

Grasping readers in tune with your vision



By [Gwen Watkins](#), issued by [Freelancers Writing Services](#)

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Many people prefer to process their information visually (V) and therefore think of the world in terms of visual references or pictures. Auditory (A) and kinaesthetic (K) people think primarily in sounds and feelings, but you want all of them to read and react to any content you may put out.

Taken from the principles of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), the use of VAK language in writing is critical because, as the writer, you do not know what the readers' preference will be and you will unconsciously write in your own favoured style; missing two-thirds of your audience.

Readers resonate better with language that attracts their attention and makes an impact.

VAK improves communication

If I want to state that I have understood someone's message, I could say: "I see what you mean," (Visual) or "I hear what you are saying," (Auditory) or "I follow what you mean," (Kinaesthetic).

All of these replies are a form of agreement but couched in a preferred style. I have replied to the message in the way that I prefer to process information. The difficulty arises when my response does not meet your processing model.

I am sure I am not alone in thinking to myself "Yes, I know you said 'you hear where I am coming from' but do you see what I mean?"

To continue the example, the person to whom I am talking then says:

"I don't quite see what you mean; I would have thought that..." (They are operating in Visual language).

Alternatively, they could say, "I hear where you are coming from but I prefer the sound of...." (Auditory)

Equally, "I understand just how you feel but I am going with my gut feel..." (Kinaesthetic)

He or she may be telling you that there is disagreement but equally he or she could be indicating that you have used language that does not match his or her frame of reference. If you continue to talk to them in a different mode, chances are they will not get the message.

The key therefore to effective communication is to listen closely to the VAK language patterns the person uses. Though we all use the three modes, depending on the circumstances, most people will give away their preferred language unconsciously.

Analysing language preferences

Many people say that they cannot listen to the language of the person they are talking to, analyse the words and then restructure their own language, while talking themselves. Actually, your brain does this automatically; it is simply a question of noticing it and practising. Begin with friends and family and you will notice how much better communication becomes and how easy it is to switch language modes

Using VAK in writing

When we write, it is far more difficult because we have no way of knowing what the reader will prefer, so we try to use all three modalities at least once in our message.

This means paying attention to the hidden meaning in the word and not just the visible meaning – if this sounds hard, consider that you probably have grasped the essence of this by now and you are already listening, watching and feeling the communication mode of your colleagues.

Below are a few words that can indicate the preferred modality.

Visual (see)	Auditory (hear)	Kinaesthetic (feel)
Appear	Communicate	Cold
Clarity	Discuss	Emotion
Demonstrate	Hear	Feel
Examine	Inquire	Grasp
Focus	Interview	Hold
Idea	Listen	Lukewarm
Inspect	Mention	Move
Look	Remark	Pressure
Perceive	Report	Rush
See	Say	Soft
Show	Sound	Solid
View	Tell	Touch

Words that have no specific modality are often used when addressing groups or where the modality cannot be analysed. These include words such as – analyse, believe, change, consider, know, learn, notice, remember, think, understand.

ABOUT GWEN WATKINS

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