You only need to think about 6 things to write well!
1. Create a strategy and use it to inform your structure.
2. Write clearly and concisely

But how?
Identify the “who” in your sentence

Decisions in regard to the launch of a new project must be made by senior management

Senior management must decide . . .
Use verbs to specify actions

Our lack of knowledge about the factory precluded a decision . . .

Because we didn’t know about the factory, we couldn’t decide . . .
Make every word tell

due to the fact that ➔ because

in addition to ➔ also

for the purpose of ➔ for
Use simple, concrete words

ameliorate → improve
expedite → hurry
terminate → end
Use some constructions sparingly

nominalizations (verbs turned into nouns)
- discovery → discover
- failure → fail

stacked nouns
- training needs assessment review . . .

We reviewed our training needs.
Same with the passive voice

The cat was chased by the dog. (p)

The dog chased the cat. (a)
The Congressman from the state of Maine had breakfast at 9:00 a.m. in the morning with a representative from China who did not speak the English language.
3. Write logically

“Pile” similar information together and organize “piles” into a logical sequence using one of the 7 common organizational patterns.
Topical

Research
- Gather data
- Analyze data
- Write report

Disseminate
- Nationally
- Internationally

Budget
- Staff
- Software
- Travel

Communication for Managers
Chronological

Collect data → Analyze data → Write report
Problem to Solution

Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.
General to Specific

(or specific to general)

Communication for Managers

Photograph courtesy of William Ward on Flickr.

Photograph courtesy of Rod Begbie on Flickr.
Cause and Effect

Category 1

Category 2

Category 3

Category 4

Communication for Managers
Comparison (or Contrast)

Shanghai

or

Sheboygan

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Photograph courtesy of Mrschimpf on Wikimedia Commons.
Spatial

Photograph courtesy of Ivanlee8 on Flickr.

Communication for Managers
The seven common organizational patterns

1. Topical
2. Chronological
3. Problem-solution
4. General to specific (or specific to general)
5. Cause and effect
6. Compare or contrast
7. Spatial
Three more ways to make your writing logical

• Check that each sentence and each paragraph contains only one idea

• Make your lists conceptually and grammatically parallel

• Use transitions effectively to link one idea to the next
“Connectors”

• **Repeater Connectors**
  - Key words
  - Pronouns that replace key words
  - Other words or phrases that replace key words

• **Direction Connectors**
  - Moving in the same direction
  - Moving in the opposite direction
  - Moving toward a conclusion
  - Moving up or down the ladder of abstraction
4. Use formatting devices effectively

- Bullets
- Bullets
- Bullets

**FIRST LEVEL SUBHEADS**

*Second level subheads*

*Third level subheads:*

**BOLD**

*Italicics*
5. Write with appropriate style & tone

You could sound like this

Or like this

Or like this

Photograph courtesy of Josh Self on Flickr.

Photograph courtesy of Roberto Miranda on Flickr.

Photograph courtesy of Right-eye on Flickr.
6. Write without mechanical errors

Five common grammatical errors

1. Run on sentences and sentence fragments
2. Problems with agreement
3. Vague pronouns or pronouns without antecedents
4. Misplaced or dangling modifiers
5. Problems with case
Three common punctuation errors

1. Misuse of commas
2. Misuse of semi-colons
3. Misuse of quotation marks
   - With other punctuation marks
   - With block quotes