

# A PROFESSIONAL TONE

Professional writers use a formal yet efficient style. They follow specific guidelines to communicate their ideas courteously and directly.

“You might not write well every day, but you can always edit a bad page. You can’t edit a blank page.” ~Jodi Picoult

## 5 KEYS TO WRITING PROFESSIONALLY

1. **Know your audience**—Learn your audience’s age range, education level, and beliefs about your topic in order to communicate most effectively.
2. **Know the formatting guidelines**—Professional documents usually have specific writing tones, word counts, etc., so make sure you follow the formatting requirements.
3. **Be courteous**—Professional writers should always aim to write graciously without inappropriate or discriminatory language. If you insult the opposition, this does **not** strengthen your argument!
4. **Be confident**—**Avoid** writing hesitantly by overusing modifiers (i.e. most likely, should, possibly), but also **avoid** writing arrogantly by using rigid, prideful phrasing (i.e. you will never truly understand, the only excellent idea).
5. **Write actively**—Write actively and clearly, so your audience will understand your message more easily. Please see the “Writing in Active Voice” handout for specific instructions.

## PROFESSIONAL WRITING EXAMPLE

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From Alec Magnum’s article “Star Wars VII: The Force Awakes Trailer Released,” written for *Regent’s Daily Runner*.

“The third and final official trailer for Star Wars: The Force Awakens aired last night at half-time, during Monday Night Football on ESPN. With excitement intensely ramping up for the upcoming film, thousands of fans around the world tuned in to get their last glimpse at what is proving to be 2015’s most highly-anticipated film.”

**Highlights:** Writes for his audience, uses active verbs, and follows standard news conventions (i.e. uses a hook to lure readers in)

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