



AD
RP

Taking the “ACK” out of Acknowledgments

Debbie Meyers
Rutgers University Foundation
SERC June 7, 2023

Because



First, who are you?

Intro/thesis statement

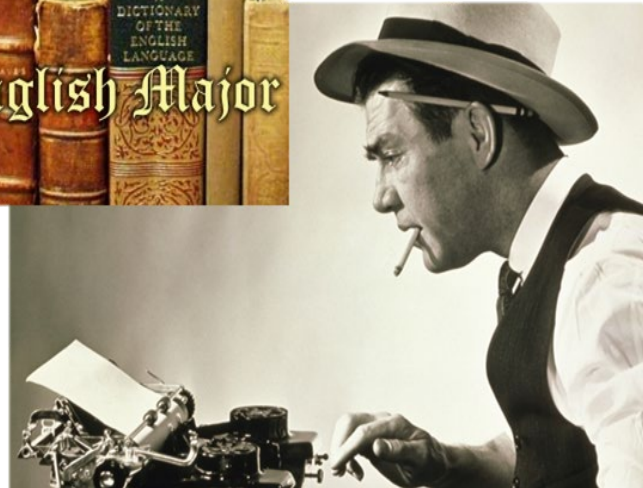
Body

Body

Body

Conclusion

Audience: 1
Language: formal



LEDE:
5 Ws & H

Most important info
goes first

Info gets less important

Audience: many
Language: informal

Who are you NOT?

MARKETING



Acknowledgment challenges

