

Air Force Tongue And Quill



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FROM: SAF/CIO A6

SUBJECT: Air Force Guidance Memorandum to AFH 33-337, *The Tongue and Quill*, 1 August 2004

By Order of the Secretary of Air Force, this Air Force Guidance Memorandum immediately replaces pages 143-149 of Chapter 12, Electronic Communication, AFH 33-337. Additional guidance on electronic mail is provided and new sections on instant messaging and social media have been added. To the extent its directions are inconsistent with other Air Force publications, the information herein prevails, in accordance with AF1 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*.

Attachment 1 to this Guidance Memorandum contains the pages to AFH33-337 that have been replaced.

The guidance in this Memorandum becomes void after 180 days have elapsed from the date of this Memorandum, or upon incorporation by interim change to, or a rewrite of AFH 33-337, whichever is earlier.

WILLIAM T. LORD, Lt Gen, USAF
Chief of Warfighting Integration and
Chief Information Officer

Air Force Tongue and Quill is an essential guide for effective communication within the United States Air Force (USAF). This resource is designed to standardize the writing and briefing processes, ensuring clarity and professionalism in all written and spoken communications. The Tongue and Quill serves as a critical tool for members of the Air Force, enabling them to convey information accurately and succinctly while adhering to the service's standards. In this article, we will explore the purpose, structure, and key components of the Air Force Tongue and Quill, as well as tips for effective communication.

Purpose of the Air Force Tongue and Quill

The primary purpose of the Air Force Tongue and Quill is to enhance communication within the Air Force and with external stakeholders. This guide aims to:

- **Standardize Communication:** Establish a uniform approach to writing and speaking within the Air Force.
- **Improve Clarity:** Ensure that messages are clear and easily understood by the intended audience.
- **Foster Professionalism:** Promote a high standard of professionalism in all communications, reflecting the values of the Air Force.
- **Facilitate Training:** Provide a foundational resource for training new personnel in effective communication practices.

By adhering to the guidelines outlined in the Tongue and Quill, Air Force members can improve their communication skills, leading to better collaboration and mission success.

Structure of the Tongue and Quill

The Air Force Tongue and Quill is organized into several sections that cover various aspects of communication. These sections include:

1. Written Communication

Written communication is a critical component of the Air Force's operational effectiveness. The Tongue and Quill provides guidelines for:

- **Memorandums:** Standard formats for internal communication, including routing, subject lines, and signatures.
- **Reports:** Guidelines for drafting reports that summarize findings, analyses, and recommendations.
- **Emails:** Best practices for professional email communication, including subject lines, salutations, and signatures.
- **Notices and Bulletins:** Formats for disseminating important information quickly and effectively.

2. Oral Communication

Effective oral communication is equally important in the Air Force. The Tongue and Quill outlines strategies for:

- **Briefings:** Techniques for delivering clear and concise briefings, including structure, visual aids, and audience engagement.
- **Presentations:** Guidelines for preparing and delivering impactful presentations, focusing on clarity and professionalism.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** Tips for effective one-on-one conversations, including active listening and feedback.

3. Standard Terminology and Abbreviations

The Tongue and Quill emphasizes the importance of using standardized terminology and

abbreviations within the Air Force. This section includes:

- Commonly Used Terminology: A glossary of terms frequently encountered in Air Force communications.
- Abbreviations: Accepted abbreviations and acronyms that should be used in written and verbal communication.

4. Formatting and Style Guidelines

To maintain consistency and professionalism, the Tongue and Quill provides formatting and style guidelines, including:

- Font and Size: Recommended fonts and sizes for various types of documents.
- Margins and Spacing: Guidelines for page layout, including margins, line spacing, and paragraph alignment.
- Citations and References: Proper ways to cite sources and reference materials in reports and documents.

Key Components of Effective Communication

Effective communication in the Air Force goes beyond following the Tongue and Quill guidelines. It also involves mastering key components that enhance clarity and understanding.

