

If you can write an article...



...you
can write
anything!

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 1

Basic Conference Series

Writing is what we do



What we all don't do:

- Tools
- XML
- Localise

What we all do do:

- Write
- Present information
- Help readers understand

We communicate!

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 2

Basic Conference Series

Writing uses techniques



What techniques do you see
in emails, manuals, articles:

- Text?
- Introduction, body, conclusion?
- Topics
- Writing Techniques?

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 3

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- **5Ws and 1H**
- Inverted pyramid
- Question/Answer
- Hierarchies
- Sentence flow

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

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Slide 4

5Ws and 1H

What is this technique?

This technique answers the following questions in your document:

- **Who?** → Who's involved?
- **What?** → What's happening?
- **When?** → When does it take place?
- **Where?** → Where does it take place?
- **Why?** → Why does it happen?
- **How?** → How does it happen?

5Ws and 1H

Why use this technique?

We use this technique because...

who, what, when, where, why, how

...are frequent reader questions, so we answer their questions first!

5Ws and 1H

Text with 5Ws and 1H

Text (with who, what, when, where, why, how)

Technical authors, documentation managers, illustrators, and others in the field gathered at the Technical Communication UK conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September.

The yearly conference hosted by the ISTC, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators, offered members and non-members sessions about the latest tools, trends, and techniques in technical communications.

5Ws and 1H

Text with 5Ws and 1H

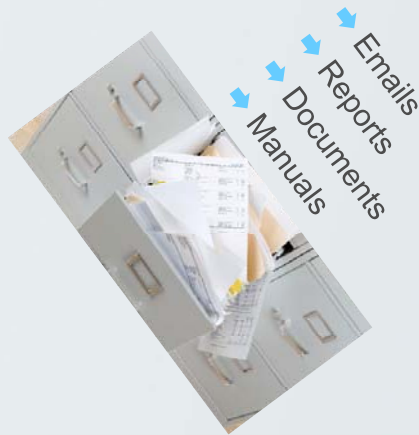
Text (with who, what, when, where, why, how)

Technical authors, documentation managers, illustrators, and others in the field gathered at the Technical Communication UK conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September.

The yearly conference hosted by the ISTC, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators, offered members and non-members sessions about the latest tools, trends, and techniques in technical communications.

5Ws and 1H

Documents with 5Ws and 1H



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Slide 9

5Ws and 1H

Example email

Email (with 2Ws):

Hi <boss>,
I would like to attend the
ISTC Conference this year.
Would the company pay for
it?
Thanks,
<worker>

Email (with 5Ws and 1H: who
what, when, where, why, how)

Hi <boss>,
I would like to use my training budget this year
to attend the ISTC Conference in Nottingham
on 22-24 September.
The conference program is applicable to our
work, and if I attend the two day sessions, the
cost will be within my yearly training budget.
Could I talk to you about it this week?
Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 10

5Ws and 1H

Example email

Email (with 2Ws):

Hi <boss>,
Iwould like to attend the
ISTC Conference this year.
Would the company pay for
it?
Thanks,
<worker>

Email (with 5Ws and 1H: who
what, when, where, why, how)

Hi <boss>,
Iwould like to use my training budget this year
to attend the ISTC Conference in Nottingham
on 22-24 September.
The conference program is applicable to our
work, and if I attend the two day sessions, the
cost will be within my yearly training budget.
Could I talk to you about it this week?
Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

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Slide 11

5Ws and 1H

Example document (with 5Ws/1H)

Documentation (with who,
what, when, where, why, how)



Product Description

The August wireless Presentation Laser Pointer has a built-in red laser and 512MB on the USB receiver for storing PowerPoint files.

Give your next presentation a professional touch using the remote's three simple buttons: page forward, laser highlighting, and page back.

Cost = £ 8.49

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 12

5Ws and 1H

Example document (with 5Ws/1H)

Documentation (with who, what, when, where, why, how)



Product Description

The August wireless Presentation Laser Pointer has a built-in red laser and 512MB on the USB receiver for storing PowerPoint files.

