



# FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER

*Strengthening Humanitarian Response*

# Functional Writing Skills for FSC Information Management





# LESS IS MORE

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HOW TO WRITE LESS AND SAY MORE:  
THE POWER OF BREVITY

# Writing Skills for an IMO

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Have you ever noticed how certain writers have an unparalleled mastery of the English language.

In every sentence they craft, they never waste words, and still manage to communicate their point with a succinct grace.

Their prose is nothing short of amazing. It's economical, to the point and most of all, clear.

This concise crafting of copy is a joy to read, it instils confidence in the reader not just by being useful, but by also managing to communicate the primary benefit and message in a very short period of time.

Although all audiences are different and require differing approaches to produce content that appeals to them, blockbuster content across the board always shares one common element. Regardless of industry, audience or approach, all successful content exercises extreme brevity.

# Writing Skills for an IMO



- *The purpose of writing is to communicate facts or thoughts, usually in order to inform, to instruct, to entertain or to persuade.*
- It is essential that communication is **FACTUAL, CLEAR, AND SUCCINCT**. **You get your point across quickly and are more easily understood. It is the art of using as few words as necessary.**

Ernest Hemingway: “My aim is to put down on paper what I see and what I feel in the best and simplest way,” he said. In fact, when challenged to write a complete story in six words, he wrote: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

- Replace longer descriptions with links for the relatively few people who want more information.
- Delete individual words that are redundant. For example, why write “free complimentary” webinar when “free” and “complimentary” mean the same thing?
- Replace fuzzy expressions with precise terms.
- Never try to write to a certain word length. Just because the space is there, you don’t have to use it. Remember that most people will focus on the introduction and not read to the end.

## **SPELLING AND GRAMMAR**

There are no excuses for spelling or grammatical errors in a writing sample. Be sure to proofread the entire piece and have a trusted friend or colleague double check your work.

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## Find the mistake:

1. In June 2016, Food security clustre partners were able to reach 100 k poor urban people with food assistance and cash transfers.
2. The Prime Minister of Nowhereland has declared famine in two locations unilaterally, without suffiecint data to support his position. The UN is challenging his position.
3. Limited access and funding are the primary reasons for low levels assistance in the south west of the country despite the increased needs as a result of the recent earthquake. In the coming weeks, FSC partners, including FAO, WFP, and the Government will increase discourse with all parties of the conflict to enhance safe passage of humanitarian goods and assistance. The HCT is also meeting with donors to discuss these funding shortfalls and imminent needs.