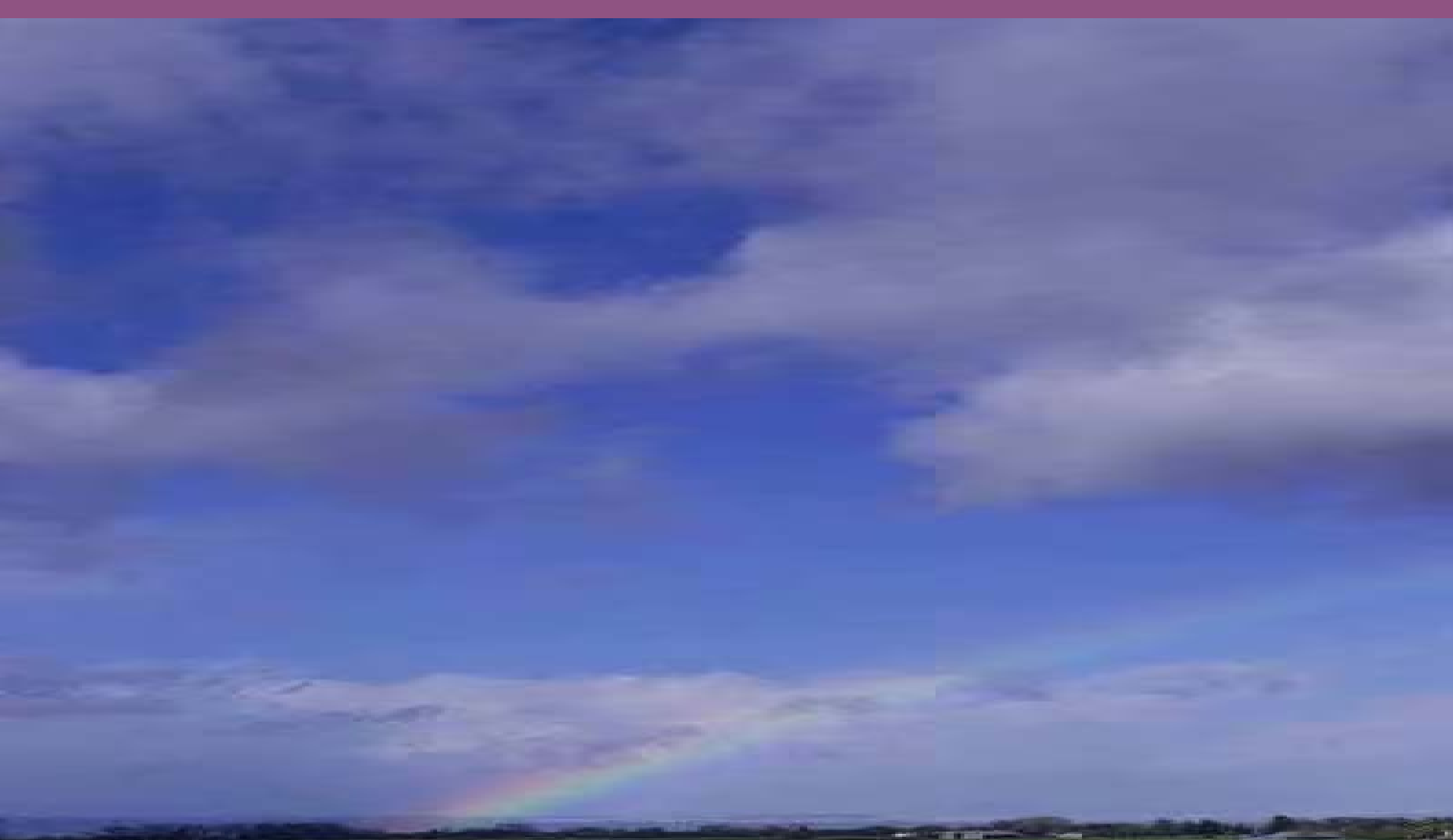# Expanding horizons

Our aim…

- Inspire you
- Tell you about opportunities
- Tell you how to open up opportunities
- Talk about skills
- Take a bird's-eye look at the pinnacle

