APPENDIX D1
PREPARING AN INFORMATION BRIEFING

The Army is effective only if information and direction are clearly communicated. In carrying out your

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>AUDIENCE REACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Inform</td>
<td>Make the audience aware, knowledgeable, or informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Persuade</td>
<td>Make the audience accept a recommendation, or arrive at a decision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEPS IN THE BRIEFING PROCESS**

1. RESEARCH THE TOPIC
2. PLAN YOUR BRIEFING
3. DELIVER A PRACTICE BRIEFING
4. REVISE
5. DELIVER THE FINAL BRIEFING

... 

A good information briefing, like good informative writing, requires that the briefer research the topic; plan how to deliver the briefing; deliver a practice briefing; revise; and deliver the final product. We shall consider these five steps to show you how to develop effective presentations.

1. **STEP 1: RESEARCH THE TOPIC.** Research requires that you analyze your purpose, role, and audience. Ask yourself, “What’s my purpose?” Your purpose refers to the “what” question: “What do you want to accomplish in this briefing?” Do you want to inform, persuade, or direct? How you answer this question will provide insight into the three general purposes for any briefing.

The general purpose for your briefing will normally fall under one of the above categories. The purpose
will provide you with a tentative focus for a thesis statement. However, further research will help you tighten the focus of your thesis statement.

After you have determined the purpose, you continue your research by gathering and recording information about the subject.

c. **Preliminary Organization of the information on the subject.** Look over the information you have collected. Organize the information into major subject groups.

d. **Determine the purpose of your briefing.** See comments above.

e. **Determine the role of the briefer.** The boss may be asking you to prepare a persuasive briefing that he or she will deliver. On the other hand you may be on a briefing team, preparing or delivering only part of the presentation, or you may be coaching subordinates who will do the briefing. You may prepare and partly rehearse a presentation that someone else delivers. Your boss may have you prepare a briefing, but ask you to attend only as a subject matter expert available to answer questions, or perhaps just to help with audio-visuals. So, when the boss asks you to prepare a briefing, ask very early in your research, “What’s my role?” The answer will restrict and focus your preparations.

f. **Determine the audience.** Before briefing a superior, ask one of his/her close subordinates about the boss’ major concerns and policies. Ask about minor preferences of procedure and style--whether and how to use viewgraphs, slides, “read-aheads,” and formality. Considering human behavior helps you anticipate audience reaction. Such reactions concern writers as well, but they concern a speaker even more. Sometimes your audience are from varied backgrounds. Consider their perspectives, and make sure you have included their concerns. This is particularly important when the decision maker has advisors to whom he/she will turn before making a decision or accepting information or recommendations. The briefer should also consider audience demographics -- age, experience, past assignments, education level. But demographics alone will not provide the fullest analysis of the audience. We also need to consider what writers call audience “psychographics:” values, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and prejudices. Good staff work will make you confident about the audience reaction before you begin to speak.

g. **Determine the setting.** Location and room arrangement vary widely. When necessary, make a reconnaissance of the facilities to determine how to do the briefing. Is the intended setting a small room, a large auditorium, or something in between? Find out whether you will need and can get equipment such as microphones, lectern, projection equipment, and extension cords. Will the audience sit theater style, classroom style, or around a conference table? Who needs reserved seating? You will want to rehearse at least once in the actual setting with the equipment you will be using. On site practice helps overcome jitters and unexpected problems with the stage, equipment, and audio-visuals.
h. **Determine the timing constraints.** When must you brief? Are there any conflicting events? Are there any suspenses on reserving the room, the equipment, or the materials? Is there any need or interest in videotaping the briefing? Are there any special guests? Will there be a review or follow-up after the event? Will an open question and answer period occur following the briefing? These are some considerations you must take into account when determining the amount of time necessary.

2. **STEP 2: PLAN THE BRIEFING.** The next step in the process of developing an effective briefing is your plan. This step determines whether you have developed an effective organization for the briefing.

   a. **Revise**

   (1) A pattern has existed since the days of Aristotle. He noted in threes, or at least writing or speaking, introduction, main conclusion. These present in most briefing should

   (2) The product that results from the planning phase is the outline. The data you identified and developed during the research phase provides you with the elements of a beginning outline. This provides an organization of known information into major groups, and organizes some of the major groups internally. But they don't establish the thesis statement. We need that before we can do anything else. A thesis statement will help us with a final arrangement of the major groups. A thesis statement will also enable us to judge whether we've done enough research. All our efforts thus far have been leading to this step; and formulating our thesis statement will drive the other steps.