Give your next presentation a professional touch using the remote's three simple buttons: page forward, laser highlighting, and page back.

Cost = £ 8.49

5Ws and 1H

Example document (with 3Ws)

Documentation (with who, what, when, where, why, how)



Product Description

The Kensington Wireless Presenter with Laser Pointer lets you remain in control of your presentation.

Easy-to-use, it allows you to focus on what matters most - your presentation.

Wireless technology lets you forget about wires and cords. Bright laser beam is easy to see.

Cost = £ 16.14

5Ws and 1H

Example document (with 3Ws)

Documentation (with who, what, when, where, why, how)



Product Description

The Kensington Wireless Presenter with Laser Pointer lets you remain in control of your presentation.

Easy-to-use, it allows you to focus on what matters most - your presentation.

Wireless technology lets you forget about wires and cords. Bright laser beam is easy to see.

Cost = £ 16.14

5Ws and 1H

5Ws and 1H order

'Time to break for lunch. Be back at 1:30.'



Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

5Ws and 1H

How can you begin: Add clauses

'I've seen a great new product on the market.'

What do you want to know next?

What is it? What does it do?

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

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Slide 17

5Ws and 1H

How can you begin: Add clauses

'I've seen a great new product on the market.'



This new pen has a laser pointer *and 512 MB storage for files.*

OR

This pen, *with laser pointer and storage for files,* frees me from carrying around a USB stick.

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 18

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H
- **Inverted pyramid**
- Question/Answer
- Hierarchies
- Sentence flow

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

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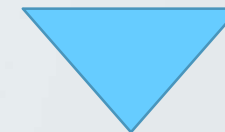
Slide 19

Inverted pyramid

What is this technique?

This technique puts info-dense information at the beginning of text:

- ➔ Topload information so its shape is like this:



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Write anything!

Slide 20

Inverted pyramid

Why use this technique?

We use this technique because an inverted pyramid...

...best uses the beginning of the text and reader attention.



(No wading through text to find main points.)

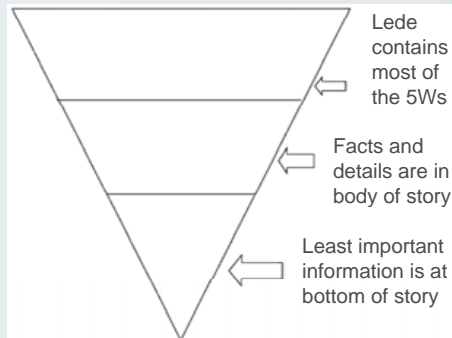
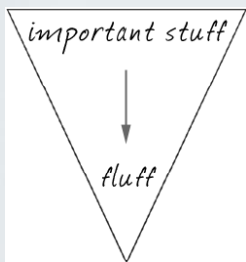
Inverted pyramid

Well-known technique



Inverted pyramid

Well-known technique



Inverted pyramid

Example news feed



Inverted pyramid

Example news feed

Brown denies "double-dealing" in Lockerbie case

Wed Sep 2, 2009 1:33pm EDT

Email Print Share Reprints Single Page



By Peter Griffiths
 LONDON (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on Wednesday that his government had put no pressure on Scotland to release the dying Lockerbie bomber early to improve Britain's trade links with Libya.

Abdel Basset al-Megrahi, terminally ill with prostate cancer, was flown home to Libya last month and has been moved to a hospital emergency room "in a bad way," a Libyan official told Reuters on condition of anonymity on Wednesday.

His release angered Washington and many relatives of victims of the attack, and triggered accusations that Britain had put pressure on the Scottish government to release Megrahi to help British companies win trade deals with the country that has Africa's biggest proven oil reserves.

Brown said he had made it clear to Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi that it was up to the Scottish government to decide whether to free Megrahi. Scotland has its own judicial system.

