

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR: Appropriate language. The language you use in your writing can influence the way your readers understand and respond to your ideas. Carelessly used words can make your writing sound either too formal or too casual for the context. They can also make your writing sound dull or repetitive.

Perhaps most important, inappropriate language can offend your readers. By using appropriate language you can get your message across most clearly and effectively.

Just as certain places have an expected dress code, writing situations often have an expected level of formality. School essays, work emails, and text messages, all call for a different tone. For example, when you communicate with most professors and work colleagues, your language should be fairly formal, instead of an email like this. An email like this would be more appropriate. The revised email does not use slang and Alanna's explanations make it easier to tell that she's concerned but not angry.

Taking the time to use the correct tone in your writing shows respect to your readers. Respecting readers also means choosing your statements and words carefully. Avoid biased generalizations about entire groups of people. Bookworms need to get a life. Jocks party too hard. These stereotypes are offensive to book lovers and athletes. They should be deleted.

Another form of respect is using a group's preferred terminology. Referring to the Native American reservation is more acceptable terminology than calling it the Indian reservation. Similarly, respect means carefully using nouns and pronouns to represent both males and females. If people want to avoid mistakes in the future they must learn from the past. Using the noun man to make a generalization about humanity overlooks women. The noun people, uses non-sexist language.

So far, respecting readers has been about using an appropriate tone and avoiding offensive words. Respecting readers also means respecting their attention span.

Whenever possible, use specific, instead of vague language in your writing. Good grades is vague. Explaining the specific requirement, a GPA of 3.8 or higher is more clear and concise.

Cliches are overused expressions. The writing on the wall is a worn out saying that makes the sentence sound trite. It is better to substitute a fresh, original expression, or to simplify the sentence. Try to keep your writing as concise as possible. And particularly avoid empty expressions that increase the word count but add little meaning. Because conveys the same meaning as due to the fact that, so it makes this statement more concise.

Watch out for redundancy, that is repetitive words and phrases, in your writing. Since strange and unusual mean the same thing it is redundant to use both.

Remember, by using appropriate language you can get your message across most clearly and effectively.