   (3) Outlining is like designing a pyramid from the top down. We begin by forming the proper capstone—the thesis statement—and then shape everything else to support it. Outlining is not fun. It takes time. This is probably why many individuals don't do it. But they'll discover, sooner or later, that outlining helps and that it can actually be a time saver. The outline offers an efficient way to get things done right the first time. Here's a quick summary of how to proceed.

   (4) **Refine your thesis statement.** Write a simple declarative sentence that captures the common thread, the meaning, and the intent of your research. The sentence should contain a topic and your attitude about that topic. Be sure the attitude is consistent with the information you've gathered, and that it suits your purpose and audience. What you have now is a trial thesis statement.

   (a) If information briefings were simply collections of facts, it would be easy. You could throw all the facts into a cardboard box, go into the boss's office, dump all the facts on the desk, and walk out. But we know that won't work. The information has to serve a purpose.

   (b) To be useful, the information—and the thesis statement—will need some structure. As you refine your thesis statement, just don't repeat the obvious. Here's a sample purpose statement: "To inform the brigade commander about our maintenance problems."

   (c) The purpose statement, "To inform the brigade commander about our maintenance
problems" might do for a tentative thesis statement, but it's weak. Inform the commander ABOUT the maintenance problems? WHAT about them? The boss needs something more than just a collection or recital of the facts. He needs to know what's important. He needs a topic and an attitude. He needs a focused thesis statement. An example could be: "The battalion's lack of experienced maintenance personnel is largely responsible for the high deadline rate." Test this thesis statement by referring to the briefing assessment checklist and evaluation criteria located at the end of this student handout. Look directly for relevance, focus, and support in the thesis statement and indirectly look at the information it comprises. Ask yourself:

- Is the thesis statement relevant to the purpose and audience? In short, does it waste the audience's time?
- Is the thesis statement focused to the scope of the briefing--not too long (won't be read) or too short (won't get the job done)?
- Is there enough information/evidence to support the thesis statement? Are relevant views and questions accounted for?

(d) Your first trial thesis statement may fail one or more of these questions, but think critically about why it failed. Before long, this reshaping process will begin to yield diminishing returns, and you'll feel comfortable with the fit of your thesis statement. Or you may discover a number of competing thesis statements, which may indicate that you need more research. But that's a good thing to know. Whatever trial thesis statement you pick at this stage, you have the opportunity to improve it. Let's refer back to our example:

--After talking to the boss about the brigade S4's information, we still see four major groups of information: maintenance personnel, repair parts, driver's maintenance, and time management. But the fourth is much clearer now, giving us a way to interpret the other three. In effect, the "maintenance personnel" group became the source for our trial thesis statement.

--With a little checking, we are able to determine the brigade commander's objective: "He wants to know whether the serious shortage of maintenance NCO's is the cause of maintenance problems in our battalion." So it won't help the brigade commander much if we address the repair parts flow or driver maintenance issues unless we can relate them back to the experience and training of maintenance personnel.

--Perhaps it would be helpful to begin research focused on "maintenance personnel experience and training." In our research we find that the evidence points to inexperienced maintenance personnel as the major cause of the high deadline rate. Specifically, we are asking the young motor sergeants in the battalions to function in positions of responsibility well above their present skill level. In fact most of the deadline problems, to include the failure to pick up parts for the five tons, are the result of the motor sergeants' inexperience and lack of training. Modifying our trial thesis statement we develop the following: "The battalion's maintenance problems are largely the result of inexperienced motor sergeants."

b. **Formulate your major parts.** Given a reasonably focused thesis statement, it's time to work on the information we have gathered. Divide the information into precise groups focus on each group, one at a time, in whatever order you deem fitting. For each group, write a simple declarative statement consistent with the information in that group and supporting the trial thesis statement. You're developing "a subordinate thesis statement" for each major part. Again, you should produce statements with a topic and an attitude. Keep your thesis statement in view. Let it guide your formulation.

(1) Test and modify each trial subordinate thesis statement until it accurately represents the information contained in the group. Check each statement for efficiency and focus. If you find two or
more ideas in one statement, break it into two statements. Let's refer back to our example.

(a) Let's say we identified four groups, with the first group (maintenance personnel) containing the thesis statement. That leaves us with three other groups to choose from in forming our supporting major parts.