Business writing is changing

Poorly ~~written~~

Poorly ~~structured~~

~~Bureaucratic~~
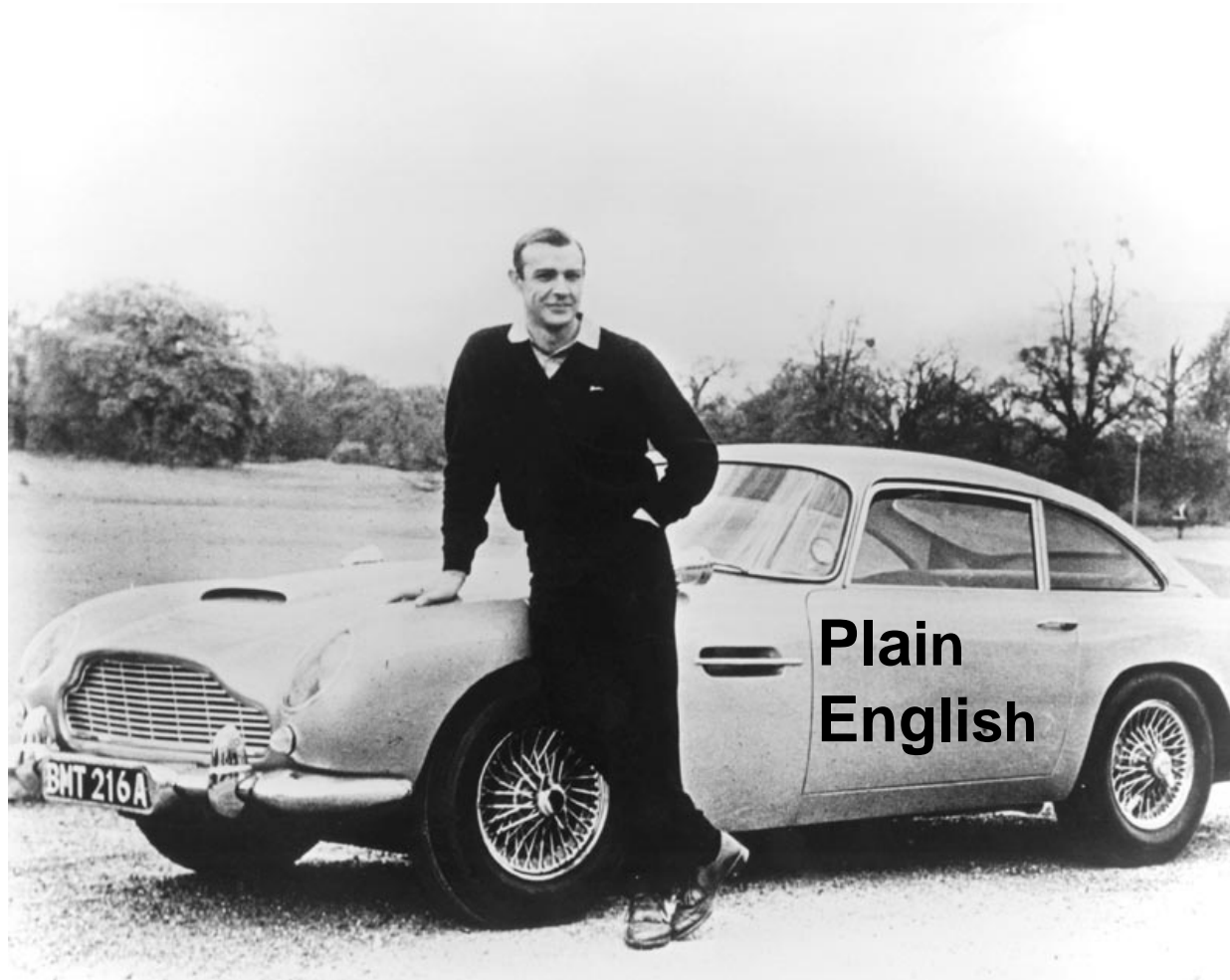
Self-~~important~~

~~Vague~~, imprecise, ambiguous

Not fit for purpose

Business writing is changing

- Clear, coherent
- Easily accessible
- Transparent
- Accountable
- Super-efficient
- **Fit for purpose**

5

The vehicle of change

Plain English

Ride the wave

Who we are: Write Group

First steps…

A business writing franchise

A moment of awakening

'If only I'd seen the participants' own writing first.'

'If only I'd seen examples of some of the actual documents they work on.'

