

# FOUR KEYS TO EFFECTIVE WRITING

## 1. Identify your audience—who will read what I write?

Am I writing to a specific individual? A diverse group?  
How much do they know about my subject?  
What is their reason for reading my work?  
What is their attitude toward me and my work?

## 2. Establish your purpose—why should they read what I write?

What do I want my readers to do after reading my work?  
Am I trying to explain? Convince? Entertain?

## 3. Formulate your message—what do I have to say to them?

What is my main idea?  
What important points do I want to include?  
What specific details should I include to illustrate my points?

## 4. Select style and tone—how can I best communicate to them?

Is formal or informal language appropriate?  
Do I want to sound passionate? Matter-of-fact?  
Persuasive? Unbiased? Authoritative? Funny?

Adapted from Kolin, Philip C. Successful Writing at Work. Second Edition.