(b) The second group is repair parts. The facts show significant and persistent shortages of repair parts for all vehicles. However, the facts also show that the parts are in the system. The lack of on-hand repair parts are the direct result of inexperienced motor sergeants and Prescribed Load List (PLL) clerks not knowing the necessary supply procedures to order, stock, and pick up parts. Use this to information to create a simple, declarative sentence that supports the paper's thesis statement and represents the information contained in this major part: "Repair parts are a problem, but the problem is due to the maintenance personnel's lack of training in ordering and picking up parts." This statement is a bit complicated and may create confusion on the part of the reader. Let's refine the statement: "Maintenance personnel's lack of training creates repair parts shortages for all vehicles." When you're reasonably satisfied and don't see a better alternative, go to the next major part.

(c) We labeled the third group "driver's maintenance." All records indicate that the daily driver's maintenance is good. The drivers and their supervisors know how to perform Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS). But the drivers' lubrication services, which the motor sergeants and mechanics supervise, are poor and the records are incomplete. The records also show that drivers are reporting deadlined vehicles and are submitting requests for parts. Yet the requests often get lost or misplaced in the company motor shops. In this case the subordinate thesis statement for our major part might be: "Lack of training and experience among maintenance personnel limits the drivers' ability to perform effective maintenance."

(d) Time management is our fourth group. Again, the facts point towards the maintenance personnel's lack of training and experience. In formulating a subordinate thesis statement for this major part, we must tie the pitfalls of poor time management to the lack of training and experience.

(2) Eventually you will have a sentence for the thesis statement and a sentence for each of the major part's subordinate thesis statements. Write them down on a sheet of paper with the thesis statement at the top and the subordinate thesis statements underneath. Now we're ready for the next planning step.

c. **Sort your major parts.** List the supporting ideas in different sequences to discover what's most effective. Sometimes the topic or situation will suggest a sequence that the audience will be most receptive to or expects from you. You need to understand that you have choices in the presentation of your material. *Remember, we don't just dump the facts out on the boss's desk. Rhetoric is the study of the most effective means for presenting information.* Here are a few possibilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chronological order:</strong></th>
<th>describing events by time as they occur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial arrangement:</strong></td>
<td>top to bottom, left to right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause and effect:</strong></td>
<td>demonstrating results or origins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By importance:</strong></td>
<td>open with strength or finish with a climax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General to specific:</strong></td>
<td>specific to general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bad news first, then good:</strong></td>
<td>or good news first, then concession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compare and contrast:</strong></td>
<td>similarities and differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem and solution:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may find that you don't have a choice about the sequence. Many posts, units, and organizations
specify standard sequencing for staff presentations and documents. Your audience, as always, should dictate your rhetorical choice. When you have finished sequencing your major parts, check for consistency between --

d. Plan your major parts. You've established a thesis statement and sequenced the major parts of the work is done. What remains is to sort the minor parts as a base of support for your major parts. Each major part serves as a thesis statement for the supporting minor parts beneath it. How much of a foundation do you need to develop? That depends on the audience. Somewhere along the pathway from thesis statement to major part to minor part, you must reach a credibility point at which your audience will consider your ideas as evidence, not just opinion or feelings. Evidence is what the audience believes without the need for further analysis or support. Facts for one audience may be looked on as opinions by another; but the combination of evidence and analysis is unbeatable. Analysis should end only when the audience accepts your information as evidence in support of your thesis statement. When you've exhausted your information but still feel the need for more evidence, do more research. If you still can't find it, reevaluate your thesis statement. But be careful. Whenever you modify, move, or delete a part, retest the whole to ensure it still holds together.

e. Write a draft introduction. You have the essential ingredients for an introduction: an attention getting step, a plan for setting the stage, a thesis statement, and the major parts. Now organize these ingredients in an outline. If they still look tentative, that's fine. Remember that you can revise right up until your suspense makes the last draft your final draft.

(1) You may still be unsure how to state the thesis statement in its most accurate and efficient form. Don't worry, you don't need to finalize the thesis statement later in the process. Even at this stage you're still refining.

