

WRITE IT THE RIGHT WAY!
Life is an essay!

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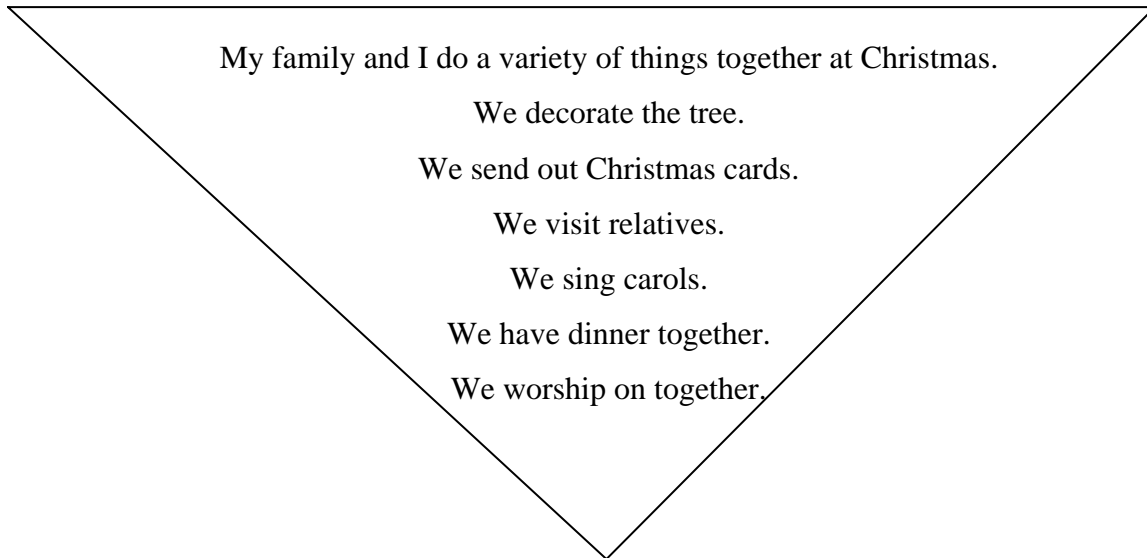


Have you ever tried to explain something to a friend or colleague and confuse him/her instead? Does the person you are talking to lose interest or become distracted before you are finished with your comments? It's difficult to get your point across when you have a complicated story to tell. Whether you are writing or speaking, here's a sure fire way to keep the attention of your listener or reader.

Any journalist will tell you that the inverted pyramid style of writing is probably the best way to write. Think about it. When you read the newspaper, do you read every word of every article or do you read the first paragraph and skim the rest? The first paragraph always gives you the general idea of the article. It's meant to whet your appetite for more information and move you to read on. If you don't have time to read on, the first paragraph or two satisfies you at least for the moment.

Any sales person will tell you that you have only the first couple of minutes to pique the client's interest. After that whatever you say could be lost unless you inspire some curiosity on the listener's part. Your first few words are paramount if you want your prospective client to hear you. Hence, the inverted pyramid. Get your client's interest by summarizing what you want to say in a couple of sentences. Then, once the client is focused, you can get down to the details.

In the inverted pyramid style, the main idea of the writing or talk is mentioned first. Once you have focused on that, you can get more specific. Details are then mentioned in order of importance or in sequential order. For example:



This method cannot only be used in your personal conversations, but business and college papers should also be done this way for clarity.

In the business world, your associates want as much information as possible in the shortest amount of time. There's no room for unnecessary or irrelevant data. State your idea, decision or request in the first paragraph of your letter or proposal in a brief and concise manner. Once that's done, the subsequent paragraphs of your composition can explain your thoughts further. Use a new paragraph for each new idea.

When students write their college papers, the same premise applies. The first paragraph should contain the main idea of the paper. English teachers call it the thesis. All subsequent paragraphs explain the main idea.

Whether you are talking or writing for business, pleasure or college, leave your listener or reader with your main thoughts or ideas. This is called the conclusion.

A quick rule of thumb is:

Say or write what the paper or the conversation is to be about.

Talk or write about it in detail.

Tell your listener or reader what you have just said in a different way.

Your audience will remember the last thing you say or write.

My best wishes for success.

Life is an essay.

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