~~a period of~~ one week.

We need to focus on the ~~end~~ result.

### d. Be concrete

Use clear concepts and imagery, avoid jargon.

'We apologise for the service interruptions' becomes 'Sorry the internet's not working.'

### e. Go German

Choose words with a Germanic root rather than words with a Latin root. They're more concrete, less ornate.

Terminate End

Commence Start

Question Ask

#### **f. Be upfront**

Tell people the important stuff first.

'Tomorrow will be a great day, make sure you bring an umbrella, it's supposed to rain.'

Becomes

'It's supposed to rain tomorrow, make sure you bring an umbrella. But it will be a great day.'

#### **g. Keep thoughts together**

Group things together that are thematically related.

'Everyone needs to bring a snack, the coach leaves at 11.00, make sure you have a drink too.'

Becomes

'Everyone needs to bring a snack and a drink. The coach leaves at 11.00.'

#### **h. New thought, new sentence**

Write short sentences that contain just one thought.

'We need to be at the event at 10.00 tomorrow, can you remember to bring your lanyards, looking forward to seeing you all?'

Becomes

'We need to be at the event at 10.00 tomorrow. Can you remember to bring your lanyards?'

Looking forward to seeing you all.'

Iterate your work. Read it aloud. Ask others to read it. Use Grammarly or spell check.

### **3. Consider your audience**

#### **a. How you write**

Match your language to the expectations of the audience. You're writing for them, not for yourself.

#### **b. What you write**

Slant the angle of the story to match the interests of your audience. What will hook them?

#### **c. Where is your audience?**

Understand where it hurts for your audience. Find the lead in the story.

#### **d. Know. Feel. Do.**

Think about what you want your audience to Know, Feel and Do after they read your post.

### **4. Focus on social**

#### **a. Understand the platforms**

People come to different social platforms for different reasons.

**Facebook:** deeper connections over time, building communities.

**Instagram:** about the instant, tell stories through imagery and video.

**Twitter:** focus on the now, keep people in the loop.

#### **b. Give a clear call to action**

Keep them short. Limit them to just one per post. People should know what you want them to do.

#### **c. Keep it short**

Social users are impatient. They work on micro moments.

**d. Add a formula**

Use a formula to structure your work. You can find lots online. Here are three:

**PAS:** Problem. Agitate. Solve.

**AIDA:** Attention. Interest. Desire. Action.

**Four Cs:** Clear. Concise. Compelling. Credible.

**e. Add some sparkle with a rhetorical device**

**Rule of three:** Use groups of three wherever you can – words, sentences, or paragraphs.

**Anaphora/Epistrophe:** Repeat a word or phrase at the beginning/end of a sentence.

**Parallelism:** Show two opposing ideas in contrast to give scale or balance.

**f. Modulate your tone**

Tweak your voice around subject matter, not platform. But understand what people expect from each platform.

Just remember, writing should be fun, you'll enjoy it more and you'll transmit that fun to your readers. Good luck.