

Writing Script: What to Avoid

Do not write in formal language

Write for the voice, not for the page.

- ✓ Make it conversational
- ✓ Use active voice
- ✓ Shorten sentences
- ✓ Use first and second person pronouns
- ✓ Use contractions

Good for written paper; not for script:

In this tutorial, the Mayflower Compact, which is one of our founding documents, will be examined.

A better script:

In this tutorial, we'll take a look at the Mayflower Compact, one of our country's founding documents.

Do not copy on-screen text to your script (or vice versa)

The script is descriptive; the on-screen text is abbreviated.

- ✓ Write the script first. Then create elements on-screen that illustrate your key points
- ✓ Put only headlines or important words on-screen

If your on-screen text looks like this:

Unlike other planets; the Earth has:

- 21% oxygen in the atmosphere
- Liquid water on the surface
- Life

Your script should be more descriptive:

The Earth is unlike every other planet in the Solar System in a number of different ways:

- First, it is the only planet that has an atmosphere containing 21 percent oxygen.
- It is the only planet that has liquid water on its surface. And,
- The Earth is the only planet in the solar system that has life.

Do not assume the narrator knows your thoughts

Unless you will narrate your own script, clearly communicate your requests to the narrator.

- ✓ Write out how you want technical terms, acronyms, or equations to be pronounced
- ✓ Use **bold** font for emphasis
- ✓ Signal in [] brackets your desire for pause, slow, etc.
- ✓ Get rid of any text (especially in parentheses) that you don't want to be narrated. If the text in parentheses needs to be read, remove the parentheses

Narrator may not know how to say this:

On Earth, gravity can be measured as $G=Ma$ or 9.8 m/s^2

A better script:

On Earth, gravity can be measured as Gravity equals mass time acceleration, or 9.8 m/s^2 [9 point 8 meters per second squared].

This script can be read in several ways:

According to CDC, approx 17% (12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2 - 19 years are obese.

A better script:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 17%, or 12.5 million of children and adolescents aged 2 - 19 years, are obese.