(2) Don't be preoccupied with polishing the outline. It's for you, not the audience. But if you can fill it out with sentences, your complete thoughts will be down on paper, and you'll reap the rewards during the drafting stage.

f. Write a draft conclusion. A reader can look back in the document to find the thesis statement but an audience has to rely upon their memory. So, reiterating the thesis statement and the major parts in the conclusion will leave this information fresh in the audience's mind.

g. Let's summarize the six steps of organizing a briefing:

1. Produce the thesis statement.
2. Formulate the major parts.
3. Sort the major parts.
4. Formulate and sort the minor parts.
5. Draft the introduction.
6. Draft the conclusion.

The outline contains the "natural" components of organization -- introduction, main body, and conclusion - generally used by all writers and speakers. We don't expect you to follow a rigid outline technique or structure. Some people use topics in their outline; some people use complete sentences. Remember, the
(c) Explain your numbers in terms the audience will truly understand.

(d) When appropriate, also depict your numbers graphically, for those of us who need to visualize what those numbers are saying. The use of graphs can make the difference between clarity and confusion.

(5) Restatement and Repetition: Stating facts a second time can firmly plant ideas in the listeners' mind and are critical when you have points you want the listener to remember.

j. Develop your visual supports. Note: See Appendix B2, Tips for Speaking Effectively, Tip #9, Using Visual Aids, Student Handout. Do you have to use visual aids? No, they're not mandatory. But in most formal briefings, they help simplify complex ideas and statistics. Research studies show we typically retain only about ten percent of what we read and twenty percent of what we hear. Yet when sight and sound communicate together, we retain facts up to fifty-five percent longer. That's why television advertising costs more than radio or billboard advertising. That's why your briefings will improve with effective visual support. Even if you're not an expert, you can plan and produce more effective visual aids. Study your outline to decide where you need visuals to simplify and explain. When you have identified the locations, then sketch out the words and layout. Then draft, rehearse, critique, condense, and revise. As you draft each visual, keep the following general questions in mind:

1. Relevant? Is it necessary? Is it appropriate to purpose and audience?
2. Focused? Does it communicate only ONE thesis statement?
3. Organized? Does it have balance and visual appeal--all the right parts in the right places, sizes, and colors--without becoming a distraction?
4. Coherent? Does the entire visual flow with such devices as parallelism, connecting words, and transition markers?

k. Integrate your transitions. When you've planned the briefing (introduction, development of major and minor parts, and conclusion), review the outline for general coherence. Does it hold together clearly and logically? At this point you should add to the outline appropriate transitional words between the major parts. Words such as--Let me illustrate this point . . . . Most importantly, we must consider. . . . In the meantime, we will continue to deadline. . . . Despite those disadvantages, option three is best because . . . Now let me summarize our findings by showing this matrix. . . . may seem too obvious in writing, but they're essential in speaking. Failure to use transitions may easily distract your audience.

l. Determine your setting. With your outline completed, plan the environment of your presentation. You may need to sketch a seating plan by protocol. If the room's equipment is moveable, then plan where you will place the lectern, the audio-visual equipment, and the furniture. Also begin a list of supplies you may need: extension cords, microphones, cables, extra projector bulbs, props, displays, handouts, notepads, pencils, pointer, screen, markers and erasers, viewgraphs, and refreshments. You'll probably keep updating your list, so keep it handy.

3. STEP 3: DELIVER A PRACTICE BRIEFING. The next step is to rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse. Practice your briefing. This is the run through step of the speaking process and equals the drafting in the writing process. This is the step where you will test and validate your briefing style by focusing on coherence, efficiency, tone, voice, and your body language.
outline is for your use; it must be user friendly.

With the completion of the planning phase you should have clearly laid out how you will present your briefing.

h. Drafting from outline.

(1) Prepare a draft briefing either by using a tape recorder or by quickly writing out your briefing. Follow your outline to ensure you capture the important points of your briefing. Don't worry about the PERFECT word or sentence, but concentrate on capturing the ideas. When you play back the recorder or read over the draft you can correct word choice and sentence structure.

(2) Draft to the outline. As ideas develop and words begin to flow into the recorder or onto the paper, it becomes easy to lose sight of the direction or the details and connections that we need to make. Use the outline to keep you on course. Be flexible. A previously overlooked yet relevant idea may challenge your plan. Don't be so rigid as to disregard it because it's not part of your outline, but don't abandon your outline either. Refer to the outline and accommodate the omission. Flying blind in your draft won't get you anywhere fast. If your draft seems to consistently be going in another direction, stop drafting and return to the outline. Spend some more time getting the outline right. At this point in the process, you should have a draft. It may not be perfect, but present your draft to a trial audience. This should determine if you are on target.

i. Develop your verbal supports. Listeners like readers, want concrete examples. They want believable assertions and assumptions. Then, they want specific cases presented in clear, memorable language. In addition to hearing you, they want to see what you mean, have a feel for your point of view, agree with your good taste, and believe you with their five senses. Therefore, use active voice verbs, precise nouns, vivid adjectives and adverbs, and just enough well-chosen illustrations to help them understand and remember.