RELATED NEWS

- Megrahi moved to emergency ward, Libyan official
- 9:56am EDT
- Suez again demand release of men held in Libya
- 10:29am EDT

Featured Broker sponsored link

E*TRADE

Indonesia quake death toll 42, likely to rise

Wed Sep 2, 2009 3:03pm EDT

Email Print Share Reprints Single Page



By Dagit Prakoro and Haru Asprihanto
 PANGALENGAN, Indonesia (Reuters) - The death toll from a powerful earthquake in Indonesia, which killed at least 42 people and forced thousands to flee buildings, is likely to rise, government agencies said early on Thursday morning.

The 7.0 magnitude quake shook buildings in the capital Jakarta on Wednesday afternoon and flattened homes in villages closer to the epicenter in West Java.

Reuters reporters at the scene early on Thursday morning saw many damaged houses, as well as makeshift tents and shelters on the streets and in fields.

"They have taken refuge not only because their houses were ruined, but also because they fear there will be aftershocks," said local official Obar Sobarna. There were about 5,000 people taking refuge in the area, he added.

At least 42 people were killed and more than 300 people injured, the government said. Officials said about 1,300 houses were damaged although local media put the number at 3,500.

Another 42 people were missing, presumed dead, after the quake triggered a landslide in the district of Cianjur, about 60 miles south of Jakarta, said Froyadi Kardono, spokesman for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency.

RELATED NEWS

- TIMELINE: Key disasters in Indonesia since 2004
- 10:17am EDT

Featured Broker sponsored link

100 FREE TRADES

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Write anything!

Slide 25

Inverted pyramid

Don't bore readers!



Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 26

Inverted pyramid

Example emails

Email (pyramid):

Hi <boss>,

I would like to go to a conference this year. I'd like to go to gain more knowledge about our work.

I am considering the ISTC Conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September. Would the company consider paying for the conference through the training budget?

Thanks,
<worker>

Email (inverted pyramid)

Hi <boss>,

I would like to use my training budget this year to attend the ISTC Conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September.

The conference program is applicable to our work, and if I attend the two day sessions, the cost will be within my yearly training budget.

Could I talk to you about it this week?

Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 27

Inverted pyramid

Example emails

Email (pyramid):

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The conference program is applicable to our work, and if I attend the two day sessions, the cost will be within my yearly training budget.

Could I talk to you about it this week?

Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 28

Inverted pyramid

Example long documentation

Example 1: Cold air can enter your house through tiny gaps around windows and doors, exhaust fan outlets, or any other place where hardware or fixtures penetrate the exterior surface of a building. In some residences, hidden openings can let in as much cold air as would come through a hole the size of a crack. **5 lines x**

Example 2: This report describes the ways consumers can lower their winter heating bills. Cold air can enter your house through tiny gaps around windows, doors, exhaust fan outlets, or any other place where the exterior surface of your home is penetrated. Caulking and sealing those gaps will make your home more energy efficient. **6 lines ✓**

Example 3: Consumers can easily lower their winter heating bills by caulking and sealing, wearing warmer clothes, and letting the sun in whenever possible. **2 lines ✓**

(D. Jerz)

Try the stop reading test yourself!

Inverted pyramid

Pyramid (essays) vs. inverted pyramid



Pyramid style of writing:

1. First describe the problem
2. Add supporting information
3. Detail how solution was discovered
4. Present results and outcomes
5. Lastly describe the conclusions

Inverted pyramid style of writing:

1. First present the conclusion
2. Add background / technical details
3. Lastly add supporting details

(Yale)

Inverted pyramid

Pyramid (essays/reports)



Pyramid style of writing:

1. First describe the problem
2. Add supporting information
3. Detail how solution was discovered
4. Present results and outcomes
5. Lastly describe the conclusions

FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING A DEPARTMENTAL INTRANET	
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Inverted pyramid

Example manual

Introduction

This user guide describes Google Earth Version 4.3 and later.

