

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT OF THE PROCESS
A YOUNG WRITER MUST HAVE FOLLOWED
BEFORE PUBLISHING HIS WORK.

This is a short story about a rather young man who was part of a team assigned to complete a tough job for a new company that shall remain nameless for now. We’ll call this guy “Masso” (but he had other nicknames) —

Masso was part of a team of five, assigned to complete a certain job, which was deemed to be absolutely vital to the future of an enterprise in which he was involved (as a rather junior member of the company). If done poorly, this task might make the entire venture fail miserably. Furthermore, it was more-or-less a matter of “life & death” because, not only were the lives & fortunes of the members somewhat at risk, but the welfare of many, many others were dependent upon its success and some of them would be in great danger if the venture failed.

The goal was to produce an entirely new “operating system” replacing the existing one; the team’s job was to write a “proposal” for it, not only saying that a new system was needed & justifying its replacement, but also outlined the specifications and objectives of the new system.

What today’s engineers might call:
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS DESIGN SPEC.
*(However, the document also had to serve as a “sales pitch”
but subtly and without appearing to be one.)*

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Company management delegated this job to a team of 5 board members. The other four guys (Bob, John, Ben, and Roger) were very-experienced and well-respected members of the company, who came from metropolitan areas up North (NYC, Boston, & Philly); All four were well-established big-shots back home, and each was quite successful and wealthy, with very impressive pedigrees and/or influential families. WHEREAS Masso was merely a young farmer, barely into his thirties and encumbered by large debts. He was regarded by many of the Yankees as a Southern yokel from the backwoods; Furthermore, he was a loner who spent most of his time with books (and the rest of his time with his new wife, when he wasn’t out in the fields). Not traveling in the same circles as refined Northern gentlemen of great influence, Masso had made very little effort to get along with the other members of the company.

Unfortunately, when the team of five first convened, the other guys made excuses, such as

- I don’t have the necessary skills,
- I’m obnoxious and the others won’t approve what I write

- I have to go out of town next week, etc.

and every one of them bowed out.

The wise, old man — whom everybody expected to do the job (because he had the most experience in doing that sort of thing) — cited some legal restrictions on work he was permitted to do in the city, and he copped out, too.

So, Masso was stuck with the job, and there wasn't much time left before the deadline, less than two weeks away.

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The job of the committee was not only to specify a brand new design replacing the old operating system, but to convince everybody — both inside and outside the company (as well as interested parties in other countries) — that the OLD design was no longer suitable for the company and its stakeholders, and to describe a brand-new, unprecedented design to replace it.

Their job was not merely to design and describe a completely new system, but mainly to produce a document explaining why the old system was defective. They had to justify WHY the company was changing course, completely, and embarking on this totally new course — by doing something nobody had ever done before! Never before, in the the recorded history of the industry!

So, for this purpose, it was essential to write a “persuasive essay”.

[Just like the ones required for the SAT exam.]

Now, a persuasive essay typically has three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion [“Formula”]

1. Begin by stating a point of view or “thesis” in a brief “introduction” paragraph;
2. Next is the “body”: a few paragraphs that explain the reasoning in detail, giving facts and examples to support the thesis, (*An important technique, here, is the “tie-back”: after giving an example, refer back to the thesis that it supports.*)
3. Finally, restate the thesis in a short conclusion-paragraph.

In short,:

- **Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em;**
- **Tell ‘em;**
- **Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.**

INTRO; BODY; CONCLUSION.

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THE INTRO:

The main purpose of the intro paragraph was to explain the new plan and what it must do, but the first challenge Masso had was to say WHY it was even necessary to write the document that explains it.

The managers firmly insisted that it was their business only, and none of anybody else’s business!

Many of them thought an announcement wasn't even necessary. They were determined to make clear that they were their own bosses, and it must not sound like they were asking anybody else's permission! (*So why even bother writing this announcement?!*)

Nevertheless, something had to be said to publicize their plans, so he had to start off by saying WHY there was any announcement at all. The best he could come up with was to say that it was being written out of "respect" for the opinions of others, after hand-waving about the fact that they were **already** doing what the announcement announced.

