## CONVERSATIONAL WRITING (WP2L)

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### Purpose
This presentation contributes to the module learning objectives by defining conversational writing style and presenting four characteristics of conversational writing.

### Time Required
- 2 hrs.

### Activity Description
PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes. This session is most appropriate for strong English writers who write technical content regularly. It is valuable for participants who will write a policy brief or blog in later workshop sessions.

This presentation has the Conversational Writing Exercises embedded throughout, so that participants practice and discuss each of the four characteristics of conversational writing as they learn about them. This presentation should always be delivered with the exercises, and in total will take a minimum of 2 hrs.

This presentation introduces conversational writing style, and highlights how it is different from the technical writing many participants are used to. Don’t be surprised if you get push-back from participants along the way—many are excellent technical writers, and it can make them uncomfortable to be told that what they’ve been doing all along is wrong. If you sense resistance from the participants, remember to highlight that this writing style is for policy and nontechnical audiences; we are not asking them to change their technical writing or saying that their technical writing is bad. But when they present technical content to nontechnical audiences, the writing style needs to be accessible.

The writing exercises are embedded in the PowerPoint presentation. When you come to each set of exercises, give the participants a certain amount of time (5 or 10 mins) to work through the examples on their own. After the allotted time, ask for volunteers or call on participants to share their work for each example. Discuss their responses. Give
the participants the answer key providing a sample “fix” for each sentence after the session.

Key Learning Concept(s)

- The definition of conversation writing.
- Nontechnical audiences require a familiar, accessible writing style because the content is inherently not familiar to them.
- Conversational writing increases the impact of writing, which can increase the likelihood that the reader will take action.
- Four key elements of conversation writing: sentence variety; writing with agents (avoiding passive voice); avoiding nominalizations; and using conversational word choice.

Materials Needed

- Laptop and projector

Associated Sessions

- Conversational Writing Exercises (WP3E)

Required Preparation

- None