# Effective Communication, Scientific Writing

**Effective Communication - General Preparation**

- Read about effective communication; reference list at: [http://www.library.illinois.edu/gex/classes/sci_writing_refs_geol_233.html](http://www.library.illinois.edu/gex/classes/sci_writing_refs_geol_233.html)
- Essay = interpretative or analytical composition, often deals with subject in personal way
- Select topic

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**Importance of Effective Communication**

- Poor communication wastes time, talent and money

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**Effective Communication - General Preparation**

- Determine audience; guides level of writing; write essay so fellow classmates can understand
- Use word processing program on computer
- Research topic, scientific explanation is minor part of essay

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**Effective Communication - General Preparation**

- Make outline, expand outline, edit, write first draft (double-space, wide margins), rewrite, GET FEEDBACK, rewrite
- Read essay aloud to self or friend

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**How to Communicate Effectively?**

- Communicate clearly
- Communicate efficiently (be brief)
Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Identify audience, pose questions** your audience might ask
  
  What is news?
  Why? (Why should I care?)
  How? (How did you know? What is supporting information?)
  Now what? What is next step?

• **Answer above questions in conversational way**

Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Have a good “hook” (first sentence or so that captures reader’s attention)** startling fact, vivid example, paradox (contradictory statement that is true), question, analogy or joke

The compelling opening sentence …

Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Put yourself in shoes of reader (editing). Don’t use jargon.** Will reader understand you? How to make it clearer, briefer, more interesting?

• **Get feedback from someone who communicates well (and willing to put in time)**

1. Get feedback
2. Use feedback

Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Put most important ideas first, lesser important ideas later**

Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Do not plagiarize** (copy or paraphrase someone else's words without quotation marks and reference; someone else's words can be from book, magazine, journal article, or web site). Plagiarism is penalized severely.

  Link to U of I Student Code
  Academic Integrity section

  Do not use quotes or references in GEOL 118 Essay; write using your own words

Effective Organization and Writing - Tips

• **Pick good title** - should be brief, interesting, highly informative; captures audience's attention.
Literary Style

Developing consistency and correct grammar with personal style; prevents monotony and boredom.

Style Requirements

• Use proper grammar. See Humorous Rules for Writing.

Style Requirements

• Brevity and clarity: avoid bureaucratese - long strings of simple words that confuse reader; avoid jargon (literary, scientific).

Style Requirements

• Use concrete (not vague) words.

Style Requirements

• When possible, use active (not passive) voice verbs (stronger, clearer, shorter).

The students are taught by the professor.

The professor teaches the students.

The dishes are washed by John.

John washes the dishes.