Writing effectively

To write effectively is often hard work at first, but good writing can make a difficult subject easier to understand and can better put across the message to be conveyed.

The following are a few specific points that may assist in attaining a better report:

1. Think of writing as two stages –
   organisation of ideas and phrasing.
   Organise first; Phrase later.

2. Know your reader and your objective .
   Adjust the style of presentation to the intended audience.

3. Use complete sentences with variety in structure.
   Don't present two separate ideas in the same sentence.

4. Employ short words, sentences, and paragraphs wherever
   possible; just like short films are better than long ones.
   Sentence construction must be clear; don't succumb to the lure
   of flowery language.

5. Don't beat around the bush; Say what you mean.
    A direct statement is better than an indirect one.
    Try to be as simple, clear, and concise as possible.
    Pompousness is a handicap in technical writing.

6. Never discuss a subject, figure or table before presenting it.

7. Employ tables and graphs where possible.

8. Avoid ambiguous expressions.

These are characterised by deviations from the precise meaning of words, too few connectives, too many verbal nouns and frequent use of words which are in identical form,

or different parts of speech. E.g tendency and tends.

9.   Avoid excessive use of slang and colloquial expressions.

10.   Avoid the use of adverbs such as 'very' and 'extremely'.

11.   Avoid over working words and phrases.

12.   Avoid strong modifiers such as inexcusable and unjust.

13.   Pay attention to the details of spelling, punctuation and capitalising words.

N.H.ATTHREYA