Welcome to Google Earth! Once you download and install Google Earth, your computer becomes a window to anywhere, allowing you to view high-resolution aerial and satellite imagery, photos, elevation terrain, road and street labels, business listings, and more. See [how easy it is to use Google Earth](#).

You can also view a printable version of this user guide (free Adobe Reader required, English only).

Use the following topics to learn Google Earth basics - navigating the globe, searching, printing, and more:

- [Getting to know Google Earth](#)
- [New features in version 4.3](#)
- [Add content](#)

For other topics in this documentation, see the table of contents (left) or check out these important topics:

- [Making movies with Google Earth](#)
- [Using layers](#)
- [Hot places](#)
- [Managing search results](#)

Getting to Know Google Earth

The following diagram describes some of the features available in the main window of Google Earth:

Inverted pyramid

How can you begin: 5Ws, clauses, series

How to start writing in an inverted pyramid:

- Use the 5Ws and 1H
(I'd like to use my [training budget](#) this year to attend the [ISTC Conference in Nottingham](#) on [22-24 September](#).)
- Add clauses
(This pen, [with laser pointer and storage for files](#), frees me from carrying a USB stick.)
- Add series
(Google Earth allows you to view [satellite imagery](#), [elevations](#), [roads](#), [business listings](#), and more.)

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H
- Inverted pyramid
- **Question/Answer**
- Hierarchies
- Sentence flow

Question/Answer

What is this technique?

This technique answers questions in your document:

What questions?

- ➔ Questions you've created or
- ➔ Questions readers have



Question/Answer

Why use this technique?

We use this technique because...

unanswered questions

...lose readers' attention



Question/Answer

Example email

Email (that has unanswered questions):

Hi <boss>,
I would like to attend a conference this year.
Would the company pay for it?
Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 37

Question/Answer

Example email

Email (that has unanswered questions):

Hi <boss>,
I would like to attend a conference (?) this year.
Would the company pay (?) for it?
Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 38

Email (that has answered questions)

Hi <boss>,
I'd like to attend the ISTC Conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September.
Could I use part of my 1000 euro training budget to pay for the conference?
Thanks,
<worker>

Question/Answer

Example article

No Decision In Duke Lacrosse Case

Friday, March 30, 2007 | 9:52 PM



(03/30/07 -- DURHAM) (WTVB) -- Special prosecutors have spent weeks pouring over documents and re-interviewing key witnesses.

All that's left is a final decision and a public announcement. The big question is when?

Rumors are flying but Eyewitness News learned that as of Friday night, no announcement is planned for next week.

Instead, we're told special prosecutors will conduct more interview at the attorney general's office.

A spokesperson says the AG's office has received a few phone calls about the progress of the case. Eleven weeks ago, Durham DA Mike Nifong recused himself and asked the AG's help.

Boxes of evidence arrived and soon after the special prosecutors started their investigation.

Collin Finnerty, Reade Selligmann and David Evans are charged with assaulting an exotic dancer.

What docs? witnesses? rumors?

→ Can we sneak in 5Ws/1H too?

Special prosecutors have spent weeks pouring over police documents and re-interviewing key witnesses for the assault case.

All that's now needed is the court's decision about whether the team players will be charged for assault.

Rumors of a public announcement next week...

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 39

Question/Answer

How can you begin: Add modifiers, clauses

How to answer questions:

Add modifiers:

- documents → police documents
- decision → court's decision

Add clauses:

- conference → ISTC Conference in Nottingham on 22-24 September
- pay → pay for with my 1000 euro training budget
- rumors → rumors of a public announcement next week

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

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Slide 40

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H
- Inverted pyramid
- Question/Answer
- **Hierarchies**
- Sentence flow



Kim Schrantz-Berquist

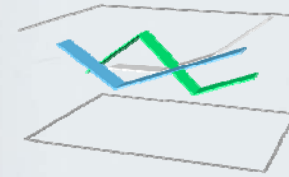
Write anything!

Slide 41

Hierarchies

What is this technique?