(1) Definitions: Use these when you expect the audience to ask, "What do you mean by that?" You would rather have control of the briefing rather than deal with interruptions, so why not anticipate?

(2) Examples: Examples are critical to credibility. When explained and believed, they are the foundation of evidence. Examples and illustrations are verbal pictures that hold an audience's interest. They may be factual or imaginary, but the factual are always better. Some examples involve comparison or contrast--bridges between the known and unknown. Showing a new idea's similarity to something already familiar often clarifies the new idea. Our comparisons, factual or imaginary, often occur as analogies. For example, you might explain radar by comparing its action to the reflection of a light beam or the manner in which a flying bat "sees" in the darkness.

(3) Quotations: Cite other's words to add variety and authority to your own. Quotations of respected persons are often most effective to open or to close speeches, but you can find suitable occasions almost anywhere. Supporting quotations ought to come from sources the audience will recognize and accept.

(4) Statistics: Numbers frequently define or verify observations. Used wisely, they can save an otherwise vague or unpopular but valid idea. Used unwisely, they can confuse the audience or embarrass the speaker. Here are four preventive measures:

(a) Understand your numbers. Verify not just the math, but also the assumptions and sources.

(b) Use only as much precision or complexity as your purpose requires. For example, don't say "$251,006,511.75" when "a quarter of a billion" will make the point. When precision really matters, display the numbers visually.
a. Develop your delivery method. Use manuscript or note cards. It is possible that you might write your briefing -- word for word -- before you practice and deliver it. There's a definite drawback to delivering a speech you've written out. It won't sound spontaneous. You've probably noticed that, for this very reason, many manuscript speeches sound stuffy and stilted. You can follow your outline and then make a tape recording to help identify the problems. If you need to, you can transcribe the tape, and polish the words and phrases as you proceed. However, you still need to reduce the written speech to a set of note cards with words or short phrases to jog your memory. After appropriate rehearsals, those note cards will be all you need to stay on track. There may be times when you need a complete manuscript. You may need precise, unvarying language for a certain listener, because of a security classification, a difficult subject matter, or historical accuracy. Whether you work from a manuscript or an outline, you must still rehearse. This is the only way to achieve a delivery that has spontaneity, personality, and authority.

b. Deliver multiple practice briefings. For the most part, speakers go from a well-developed outline to what we commonly refer to as a "run-through." The run-through is your first rehearsal. It should not be your last. We recommend many rehearsals after the outline and before the actual speaking occasion. This text breaks the rehearsal into two categories: the run-through and the dress rehearsal. Between these two steps, you should continue to revise. As any experienced speaker knows, you can and should rehearse as many times as possible, and revise after each rehearsal.

(1) Why rehearse? We often say "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?" In speaking, however, you won't ever get the chance to do it over. It's a one shot deal. Can you afford not to rehearse? This is when you learn for the first time how our words really sound and how the presentation really looks. Rehearsal also reduces anxiety for you AND confusion and frustration for the audience. Also, within the past few years you may have developed some poor preparation and delivery habits. Now's the time to rethink the process, polish your skills, and include rehearsals. Just as we encourage you to have fresh eyes for your written drafts, have fresh ears for your oral drafts.

(2) Rehearse with a mirror, tape recorder, or video recorder! You'll profit from such self-critique. However, the best critique comes from other discerning listeners. Here's how.

(a) Get listeners who have experience. Give them only enough background to clarify your purpose and intended audience. Have them use the evaluation form as a guide for feedback. Then using all your props and audio-visuals deliver your presentation.

(b) Speak in a conversational style. Communicate directly and concisely, using mostly active voice. This may be difficult initially, but that's all right. After all, this is your first rehearsal. In the process you will discover flawed or missing substance and organization. Naturally, you will want listeners to point that out. But they should also comment on how you sound, look, and move. In oral communication these are part of your message. Use rehearsals and listeners' feedback to polish them.

