

Smart Writing!

Presented by

SwanShadow
COMMUNICATIONS

Volume 2, Issue 4

September 2003

Induction or Deduction?

How do you present information to your audience? A key part of the answer involves choosing correctly between an **inductive** and a **deductive** approach. Let's compare the two.

Induction presupposes that your reader *doesn't know much*, if anything, about the subject you're addressing. An inductive approach takes the reader by the hand (metaphorically speaking) and guides him or her *from square one to the intended conclusion*.

Deduction presupposes that your reader *already knows* most of the background information necessary to understand what you're talking about. In de-

ductive writing, you *start with the main point*, then work backward to fill in any pertinent details.

Which approach is appropriate when? **Typically, in-house communication is deductive.** For example, if you're advising your team about a new development in a project on which all are participating, it's not necessary to explain what the project is and why you're all working on it. (If such explanation is necessary in the middle of your project, you probably missed some earlier steps in communication!) *Put your key facts at the beginning of your letter or memo*, and follow up with any supporting material.

Inductive communication comes in handy **when your audience has no idea** what you're about to say, and some preliminary foundation is needed either *to enable comprehension* or *to minimize negative impact*. If, for example, you're issuing an announcement about unexpected layoffs, you may choose to first outline the reasons for the impending action, then conclude with the harsh reality.

By the way, even though the great fictional detective Sherlock Holmes often spoke about his brilliant *deductions*, his reasoning style was actually *inductive*. You'd think Sherlock Holmes would know that!

— Michael Rankins

Format Like a Pro

For a sharp document, follow these formatting tips.

It usually isn't necessary to double-space at the end of a sentence when you're using a word-processing program. Modern fonts are designed to appear correct without the added post-period space. One exception is any mono-

spaced font designed to mimic a typewriter's output (Courier, for example).

Justified text, in which both left and right margins are uniform, **is difficult to read** and creates odd spacing between words. Unless your document uses narrow columns, like a newspaper, it's easier on the reader's

eyes if you **use a "ragged" right margin** (as shown).

Keep font styles to a minimum. Your computer came preloaded with dozens of fonts, but don't use them all in the same document! Try **sans-serif** fonts for **headings**, **serif** fonts for **body copy**. (A little variety for effect, however, is okay.)

Is That Write?

In American style, **quotation marks go outside punctuation** (especially periods and commas). Notice where the periods are in these sentences:

Incorrect in American style: **Joanne said, "I'm going downtown today".**

Correct in American style: **Fred said, "Take me with you."**

However, when the punctuation **doesn't belong to the quoted words**, keep it outside:

Did I hear you say, "Supper's ready"?

At last—I finally finished reading "The Right Stuff"!



Suggestions for an upcoming issue?

Share them!

E-mail us:

Michael@SwanShadow.com



SwanShadow

COMMUNICATIONS

6363 San Benito Way
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Phone: 707-585-8224

E-mail: Michael@SwanShadow.com

ON THE INTERNET:

WWW.SWANSHADOW.COM

Smart Writing! is published bimonthly by
SwanShadow Communications.

SwanShadow Communications offers a comprehensive package of writing and editing services for your business.

Whether you need advertising copy, newsletters, marketing materials, sales letters, press releases, Web site content, or research articles, we'll produce excellent words, on time and at the right price.

SwanShadow principal **Michael Rankins** is also a veteran public speaker, with more than 2,500 lectures and seminars to his credit. As your personal speechwriter and presentation coach, Michael will help you sound like a seasoned professional.

Contact **SwanShadow Communications** today at
707-585-8224, or visit us on the World Wide Web:
www.SwanShadow.com

Writers Say...

"No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft." — Herbert Gordon (H.G.) Wells

It's All About You!

Your résumé, that is. Sooner or later, we all have to write one, or update a previous version. Here are a few tips to keep in mind the next time you have to summarize your career in two pages or less.

Pull the facts together.

Before you type a single word, make sure you've collected all the dates, names, addresses, job titles and descriptions, and other data you'll need. Dates are especially important—mainly because they're the details you're most likely to forget or remember incorrectly. Verify the spellings of names and the accuracy of addresses and telephone numbers.

Begin with a summary or goal statement.

The first thing a prospective employer should see (after your name and contact information) is a sharp, tightly written paragraph that either summarizes your skills (if you have experience in the field in which you're applying) or your immediate career goal (if you're moving into a new field, or just starting out). Ideally, this statement should be so persuasive the employer will already be interested in interviewing you, even before she's read the rest of your résumé. Include all your relevant attributes.

Use powerful words.

When writing your résumé,

choose words that show you're an active participant rather than a bystander. Regardless of the kind of work you've done, or are seeking, it's essential to sound confident (but not arrogant) and collaborative.

It's not a biography.

Save your world travels and family history for your journal, or your memoirs. Stick to what's pertinent to your job search. Certain items of personal information should never appear in your résumé—anything that specifies your age, race or ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, marital status, or physical condition.

Be thorough and accurate.

Your résumé is the wrong place to become overly modest about your accomplishments. Be forthright about your true achievements and accolades. At the same time, don't invent false stories to build yourself up. Let your record speak for itself.

Review! Review! Review!

Triple-check for correctness and for typos. Nothing moves a résumé to the slush pile faster than poor spelling and grammar, or inconsistent or questionable information.

And yes, the preferred form of "résumé" calls for an accent over each "e."

— Michael Rankins