THE BODY:

Before describing the proposed design for the system and its purposes, Masso decided to start with what any reasonable system must accomplish, and perhaps to explain WHY systems are needed in the first place!

It was rather difficult to state the objectives of a new system when many people thought that the existing system was just dandy and they had no idea that there was anything wrong with it.

In only a few words, he had to first explain WHY change was needed, then specify the requirements that must be met by any viable system, and finally explain how the old system failed to meet these requirements.

*** Don't forget that he had to do all of this in a few pages. It is truly remarkable that he managed to do all this in just 21 sentences. NOT counting a LIST OF FACTS illustrating what was wrong.

Actually, it was a list of complaints about the problems with the old system.

I should add that, a couple of years earlier, the predecessor of this company had sent in a list of complaints/grievances, asking for redress and correction. Unfortunately their protests were not only ignored, but the proprietors to whom they had complained took punitive action against them, and generally made things even worse. In fact, there were even some violent reprisals!

That's why the board was meeting here again, and why they had decided to change the system.

It was also appropriate to smooth the ruffled feathers of some folks who were not necessarily to blame and whose sympathy might be useful later on. So he added another paragraph to soothe them.

Finally, there was a summary paragraph, restating what they had decided to do,

and expressing hope for the future (to end on a happier note).

Now, here is the result of this writer's efforts.

INTRO: To explain why there was to be a new system (being careful NOT to ask anybody else's permission), Masso began by saying "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind" was the only reason to announce that we are doing what we are doing. He began:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

This intro, and the rest of the announcement was co-authored and approved by the entire team:

[Benjamin Franklin](#), [Roger Sherman](#), [John Adams](#), [Robert R. Livingston](#), and it was signed UNANIMOUSLY by everyone who was present.

(Another member also approved it in abstentia but could not sign it because he was off fighting battles elsewhere: George Washington.)

Nevertheless, nearly all of it was written by "Masso" — better known as Thomas Jefferson.

The announcement or "declaration" continued by describing WHY any system was needed at all, and what justified the very existence of any such system.

It was important to undercut the notion of "**divine right of Kings**" to state exactly WHY "governments are instituted among men", and to list principles that are the foundation of any proper government.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,
--That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Before getting to the point, it should be pointed out that important actions should not be undertaken lightly or casually.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and

transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

Next, the declaration addressed the failures of the old system, and the reasons why it had to be abolished. Here is how he introduced the “laundry list”:

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

Next followed the list of grievances.

I'll omit it here, except to say that it lists 27 items; actually 18 items, one of which had a sub-list of 9 items.

Most of the items began with the words “**He has**”

- He has refused ...
- He has forbidden ...
- He has obstructed ...
- He has plundered ..
- He has excited ...

Of course, the pronoun “**he**” referred to the **King** — but, unlike previous documents, he was never referred to by the proper title, “**His Majesty**”.

Then, there was the bit about the earlier complaints, and how they were ignored and rebuffed:

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Since these complaints were expressed against the King of England, but not directly against the other people in England, it might be a good idea to make nice to the latter (and to say that we can all be friends, after this unpleasantness is over) while maybe griping that maybe they should have sympathized earlier.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

So, in conclusion, let's restate our decision,

make it clear what we are doing,
and wrap things up by expressing hope for good things in the future.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

64 lines 1320 words

21 sentences (+ list of 27 items; actually 18 items, one of which had a sub-list of 9 items.)

Only 644 words w/o the laundry list.

This is “The Writers’ Corner”

THIS HAS BEEN A SHORT STORY ABOUT A WRITER

It was all about how he composed the document that he published two dozen decades ago!

Yesterday, we celebrated the work of this amazing writer:

Thomas Jefferson.