This technique coordinates and tiers information using connectors like:



- ➔ more importantly
- ➔ in addition
- ➔ least of all
- ➔ in contrast
- ➔ consequently

(connectors = conjunctive/comparative adverbs)

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Write anything!

Slide 42

Hierarchy

Why use this technique?

We use this technique because information is different...



...readers need clues about priority, importance, cause/effect, contrast, comparison, sequence, etc.

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 43

Hierarchy

Connectors: Do we need them?

consequently

Sentence 1:

A driver using a cell phone is four times as likely to be in an accident.

Connector: *consequently*

Sentence 2:

Many countries are banning the use of cell phones behind the wheel.

Sentence 1+2 connected (shows cause/effect):

A driver using a cell phone is four times as likely to be in an accident; *consequently*, many countries are banning the use of cell phones behind the wheel.


Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!


Slide 44

Hierarchy

Example connectors


and, also, in addition, besides

Some connectors are equal in focus:

 **and, also, in addition** show parallelism
besides, furthermore shows parallelism, but with offset or focus

You can view satellite imagery, elevations, **and** roads. ✓


You can view satellite imagery, elevations, ~~**as well as**~~ roads. ✗

The conference has useful topics and we should book now. ✗


The conference has useful topics. We should book now. ✓

Hierarchy

Example connectors


more importantly, least of all

Some connectors are not equal in focus:


 **more importantly** shows comparison and hierarchy.
Focuses the reader on the more important information.

Our internal translators, and **more importantly** our readers, must be able to read our documentation. ✓

Our internal translators and our readers must be able to read our documentation. ✗

Hierarchy

Example connectors


before, after, finally, then

Some connectors move along focus:

 **Before, after, finally, then, subsequently** shows sequencing.

First shut down the computer, **then** unplug the power cable, and **finally** lift off the metal casing. ✓

Shut down the computer, unplug the power cable, and lift off the metal casing. ✗

Hierarchy

How can you begin: Look for focus

How to add connectors:

- Look for parallels
(Use connectors like and, also, in addition, besides...)
- Look for comparisons and hierarchies
(Use connectors like more importantly, least of all...)
- Look for sequencing
(Use connectors like before, after, first, second, finally, then...)
- Don't overdo. Keep using a simple full stop
(The conference has useful topics. Book now.)

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H
- Inverted pyramid
- Question/Answer
- Hierarchies
- **Sentence flow**



Kim Schrantz-Berquist

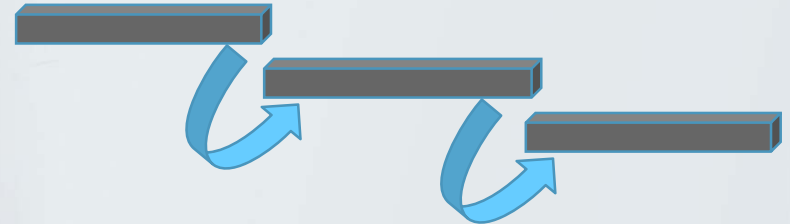
Write anything!

Slide 49

Sentence flow

What is this technique?

This technique links a sentence or paragraph to the next sentence or paragraph:



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Write anything!

Slide 50

Sentence flow

Why use this technique?

We use this technique...



...to help readers read from one sentence or paragraph to the next.

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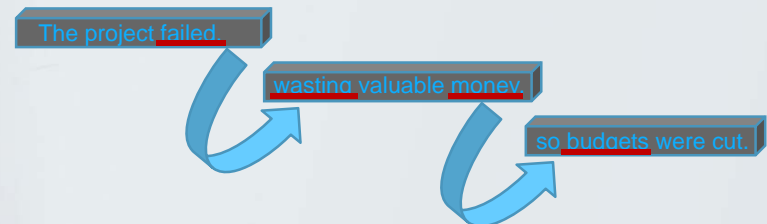
Write anything!

Slide 51

Sentence flow

How to link

Last words → → relate to → → First words



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Write anything!