Finding our niche

Customised business writing training

Who we are: WriteCoach

Building our knowledge

- Focused, in-depth knowledge
- Breadth and depth of experience
- Huge credibility
- Devoted clients

Bringing theory to life

Real-world business results

Expanding our experience

Editing and proofreading services

Our edge

Professional editors with **two huge pluses**

Who we are: WriteEdit

Something more

We needed a standard…

An accredited quality mark

Who we are: WriteMark

Why?

Editing and proofreading — part of the natural cycle of **all** publishing

How?

Improve editing and proofreading skills

How can we inspire?

Develop better pathways to success

How?

Make editing for the public and corporate sectors a **key component** of all editor training
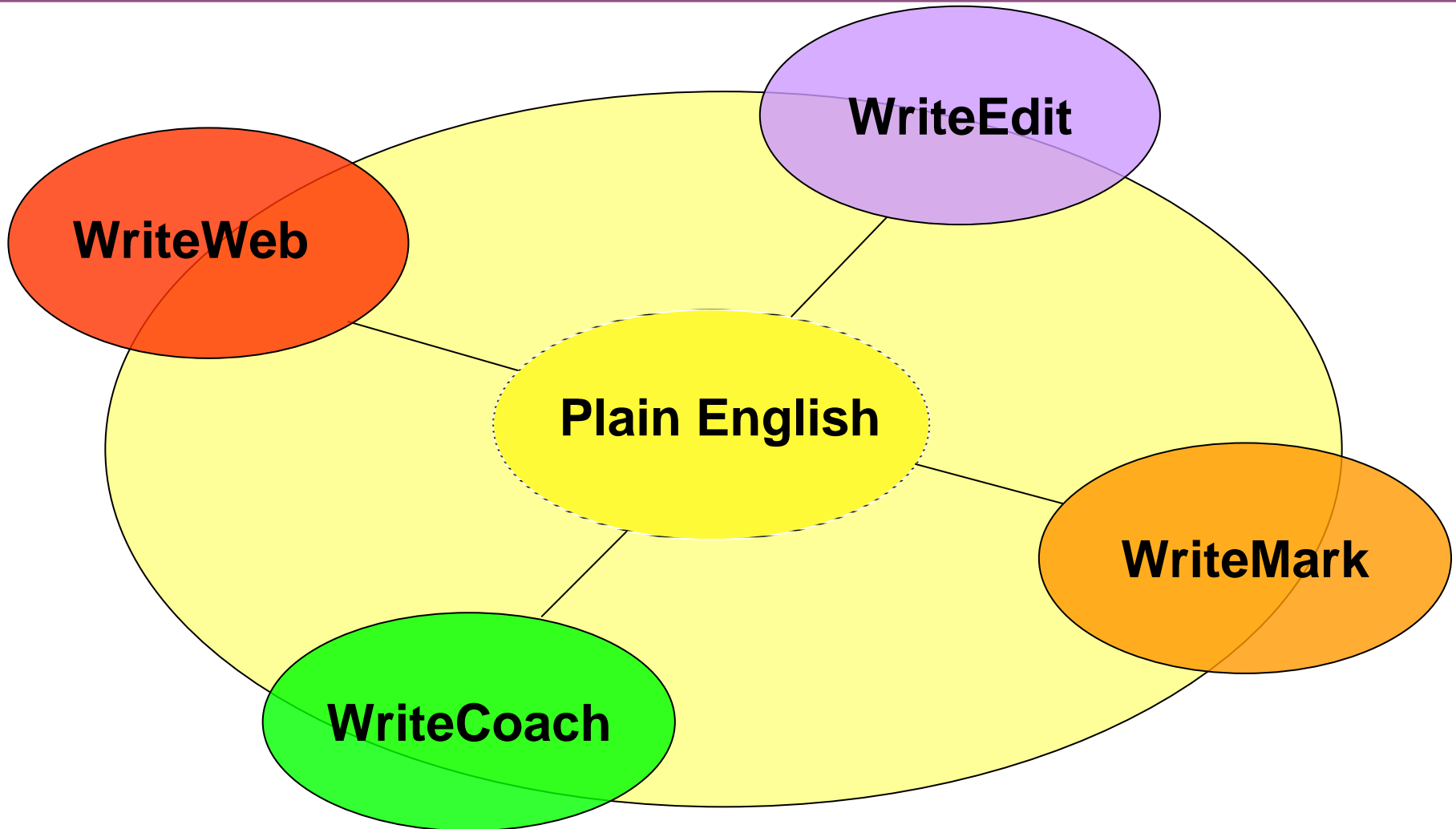
How?