(c) Resist the temptation to memorize everything. Memorized opening and closing statements can help, but a speech entirely memorized will almost always be stilted. Worse, your memory may lapse, destroying everything. So instead of memorizing a whole speech, rehearse until you're comfortable with its language. You'll build self-confidence and sound spontaneous. You'll speak with the right words and you won't vocalize the pauses (uh, ah, ummmm).

(3) Use the evaluation form to Validate your rehearsal by focusing on your briefing style (see page 16 of the Student Handout).

4. STEP 4: REVISE THE BRIEFING. Have someone you trust to be candid listen to your briefing and
provide feedback.

a. **Focus on your audience’s perspective.** Until we finish the draft phase, we should keep the mind free to concentrate on substance and organization. After the draft is complete, we then focus on viewing our work through the audience’s eyes. We must do the following in the revision step:

We must see the material from the audience’s perspective. Don’t begin to revise until you can look at your material in this light. This involves separating yourself from the briefing, shifting from briefer to audience.

b. **Validate Your Introduction.**

(1) As your audience listens to your briefing, ask the person to identify your attention step—does it create interest and provide purpose to the briefing.

(2) Is he/she able to identify your thesis statement and tell you how it provides focus and unifies your briefing.

(3) Can your audience identify your agenda/main points. Do they support your thesis statement? Do they support the focus of your thesis statement? Are they carefully thought out?

c. **Validate Body of the Presentation.**

(1) Is your organization logical, appropriate and shows a clear relationship between ideas.

(2) Is your audience able to identify the support you provide for your briefing. Does this support based on credible facts and opinions? Does it support your main ideas? Is it fully developed.

(3) Transitions are very important. They help your audience to move with you from point to point. Do your transitions provide good continuity to the ideas you are trying to develop. Do they smoothly tie the parts of your briefing together?

(4) Visual aids are useful tools for supporting or illustrating ideas. Do you use visual aids where they are not needed? If used, do they support or illustrate your ideas? Do they stimulate your audience’s thinking or translate the ideas you develop in your briefing?

(5) Objective. Ask your audience to identify the objective of your briefing. If your objective is to provide an information briefing and you develop a decision briefing, you’ve failed the objective. Have you met the requirement of providing information or have you gone beyond and shown your audience how this information is important?
d. **Validate your conclusion.** Does your conclusion help your audience to review the ideas and relationships you developed? Have you provided a complete synthesis that helps your audience to retain what you've said.

e. **Review your style.** First: Is my style consistent with the Army standard that emphasizes "understandable" before "rapid." Second, how I use my voice may enhance or detract from an otherwise excellent briefing. Focus on emphasis, rate and tone.

   (1) **Format.** Have I used the appropriate format for the briefing? For example, a decision briefing requires a different format than an information briefing.

   (2) **Tone.** Your gestures, glances, speech habits, voice quality, dress, and audio visuals create a total effect that we call the tone. Thus, as you think about the remaining criteria of style, think about their aggregate effect: the created tone or "feeling." Everything becomes a part of your message.

   (2) **Voice.** Keep your voice primarily in your natural register because it's easier to hear and comprehend. Avoid speaking in a lower than normal register for long periods because you could damage your vocal cords. Talk occasionally in a slightly higher pitch to emphasize major points. When you don't have a microphone, a higher pitch will carry your voice farther. Always prepare your throat properly. Drink water, preferably with some lemon juice in it, to clear your vocal cords. If you're familiar with any vocal warm-up exercises, do them also.

   Listeners think many times faster than anyone talks. Fortunately, the goal is not to keep up with them, but to communicate and support a thesis statement. Typically, a speaking rate of 125-150 words per minute is adequate -- and the larger your audience, the slower you want to speak. Audience noise and the slightly longer traveling time of your voice will swallow up a too rapidly spoken sentence. One of your main adversaries is boredom caused by the "thought-speech speed difference." Remember that listeners can think much faster than you speak, and give them a lively presentation with vivid examples. You want to develop a voice that is agile and flexible, yet not erratic in rate. This is where rehearsing with a videocassette or a tape recorder can really help. Not only can you get an accurate overall time length of the speech, but you can also calculate your speaking rate.

   (3) **Nonverbal Communication.** Although our spoken language is the primary signal in most public speaking, our body language also sends important signals. An effective speaker not only understands the signals of body language, but also includes them in planning and rehearsal to insure a coherent total message.