Slide 52

Sentence flow

Example email (paragraph linking)

Email (no linking):

Hi <boss>,

I would like to attend the ISTC Conference this year.



Would the company pay for it?

Thanks,
<worker>

Email (with linking)

Hi <boss>,

I would like to use my training budget this year to attend the ISTC Conference.



The conference program is applicable to our work, and the cost is within my yearly training budget.

Could I talk to you about it this week?

Thanks,
<worker>

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 53

Sentence flow

Example article

Lorem Ipsum is an extract of the book *The Extremes of Good and Evil*.



The book, written in 45 BC by Cicero, is a treatise on the theory of ethics, a very popular subject during the Renaissance.

Lorem Ipsum is an extract of the book *The Extremes of Good and Evil*.



Written in 45 BC by Cicero, it is a treatise on the theory of ethics, which in the Renaissance era was a popular subject.



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Write anything!

Slide 54

Sentence flow

Lastly, there's always more

Lorem Ipsum is an extract of the book *The Extremes of Good and Evil*.

The book, written in 45 BC by Cicero, is a treatise on the theory of ethics, a very popular subject during the Renaissance.

Lorem Ipsum is an extract of the book *The Extremes of Good and Evil*.

Written in 45 BC by Cicero, it is a treatise on ethics, which at that time was a popular subject.

(word choice)

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 55

Sentence flow

How can you begin: Read ends/beginnings

How to add linking:

- Read the beginning/ends of sentences/paragraphs
(Example: The book is about ethics, which in the Renaissance era was a popular subject.)
- Identify disjoint
(Example: The book is about ethics, which in the Renaissance era was a popular subject.)
- Rework with linking to a related topic
(Example: The book is about ethics, which was a popular subject in the Renaissance era.)

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Write anything!

Slide 56

Agenda



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H ✓
- Inverted pyramid ✓
- Question/Answer ✓
- Hierarchies ✓
- Sentence flow ✓

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Write anything!

Slide 57

Summary

Key point of 5Ws and 1H

Answer frequent reader questions first:

- ➔ Who?
- ➔ What?
- ➔ When?
- ➔ Where?
- ➔ Why?
- ➔ How?

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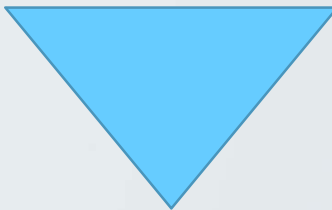
Write anything!

Slide 58

Summary

Key point of inverted pyramid

Topload information



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Write anything!

Slide 59

Summary

Key point of question/answer

Answers readers' questions before they pause/stop reading to wonder ✓

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Write anything!

Slide 60

Summary

Key point of hierarchies

Connect, coordinate, tier:

- ➔ more importantly
- ➔ and
- ➔ finally
- ➔ consequently

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

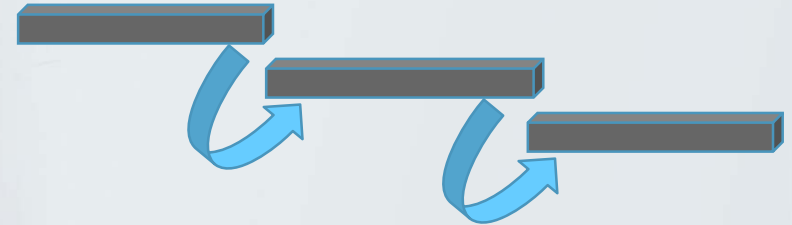
Write anything!

Slide 61

Summary

Key point of sentence flow

Link ends/beginnings of sentences/paragraphs:



Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 62

Summary

Have fun using these techniques!



Writing techniques:

- 5Ws and 1H ✓
- Inverted pyramid ✓
- Question/Answer ✓
- Hierarchies ✓
- Sentence flow ✓

Kim Schrantz-Berquist

Write anything!

Slide 63

If you can write an article...



...you
can write
anything!