Delays

- Holiday weekends
- Check sits on a desk
- Insufficient information
- Made payable to the wrong entity



Staff and resources

- Turnover
- Lack of staff dedicated solely to stewardship
- Level of staff education on technology and best practices



Four A's

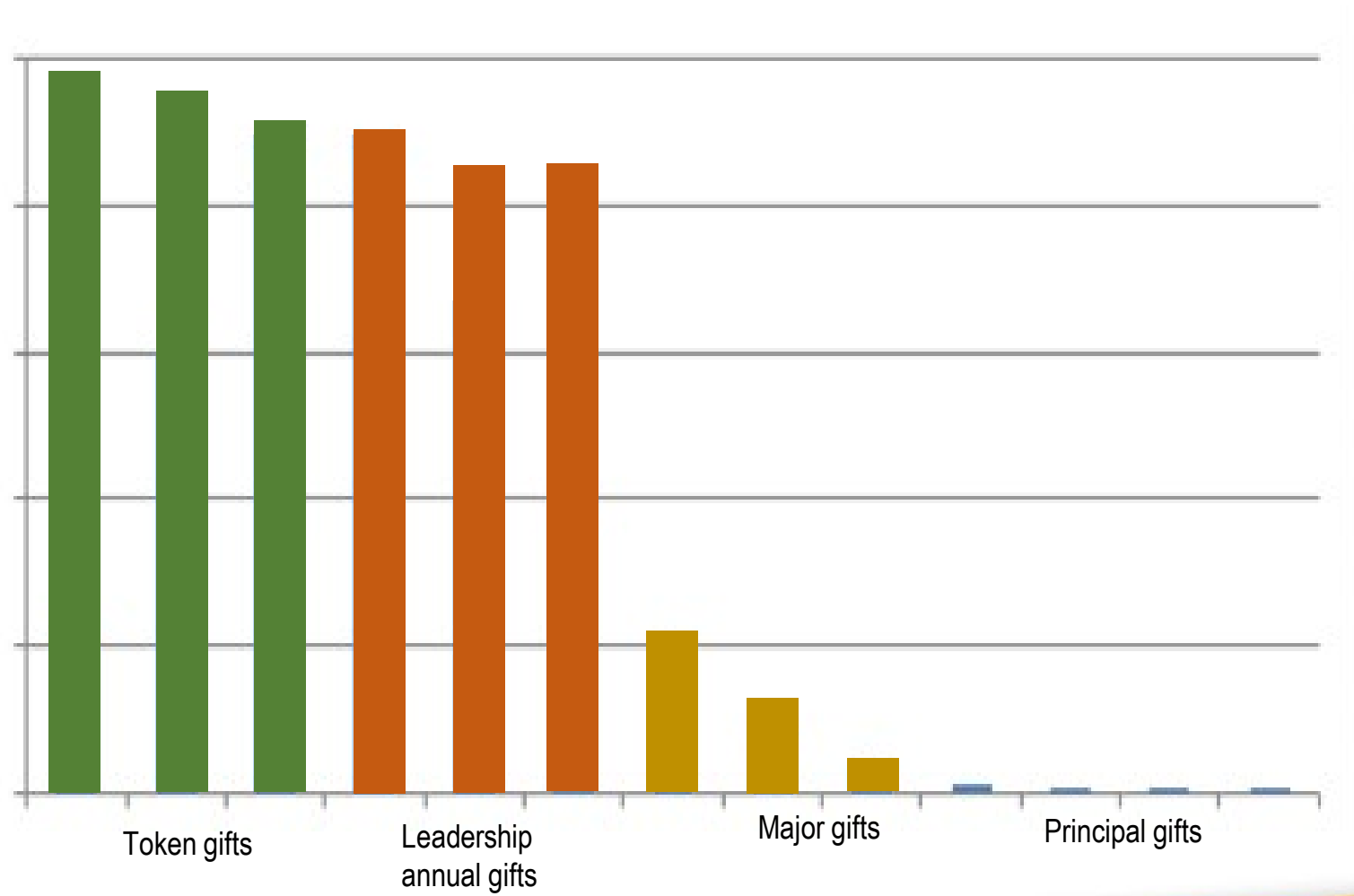
- Amount
 - *How much?*
- Affiliation
 - *Who's it from?*
- Allocation
 - *What's it going to?*
- Attribute
 - *What type of gift is it?*