1. Clarity and Conciseness

One of the main goals of the Tongue and Quill is to promote clarity and conciseness in communication. To achieve this, Air Force members should:

- Use Simple Language: Avoid jargon and overly complex language that may confuse the audience.
- Be Direct: Get to the point quickly to maintain the audience's attention.
- Limit Length: Keep written documents and verbal presentations as brief as possible while still conveying necessary information.

2. Audience Awareness

Understanding the audience is crucial for effective communication. Air Force members should consider the following:

- Tailor Content: Adapt the message based on the audience's knowledge and experience level.
- Engage the Audience: Use interactive elements, such as questions or discussions, to involve the audience in the communication process.
- Anticipate Questions: Be prepared to address potential questions or concerns from the audience.

3. Active Listening

Active listening is a vital component of effective communication. It involves more than just hearing words; it requires fully engaging with the speaker. To practice active listening:

- Maintain Eye Contact: Show attentiveness by looking at the speaker.
- Provide Feedback: Offer verbal and non-verbal cues to indicate understanding.
- Ask Clarifying Questions: If something is unclear, ask questions to gain a better understanding.

4. Professionalism and Etiquette

Professionalism is a hallmark of Air Force communication. Members should adhere to the following principles:

- Respect: Treat all individuals with respect, regardless of rank or position.
- Punctuality: Arrive on time for meetings and briefings.
- Appropriate Language: Use respectful and appropriate language in all communications.

Challenges in Communication

Despite the comprehensive guidelines provided in the Tongue and Quill, challenges in communication can still arise. Common challenges include:

- Cultural Differences: Members from diverse backgrounds may have different communication styles and norms.
- Technological Barriers: Miscommunication can occur due to technical issues with communication tools.
- Information Overload: Too much information can overwhelm the audience, leading to confusion.

To address these challenges, Air Force members should remain adaptable and seek feedback to improve their communication skills continuously.

Conclusion

The Air Force Tongue and Quill is a vital resource that enhances communication within the USAF. By adhering to its guidelines, members can improve their writing and speaking skills, leading to clearer, more effective communication. Mastering the principles of clarity, audience awareness, active listening, and professionalism will further strengthen the Air Force's commitment to excellence in communication. As members of the Air Force continue to navigate the complexities of modern communication, the Tongue and Quill will remain an invaluable tool for fostering understanding and collaboration, ultimately contributing to mission success.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Air Force Tongue and Quill?

The Air Force Tongue and Quill serves as a guide for effective communication within the Air Force, providing standardized formats for writing and speaking to ensure clarity and professionalism.

What types of documents does the Tongue and Quill cover?

The Tongue and Quill covers a variety of documents including memorandums, letters, reports, and presentations, detailing the proper structure, format, and style for each.

How does the Tongue and Quill enhance military communication?

It enhances military communication by standardizing language and formats, reducing misunderstandings, and ensuring that all personnel can effectively convey and receive messages.

Is the Tongue and Quill applicable outside of the Air Force?

While it is primarily designed for the Air Force, many principles of the Tongue and Quill can be applied to other branches of the military and professional settings that require formal communication.

What are some key formatting rules outlined in the Tongue and Quill?

Key formatting rules include proper use of headings, bullet points, spacing, and margins, as well as guidelines for tone, conciseness, and clarity in written communication.

Where can one access the latest version of the Air Force Tongue and Quill?

The latest version of the Air Force Tongue and Quill can be accessed online through official Air Force publications or the Air Force e-Publishing website.

How often is the Tongue and Quill updated?

The Tongue and Quill is updated periodically to reflect changes in communication standards and practices within the Air Force, ensuring it remains relevant and useful.

What training is available for using the Tongue and Quill?

The Air Force offers various training programs and resources, including workshops and online courses, to help personnel understand and effectively use the Tongue and Quill in their communication.

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