   (a) **Eyes:** Most speakers, particularly those learning to control nervousness, feel more confident after establishing eye contact with the audience. It helps you relax by showing you that the audience is listening, wanting to understand, wanting you to succeed. It controls the nervous darting of your eyes, or the distracting glances around the room, or the vacuous staring at some point between the speaker and audience. It enhances your credibility because you look confident and sincere. It also gives you the initiative. When you look an audience in the eyes, they can't easily look at or think about something else. Your simplest approach is to begin with several people throughout the audience who seem especially attentive and interested. Focus on their eyes until your confidence grows; then begin including more and more of the audience. Eventually, you should look every listener in the eye at least once. Of course, as with many principles, it's possible to go too far. Make sure you don't cause your audience (and especially the decision maker) to feel uncomfortable by staring them down.

   (b) **Face:** Facial animation, along with vocal animation, helps the audience see our enthusiasm, your belief in what you're saying. Facial animation can include smiles, frowns, grimaces, and raised eyebrows. When such perfectly natural expressions suit your meaning, don't suppress them for being "non-military" behavior. They're not.

   (c) **Hands:** All gestures should appear natural and well timed, and they should help the audience focus on what ought to be your primary signal--words. This means you should keep hand
gestures above the waist. You want the audience looking at your face most of the time. You should also keep gestures meaningful (not limp or tiny) and also moderate (not distractingly repetitious or energetic). When you're not using pointers, chalk, pens, and markers, put them down so you won't drop them or play with them. Rings and other jewelry can also become unconscious distracters. If they're problems for you, remove them before you speak. Should you ever put your hand in a pocket? Are hands on the hips ever acceptable? Your previous research about your role as speaker, your audience, and the setting should answer such questions. For informal settings, placing a hand in a pocket or putting it on one hip for a brief time could communicate an intended tone. Note the emphasis on *brief*, though. Any stance or position you hold too long becomes, at the least, monotonous; at the worst, a distracting subject of speculation. Resist jingling coins or keys. Speakers often do it, unconsciously. Take the coins and keys from your pockets before you begin.

(d) Posture: As a professional soldier, you may assume your posture is fine. We hope that's true, but don't assume until you've seen yourself as the audience sees you. During rehearsal, ask the listeners to observe your posture, or review it yourself by mirror or videotape. Keep in mind, too, that the first thirty seconds or so of your presentation become a lingering snapshot for the audience. Unfortunately, your first thirty seconds are also difficult because you have not yet settled down and the audience isn't wholly attentive yet. So, plan your body language, especially for the introduction.

Whenever you conduct a briefing while seated at a conference table, maintain good posture either by keeping your spine against the chair back or by sitting forward in the chair and leaning slightly into the table. In a small classroom or other casual situation, speakers may sit on a table as they talk. If you choose to do this, then sit over a table led, and keep one foot on the floor. You also need to maintain good posture while doing this.

(e) Movement: When practical, move comfortably and naturally away from the lectern for a time. Then return. If you'll rehearse these movements, you won't be away from the notes when you need them. You'll also prevent aimless wandering that often increases your stage fright, and tires and exasperates your audience. Smaller movements also demand attention. Eliminate "happy feet"--the nervousness that manifests itself in aimless pacing, swaying, and shifting, and which can tire and exasperate the audience, too. Unlearn the habit of holding still. When you make planned movements, stop completely at each destination, and then speak a while before moving again. Are you a lectern rocker? This bad habit has simple solutions also. The easiest is to eliminate the lectern. However, if you need it to support your props or notes, take a step away from the lectern while keeping your weight on both feet.

(f) Timing: Do you time a gesture to coincide with appropriate words or phrases? Do you introduce a view graph before turning it on? Do you cross a stage at the most natural moment, perhaps to help signal transition? Do you pause after a key point, or intentionally repeat it, for best effect? Ask your listeners during rehearsal to look for these and other features of good timing. Not tied to notes? How you use your notes will tell your audience if you're prepared or not. Over relying on notes, particularly during introductory and concluding remarks, signals inadequate rehearsal and defeats the persuasive power of face-to-face speaking. So, avoid reading from notes unless for brief quotations or numerical detail. Remember, long quotations or batches of statistics are most effective when simplified or displayed. In most cases you can simplify notes to "bullets"--key words and phrases--so you won't bury your nose into sentences. Practice until you can visualize nearly every key point in your mind. When you can do this, the notes become aids, not distractions.