Develop an expertise that makes editors and proofreaders indispensable

Write Group's plain English platform

Plain English carries clout

- Clients want the benefits
- Clients see the benefits in practice
- Clients value your expertise

What is plain English?

- Clear
- Concise
- Precise
- Appropriate to the **audience**

Whose needs?

Plain English focuses on the **reader's** needs

Plain English — main elements

- Structure
- Content
- Language
- Grammar, punctuation, spelling
- Style consistency
- Layout, overall presentation

Plain English — main elements

Additional elements for web content:

- Strategic purpose
- Credibility
- Usability
- Links

Easy to read…

Plain English — key principles

- Clear purpose
- Key messages upfront
- Lots of clear, informative headings
- Active voice
- Short sentences
- No jargon
- Clear layout with plenty of space

The goal of plain English

The reader understands what the writer is saying, on the **first reading**

Plain language

Plain language is an international movement

The wave of change

Plain English

More than just a style

Plain English —
a principle of
democracy

More than just a style

Plain English is essential for social justice

More than just a style

Plain English reduces the
waste of taxpayer money

More than just a style

The contribution you make goes much further than the document itself

More than just a style

A lot of seemingly magical, win-win things happen

More than just a style

Plain English benefits everyone

Are you a generalist?

Generalists like a little bit of everything

Are you a specialist?

Specialists like to specialise…

Where's my paintbrush?

