

GETTING STARTED: A THREE-PART WRITING GUIDE

Step 1: Answer important questions

Who is your target audience? _____

What action do you want your audience(s) to take? _____

Step 2: Write now. Read later

- Write a letter to a member of that targeted audience. Tell them why they should take the action you want them to take. Then put the letter away for at least a day or two.
- Take your letter out and reread it. Does it still make sense? Circle or highlight anything that's confusing or that you had to reread, but don't change anything yet.
- In a new document, write each of the unclear sentences. Do you see any frequent mistakes? How could you correct any errors? How could you rewrite sentences to make them more clear?
- Rewrite all the unclear sentences, then return them to the original document.
- Tuck the new letter away again for another day.
- Continue to isolate unclear sentences until the entire letter is clear and easy to read the first time.
- Write another letter, and notice how your writing has already improved. Watch your revising abilities improve each time you perform this exercise.

Step 3: Check the grammar

- Check for run-ons or sentence fragments. Does each sentence have a subject and a verb?
- Watch for common grammatical errors. If you aren't sure, check out one of our Grammar Guides or contact us for help.