

Clear Writing: Write for the Reader

[Click here to watch the Intro to Clear Writing video](#)

[Click here to watch the Clear Writing- Six Steps video](#)

Clear Writing

Puts the
reader first
and focuses
on **action.**

Target audience
can easily
find what they need,
understand it, and
use it.

clarity

usability

transparency

Clear Writing

- language your readers know
- information readers need
- design that improves understanding

“The secret
of being a
bore...
is to tell
everything.”

“...we have to
write so
people don't
have to read
what we write.”

synchronous diaphragmatic flutter

=

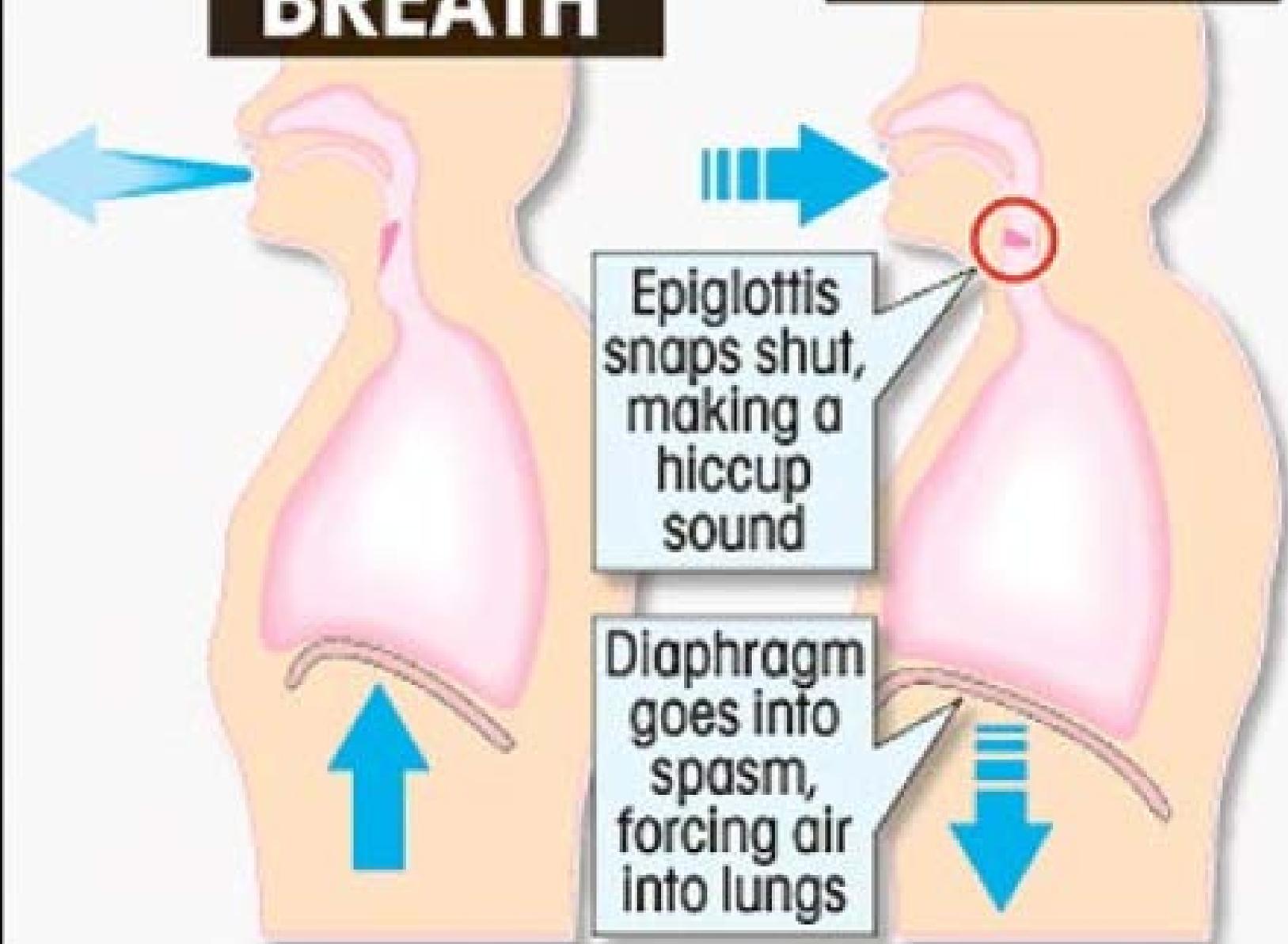
a sudden closure of the
glottis due to the
spasmodic contraction
of the diaphragm