Recognised opportunities

All types of paper-based publications in
the public arena

Recognised opportunities

Documents and publications in a specific discipline or field

Recognised opportunities

Style guides
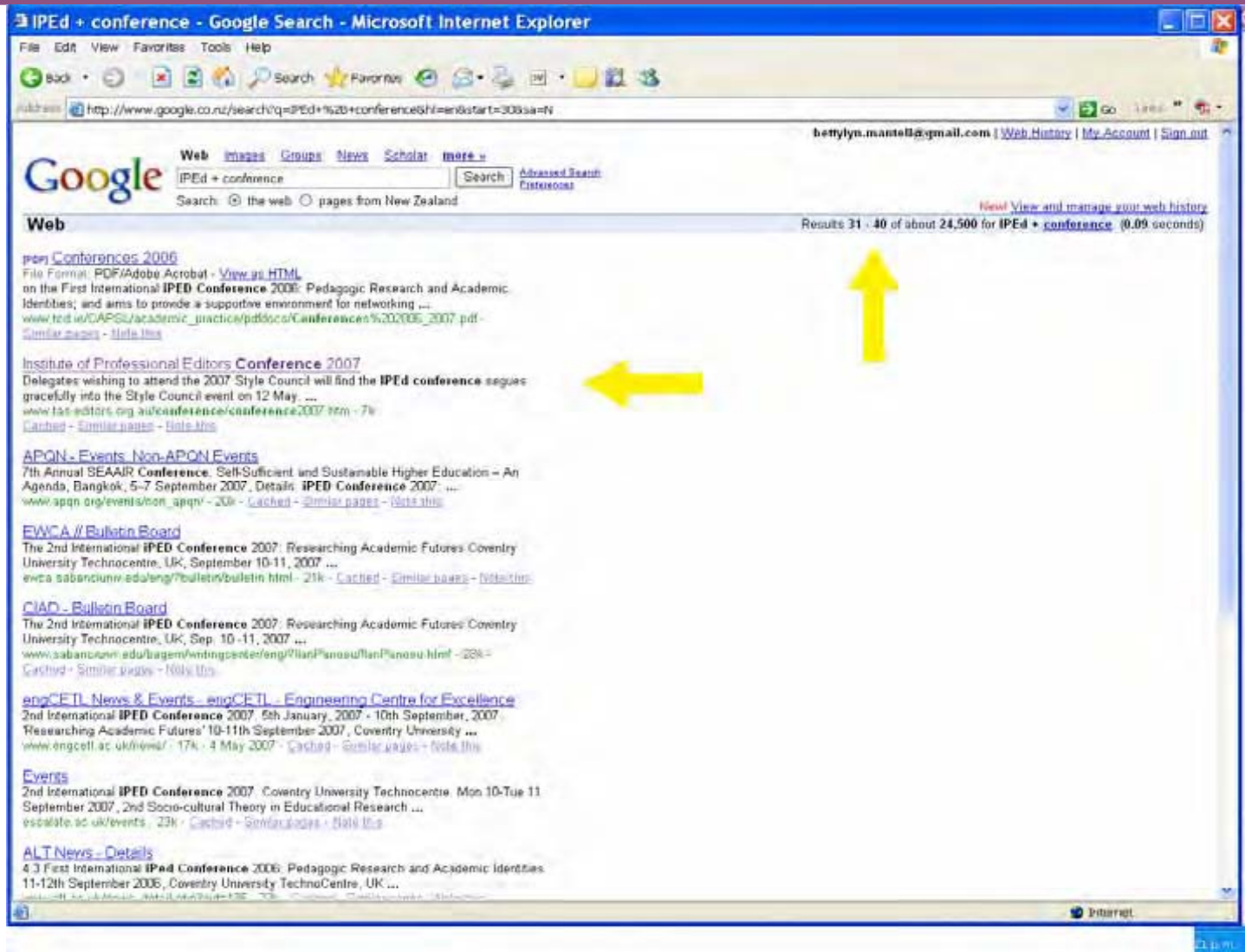
Recognised opportunities

Web content

Search engine rankings matter

Unrecognised opportunities

Critiquing documents

Unrecognised opportunities

Designing forms

Unrecognised opportunities

Testing document usability

Unrecognised opportunities

Developing templates

Have you considered…?

Managing

- Communications manager
- Publishing manager

Have you considered…?

Consulting

Create opportunities

- Position yourself
- Make yourself valuable
- Team up with organisations
- Offer yourself for overflow work

Create opportunities

- Team up with other freelancers
- Increase your knowledge and skills
- Network and build sound working relationships
- Get involved with chambers of commerce

Take opportunities

Plain English

A place where you'll be inspired … the place where you can be inspiring

Entry-level skills — Write Group

- Editing and proofreading experience

- Experience of business documents

- Plain English

- Knowledge of local and international style conventions

- Ability to work within tight timeframes

- Pass of 90% in our editing test

Skills

Plain English

Editing and proofreading

Beautiful portfolios

But…

- Incorrect table of contents
- Incorrect page numbering
- Varied page format
- Duplicated information in headers and footers
- Inconsistent bullet points (size and indent)
- Muddled heading styles

But…

- Inconsistent capitalisation
- No number style
- Ampersands in headings
- No knowledge of en and em dashes
- Muddled quote marks (single / double)
- Items that should be kept together on one line running over two…

Skills

Style (local and international)

Skills

Word (format)

Get a grip on Word

Skills

Ability to think

Skills

Research and learning skills

Skills

Communication skills

Skills

Interpersonal and leadership skills

Skills

Project management skills

Range of work

submissions

annual reports

letters

templates

legislation

brochures

newsletters

manuals

proposals

pamphlets

press releases

web content reports

movie subtitles

teletext

contracts

ministerials

handbooks

timetables

directories

flyers

guides

toolkits

plans

minutes

forms

maps

ads

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web

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pamphlets

press

releases

Example 1

A selection of transport modes

Rewrite

A choice of transport

Example 2

These staff help to facilitate the process assisting the group…

Rewrite

These staff help the group to…

Example 3

Consultation and the involvement of all teachers in the development of student achievement targets is recommended.

Rewrite

We recommend you involve all teachers when developing student achievement targets.

Example 4 [Before]

Legal representation and other expert advice or representation is permitted in adjudication and parties may use this to help them prepare for and argue their case. Any such assistance used by the homeowner would be at their own expense.

Example 4 [After]

You may get advice from your lawyer, who may help you argue your case at the adjudication meeting. If you do use a lawyer, you will need to pay the lawyer's fees yourself.

Example 5 [Before]

What happens when you turn 30? You can expect a letter from us around the time of your birthday. As you know, ABC Money is designed especially for people under 30, 19   29 year olds in fact, so we'll get in touch to outline the advantages of our other everyday accounts, including XYZ Money, and help you change accounts.   [58 words]

Example 5 [After]

What happens when you turn 30?