C/S/U	DEV OFFICER	EXEC DIR	ASST DEAN	DEAN	NOT SPEC	TY CARD	NOTES
AGNR	\$500-999			\$1,000+		>\$500	
ALUM						ALL GIFTS	Handwritten notes from students
AIE		ALL GIFTS					
ARCH	BELOW \$1,000			\$1,000+			
ARHU				ALL GIFTS			\$500+ personalized
BSOS			ALL GIFTS	\$1,000			
BUS				\$1,000	\$100+	>\$100	F/S acknowledged regardless of gift
CAMPUS	SOME					FTD	DO note when gift is secured
CMNS				ALL GIFTS			
COE	> \$,1000			\$1,000+			call or email from gift officer for >\$1,000
CPS		ALL GIFTS					
Clarice		\$500+		\$500+		BELOW \$500	
ENG			\$500-999	\$1,000+		BELOW \$5,000	First time donors receive notecard from Dean
GRAD							IN PROCESS
ICA	SOME	SOME					
IS				ALL GIFTS			

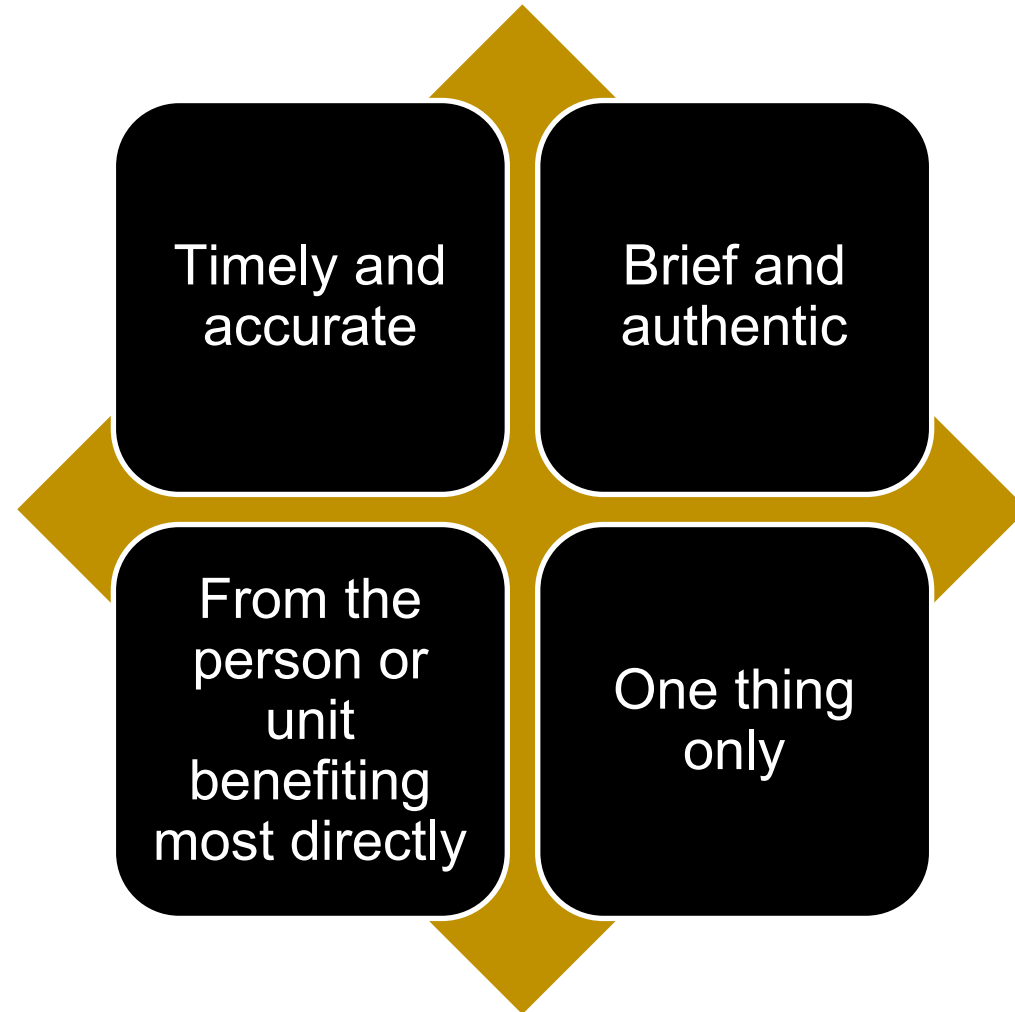
Strive for consistent and relative.