Trust Me, I'm a Doctor

NORMAL BREATH

HICCUP



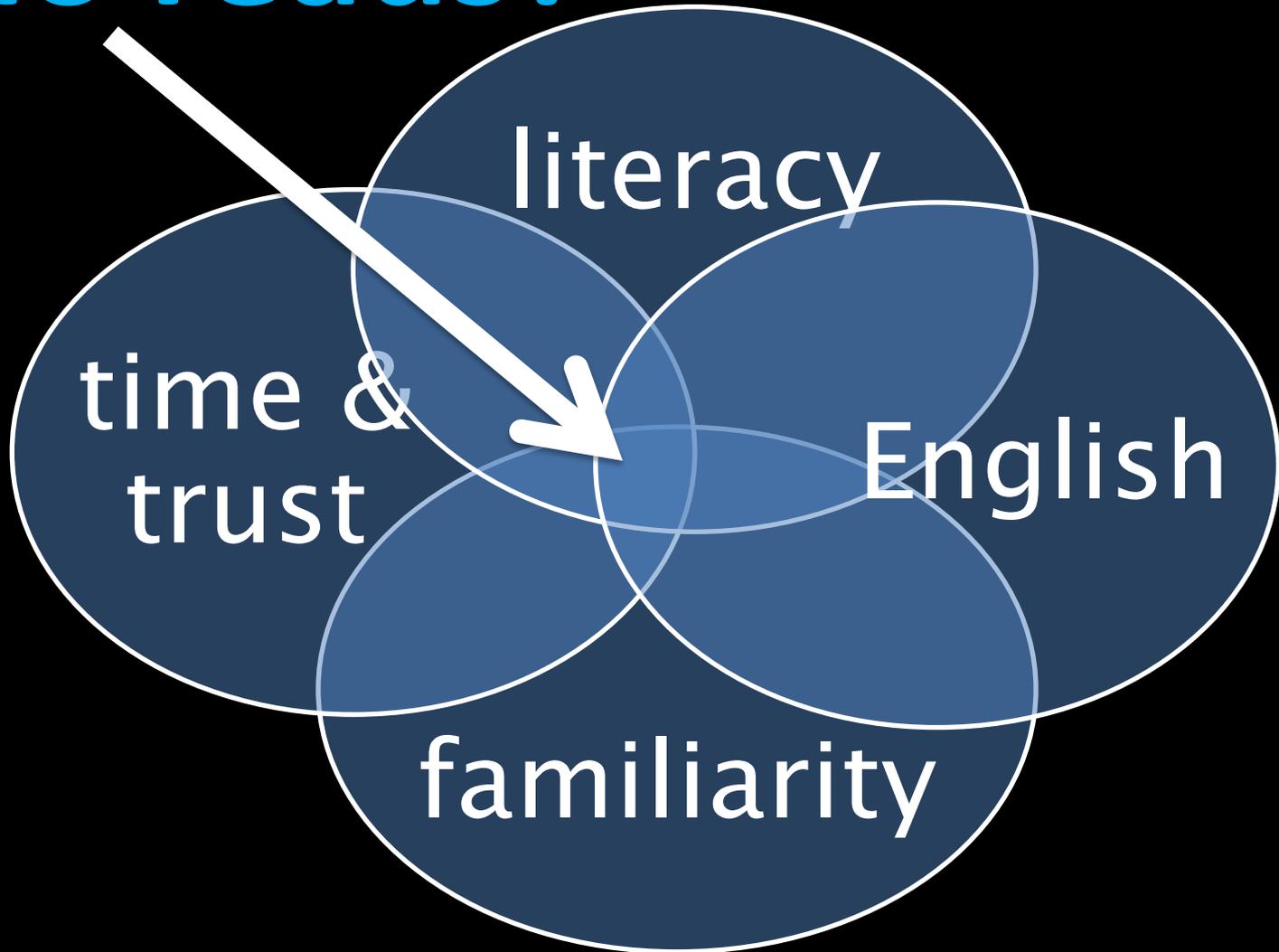
Epiglottis snaps shut, making a hiccup sound

Diaphragm goes into spasm, forcing air into lungs

- literacy skills
- experience with English

- information overload
- readers are changing

Who reads?



TL;DR

- reach larger audience
- engage people
- save time and money
- improve outcomes

- time consuming
- demeaning
- lacks precision



“If we cannot understand our rights, we have no rights.”

Clear Writing:

Write for the Reader

6-Step Process

Think



Plan



Write



Design



Test



Revise

Step 1: Thinking

- know your reader
- know your purpose
- know your impact

W.I.I.F.T.