You can expect a letter from us around the time of your 30th birthday. We'll tell you about our other great banking packages and help you choose an account that suits your needs. [39 words]

Writing for a global audience

Jim is a Vietnam vet.

Translation

Jim is a veterinarian from Vietnam.

Writing for a global audience

She died in a freak rugby accident.

Translation

She died in a rugby match for people with deformities.

It's got to fit

Michael J Summerville, Morguefile.com
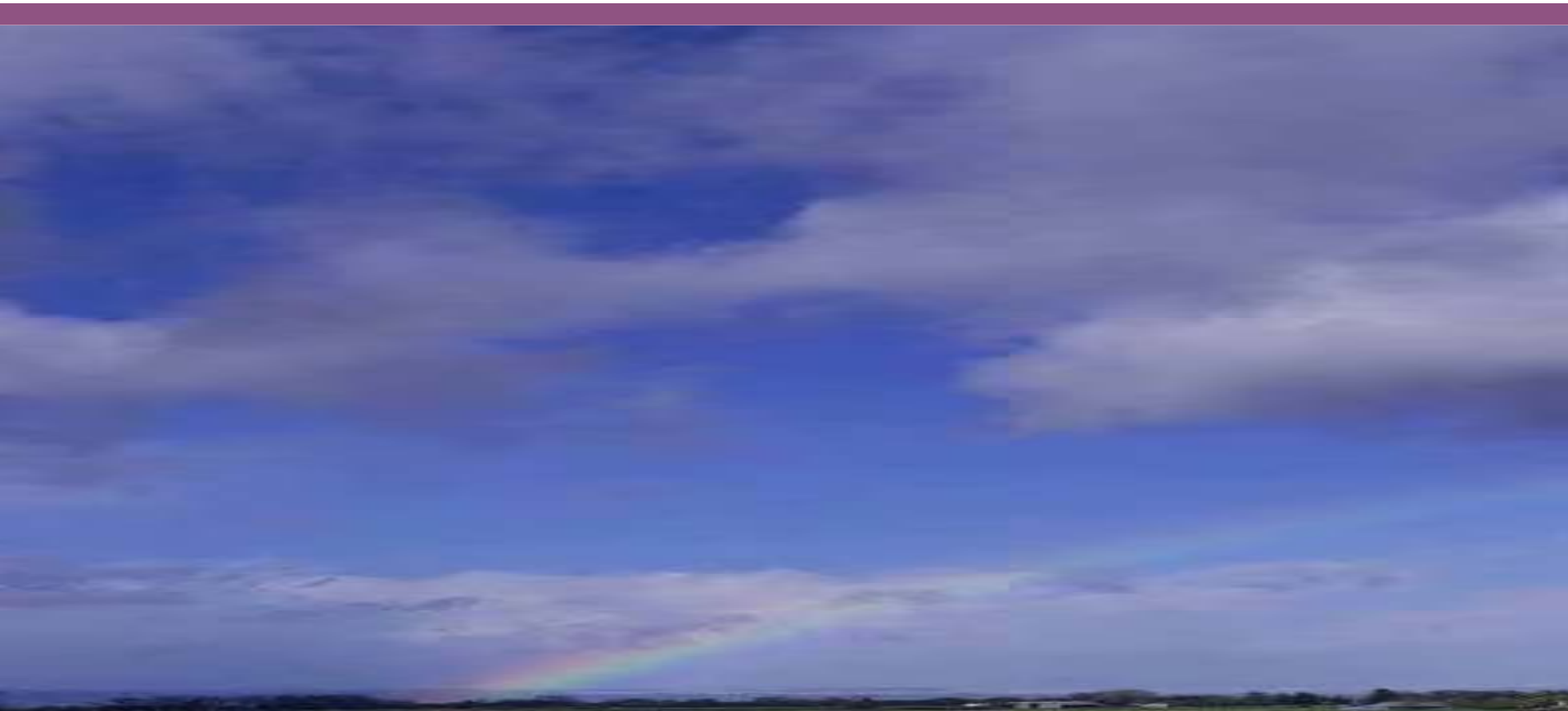
Foster success

Do what you love

Love what you do

How far? How high?

Alex Orlando, Morguefile.com

Expand **your** horizons

Be inspired!

WriteMark plain English conference

Where?   Wellington, New Zealand

When?   16 November 2007

Website   www.writemark.co.nz