It's all relative



Theory of acknowledgments



Receipt vs. Acknowledgment



Transactional



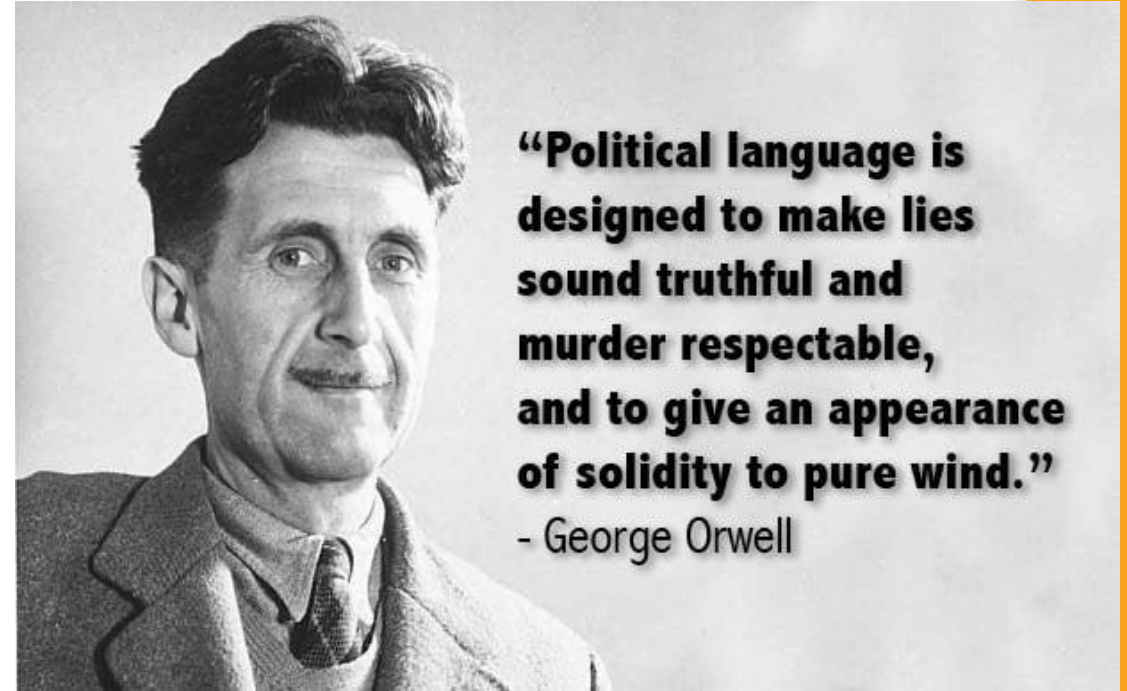
Relational

Praise and thank.

George Orwell says

1. What am I trying to say?
2. What words will express it?

Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.



Please don't

- I hope this letter finds you well.
- As the leaves change on campus...
- I want to thank you for contributing to our campaign.
- Thank you for your gift of blank to blank.
- Our strategic plan thrusts us into a trajectory of excellence in cutting edge technology.
- It is a pleasure to thank you for your gift of \$100,000 to the X Fund.
- As we navigate these uncharted waters in these unprecedented times, now more than ever we are in this together as we pivot.
- Thank you, and I hope you will consider making another gift.
- We are in receipt of your initial pledge payment for your multi-year commitment.

Please do

- Praise and thank.
- Tie it back to your mission.
- Watch your vocabulary.
- Avoid hyperbole.
- Be specific.
- Personalize.
- Have a meaningful signatory.
- Have a catchy opening – say thank you without saying thank you.
- Show how the gift will change the world.



Because of you

Through X Campaign, ABC Organization was a world leader in eliminating childhood cancer last year.

Through your gift to X Campaign, ABC Organization was a world leader in eliminating childhood cancer last year.

Because of donors like you, last year ABC Organization cured 5.4 million children who had cancer.

Because of you, last year ABC Organization cured 5.4 million children who had cancer.

Last year, you helped cure 5.4 million children who had cancer.



Length

By the numbers



Output vs. outcome

Nothing good ever comes in a #10 envelope

*With form letters:
the best you can
hope for is to not
make a mistake.*

Letter	Email	Phone call
Social media	Video	Post card
Card	Website	Poem!
Handwritten note	Welcome packet	Swag

Format/Medium



May 12, 2023

Edgar Donor
199 East Washington Street
Central Point, Oregon 97504-9382

Dear Edgar,

Your gift is making a meaningful impact on someone's life – helping them achieve greater independence, safety, and confidence! Thank you for your thoughtful Sponsorship that helps further our mission.

The generous spirit shown in your gift is the bedrock of what is good about humanity. Because of you, the world is a better place for people and dogs. purchasing dog toys

With gratitude,

B. Williams

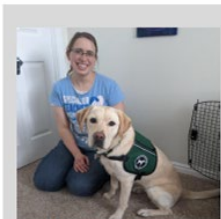
Bryan Williams
President and CEO

GIFT INFORMATION

Date Received	Amount
5/9/2023	\$1,500.00

Dogs for Better Lives' mission is to professionally train dogs to help people and enhance lives while maintaining a lifelong commitment to all dogs we rescue or breed and the people we serve. Dogs for Better Lives has never sold or traded donor information. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation. Gifts are tax-deductible according to current law as written in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Federal ID #93-0681311.

