

**Kenyon College Natural Science Division**  
**Summer Communication Groups**  
**Week 2 – What works (and doesn't)**

Objective: Students develop an appreciation for strategies that work well for communicating with general audiences.

Homework: Students bring one example of good or bad writing (1-2 pages) targeted at a general audience. We send out a TED video that everyone watches before coming. We each bring copies of a short piece of writing for the general public

Main activity: Discussion about what works well and what doesn't work well in communications towards a general audience.

Toolkit:

- Discuss the writings and TED videos
  - Generate lists
    - What are the features of good scientific communication to the general public? What specific tactics, strategies, tricks, do effective communicators use?
    - What are features of lousy scientific communication?
  - Extensions
    - Covert written into oral (i.e. into an elevator talk)
    - Do some textual analysis (i.e. circle verbs or adjectives)
    - Apply to student's own communication
      - Try to apply one tactics you've learned to your own work
      - Pairs brainstorm tactics
- Sources for good scientific communication
  - Newspapers and magazines
    - New York Times Science page: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/science/index.html>
    - Science News: <http://www.sciencenews.org/>
    - Science Daily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/>
  - Blogs
    - <http://scienceblogs.com/>
  - Podcasts:
    - <http://www.nature.com/nature/podcast/>
    - <http://www.sciencemag.org/rss/podcast.xml>
    - <http://sciencefriday.com/>
    - <http://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/>
    - <http://earthsky.org/>
    - <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/radiolab/>
    - [http://www.microbeworld.org/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=142](http://www.microbeworld.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=142)
    - <http://www.thenakedscientists.com/>
  - Video
    - TED talks: <http://www.ted.com/>