Purpose / Impact

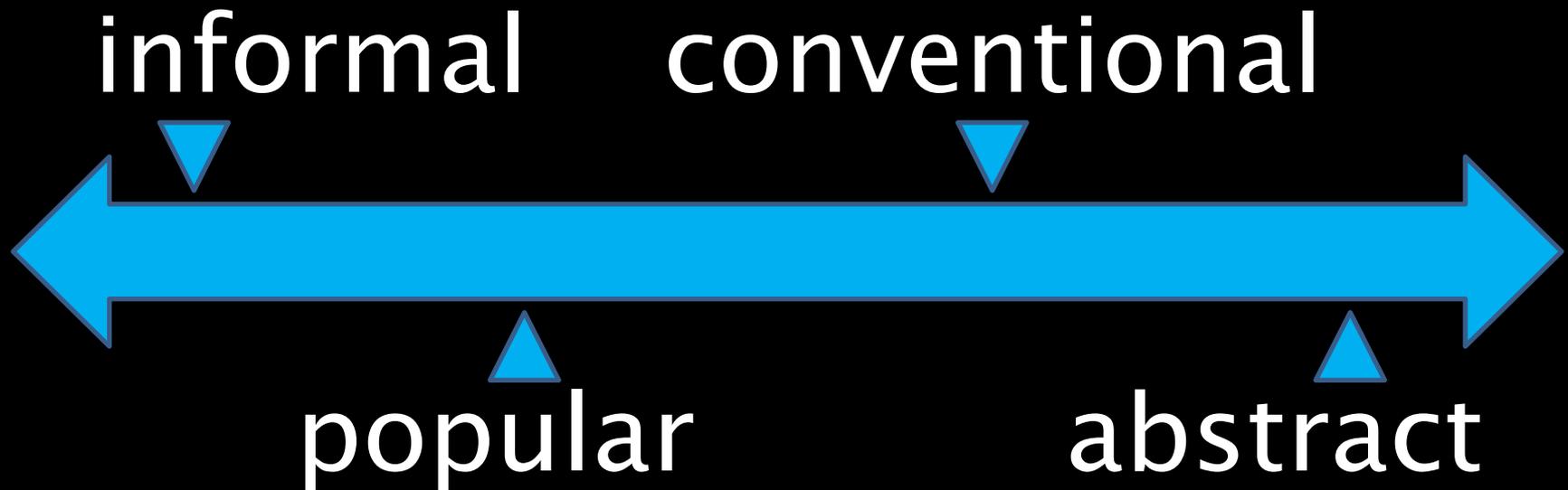
- deliver programs
- build knowledge
- train staff
- seek partnerships

Who are your
primary and
secondary
audiences?

Step 2: Planning

- essential information
- register
- tone

Register



Register

- MicroRNAs are known to play regulatory roles in gene expression associated with cancer development.

Register

- I'm going to tell you the story of how brave MicroRNAs help scientists battle cancer. The story begins with the genes inside the cells in your own body.

Step 2: Planning

- order
- style
- format
- design

Persuade the
reader that the
message is
worth the
cognitive effort.

Step 3: Writing

- organization
- words
- sentences
- paragraphs
- grammar

Step 3: Writing

- begin with important ideas
- use logical order
- make the order obvious

Before: Do not open door until checking that area is clear.

After: Check that the area is clear then open door.

Step 3: Writing

- abbreviations
- acronyms
- jargon



CAUTION

Step 3: Writing

- nouns made from verbs
- noun stacks

“micro bacteria population
diversity has increased in the last 3
years”

Step 3: Writing

simple, complete sentences:

Matthew presents this workshop
(Subject) (Verb) (Object)

Step 3: Writing

Before: The porcupines were tagged.

After: The biologist tagged the porcupines.

Step 3: Writing

Paragraphs

- 3 – 5 sentences
- topic sentence
- introductory words, transitions, definitions, examples, commentary

Chunks

- information blocks
- one kind of meaning
- leave out what's not relevant to this chunk

Step 3: Writing

- verbs
- adverbs
- adjectives

Step 3: Writing



Writing is a
process not
a product.

- Not clear
- Not logical
- Verbose or pretentious
- Klunky or full of clutter
- Boring
- Full of clichés
- Lacks rhythm
- Ambiguous

The behavioural manifestations of stress responses have been shown to vary greatly between individuals in rodents, pigs, birds, fish, and humans.

The behavioural manifestations of stress responses have been shown to vary greatly between individuals in rodents, pigs, birds, fish, and humans.

The behavioural manifestations of stress responses have been shown to vary greatly between individuals in rodents, pigs, birds, fish, and humans.

The behavioural manifestations of stress responses have been shown to vary greatly between individuals in rodents, pigs, birds, fish, and humans.

Individual rodents, pigs,
birds, fish, and humans
behave very differently
in response to stress.

Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising

- Flesch-Kincaid
- Gunning Fog Index
- Dale-Chall Index
- www.readabilityformulas.com

$$.39 * \frac{\# \text{ words}}{\# \text{ sentences}} + 11.8 * \frac{\# \text{ syllables}}{\# \text{ words}} - 15.59$$

Revising helps
you to
rethink.

Step 5 & 6: Testing and Revising

- read document aloud
- ask colleague to read your draft
- conduct a focus group

Clear Writing:

Write for the Reader