WEST: 10175 Wheeler Road, Central Point, Oregon 97502 | EAST: 188 Nathan Ellis Hwy, East Falmouth, MA 02536
(541) 826-9220 Voice/TDD | (800) 990-3647 info@dogsforbetterlives.org dogsforbetterlives.org



ALLISON & RUTH
Facility Dog
Client Team since 2021

Facility Dog Ruth works with Allison, a teacher in a special education classroom for elementary school-aged children. "There are so many ways Ruth has made a difference in our school. It happens every day! She has made an impact on me, too. She also helps me remember why I got into teaching and to take time to enjoy the little moments with the kids. I can't picture my life or my work without her," said Allison.



May 1, 2023

Jeannie L. Donor
170 Spring Street
Central Point, Oregon 97502

Dear Jeannie,

You've helped to change a life! Your support is allowing people to achieve greater independence, safety, and confidence.

On behalf of everyone whose lives have improved because of your generosity - clients we serve and dogs we rescue – thank you!

Gratefully,

B. Williams

Bryan Williams
Chief Executive Officer

GIFT INFORMATION

Date Received	Amount
4/24/2023	\$20.00

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NONI & TESLA
Hearing Assistance Dog
Client Team since 2021

Tesla is Noni's third dog from Dogs for Better Lives, and they've been together for about a year. Noni takes Tesla everywhere with her, and they are a perfect match! Tesla works smoke alarm at home and in RV, cell phone, smoke alarm, and ring doorbell. Tesla has changed Noni's life in so many ways. Noni feels more comfortable and confident going out and traveling – and even visited DBL's northeast campus!



May 18, 2023

Maggie Donor
111 East Main Street
Central Point, Oregon 97502

Dear Maggie,

You are making a difference! Because of you, lives will be changed – people's and dogs' – for the better.

The generous spirit shown in your donation in honor of Jon Donor is the bedrock of what is good about humanity. Thank you for your thoughtfulness in honoring and remembering family, friends, and pets.

Gratefully,

B. Williams

Bryan Williams
Chief Executive Officer

GIFT INFORMATION

Date Received	Amount
5/13/2023	\$30.00

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HANNAH & THUMPER
Hearing Assistance Dog
Client Team since 2022

Hannah decided to take the leap and apply for a hearing dog when they realized that they were ready to consider living alone but didn't feel that they could for safety reasons. Hannah fell in love with Thumper's 'go go go' personality and says that he's the perfect fit for their lifestyle of working on an urban farm and moving around various meeting spots in the city for work.





*I'm loving my time here!
Thanks for making it
possible! Go Terps!*

Dear Jack and Diane,

IN FACT, YOU'VE MADE A LOT OF
TERRAPINS VERY HAPPY.

Your first gift is a big deal! On behalf of Terps everywhere,
welcome to the University of Maryland's fearless donor community.

THANK YOU!!

*Jen D.
(BSOS '17)*

- I'm graduating on time thanks to donors like you! Thank you!
- I'll rub Testudo's nose for you!
- Wish me luck on finals!
- This has been the best year! Terp for life!
- I'm loving my time here. Thanks for helping make it happen!
- I can't wait to be a grad and donor! Terp for life!
- It's my first spring on campus – so beautiful!
- I'm interning at the White House this summer! Terp pride!
- My parents and sister are also donors! Terp pride!

THANK YOU



Dear Joan,

What a thoughtful gift you made to the marching band! We're fortunate to have friends like you who keep the music alive.

Many thanks!

Sincerely, Debbie Dean

Department | Address | College Park, MD 20742

Create a word bank



Adjectives	Nouns	Verbs	Adverbs (sparingly)
stalwart	trajectory	forge	exceptionally
premier	quagmire	cascade	fervidly
stellar	leadership	spearhead	fervently
elite	transformation	bolster	unconditionally
visionary	bedrock	shutter	ardently
thoughtful	catalyst	fortify	valiantly

Create a sentence bank

Template sentences for

- **Discipline:** athletics, English, engineering
- **Department:** hematology, pediatrics, admissions
- **Fund type:** scholarship, professorship, research fund
- **Beneficiary:** students, residents, doctors, clients, faculty, graduate students
- **Gift attribute:** DAF, planned gift, multi-year pledge, final pledge payment
- **Giving behavior:** first-time gift, transformational gift, consecutive giving, recurring giving
- **Donor affiliation:** parents, grateful patients, alumni, corporations/foundations

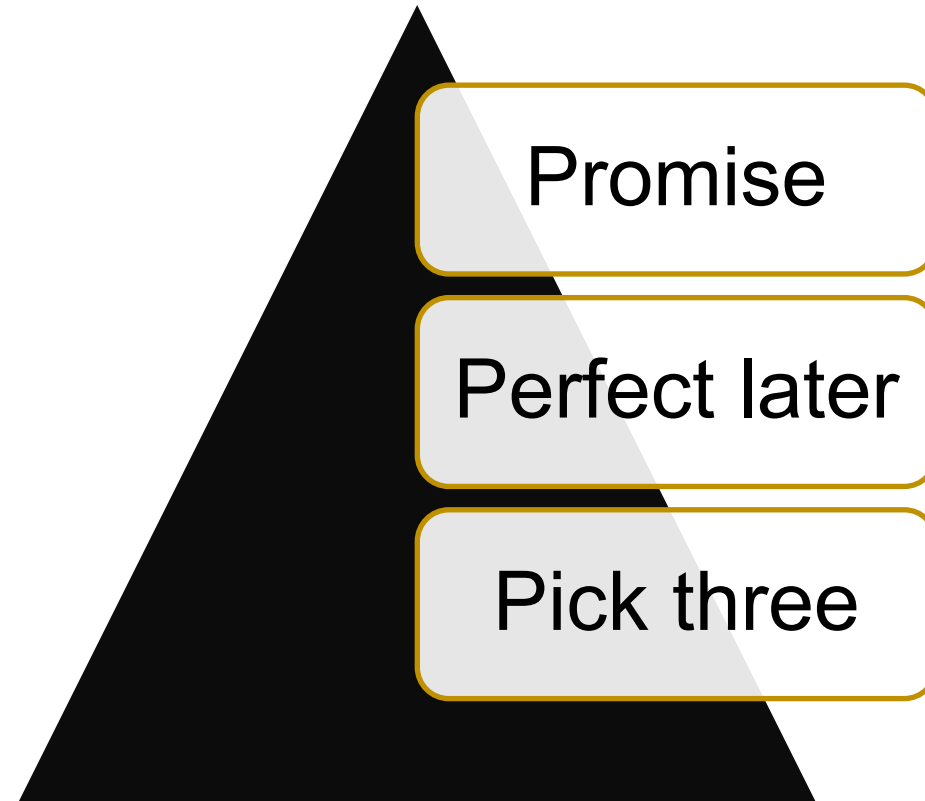
Overcoming writer's block

- Why?
 - It's the right thing to do and we hope to get future gifts.
- Why?
 - We needed to highlight the program to attract further support from other donors.
- Why?
 - We want to be a national model for aerospace engineering.
- Why?
 - Aerospace engineering will enable us to explore space and secure our future with scientific breakthroughs that will save lives.
- Why?
 - OUR MISSION: to achieve excellence in the interrelated areas of undergraduate education, graduate education, research and public service.
 - CORE PURPOSE: to transform lives for the benefit of society.

The Smiths gave \$100M to name a new aerospace engineering center. You need to write them an acknowledgment.

Overcoming writer's block

The Three P's



Sample template formula

Amid the current nurse shortage crisis, your recent commitment to **School of Nursing Excellence Fund** is a gift to our entire community.



The School of Nursing's vision is **to become a top-ranked school** recognized for excellence and innovation in education, leadership, research, advocacy and practice. Your **thoughtful** contribution to future nurses is **helping to make that vision a reality.**



Thank you for your generous support of our nursing program and ABC University.



Key takeaways

1. Go for the journalism opening.
2. Focus on the donor, not your strategic plan.
3. Praise and thank.
4. Be brief but authentic.
5. Strive for relational, not transactional.
6. Create a word bank and a sentence bank.
7. Be creative with your media.
8. Tie things back to your mission.