(g) Poise: Stage fright is common. Even long-time performers have it. Some of the most common symptoms--whether you're still "back stage" or facing the audience during the presentation--include weak knees, sweating palms, quivering voice, pounding heart, nausea, fumbled words, memory lapses, a runny nose, or a dry throat. Exercising, breathing deeply, yawning, singing, and sipping lemon water are ways that many speakers control their jitters. Remember, all successful speakers include detailed rehearsal in their preparation.

(h) Overall: Conform to military standards of conventionality in delivery, bearing, and
dress.

5. STEP 5: DELIVER THE BRIEFING. Now is the time to conduct the final briefing. You have rehearsed on multiple occasions and you should be ready to brief a substantive, organized presentation. Now you need to prepare yourself for the following situations:

   a. A question and answer period. Develop a method of answering questions. Establish eye contact with both the questioner and the audience. Turn non-questions into questions that help achieve the objective. If someone says, “I don't think we need all this new equipment,” simply convert the remark into a question: ”I believe I hear you asking, 'What are the benefits from purchasing this equipment?'' Generally, effective answers should include one or more of these?

      (1) Your own professional and personal experience.

      (2) Quotations from experts.

      (3) Facts and comparisons.

      (4) Simplifications and examples.

      (5) Bridging responses that get back to the objective.

Finally, be flexible. Your listeners will react, ask questions, misunderstand, and disagree. So be prepared to handle any distraction: respond, dispel confusion, support your thesis statement, and proceed without obvious frustration. And when you don't know the answer, say so. You may want to close the presentation by announcing you'll be available for questions later--thus avoiding the formal questions entirely. However, that luxury is seldom an option or desirable in military speaking situations.

   b. Handling audio-visuals. Allow time for an audience to look at or read the visuals before you speak. Practice this with your rehearsal audience. Many, if not most, people, experience frustration whenever they need to read and listen at the same time. So allow silent pauses to help the audience comfortably take in both your words and your visuals. Face the audience when showing visuals. Many listeners won't hear all your oral remarks when you talk to a screen behind you. Rather, courteousl remain facing the audience and glance at the display graph on the projector or hold a hard copy reference in your hand. During rehearsals and presentations, use this effective five-step procedure for handling viewgraphs, slides, charts, blackboards, tackboards, videotapes, audiotapes, and physical models:

      (1) Introduce the visual aid orally.

      (2) Reveal the visual aid and allow time for the audience to absorb both meaning and relevance.

      (3) Discuss how the visual aid supports and simplifies your idea, keeping it prominently in sight or within hearing range only as long as it supports your remarks.

      (4) Remain close to the visual aid during your explanation. Don't confuse or frustrate the audience with competing focal points.

      (5) Remove the visual aid from sight or hearing range when you have finished using it.

Rehearsing and checking your equipment give you the competitive edge against audio visual catastrophe: slides reversed or upside-down, blown projector bulbs; and your shadow blocking the slides. The list is a long and humorous one--don't provide this kind of entertainment for your audience.

6. SUMMARY:
a. If Army briefings are to promote good decision-making, they must clearly and quickly convey the speaker's and commander's intent. You can easily convert the "corporate standard" for writing into one for spoken communications: "An effective Army briefing transmits a clear message in a single listening, and is generally free of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage."

b. Good briefings should be compactly organized with a clear thesis statement stated early. The main supporting points should be easily identifiable so the listeners can remember them. Briefers can effectively research and analyze their subjects (usually a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be grasped) using mind-mapping, criteria for decision-making, and good outlining techniques.

c. The traditional "package" for oral communications in the Army is the briefing. Remember, whatever format you use, your style should conform to the Army standard. It should have specific transitions, be clearly and effectively sequenced, and uses appropriate audio visual supports. It should be clearly presented in the active voice and first person, when appropriate. It should be concisely worded, but without excessive jargon.
APPENDIX D2

THE INFORMATION BRIEFING

The purpose of the information briefing is to inform your listener. It deals primarily with facts. Its purpose is to make the audience better informed or more aware about the subject of the briefing. **An information briefing does not include recommendations in the conclusion.** It should contain a brief introduction — enough to indicate the subject and scope of the briefing. As with all briefings, your presentation of facts must be clearly analyzed and explained, honest, and concise. The information briefing may present high priority information requiring immediate attention; complex information involving complicated plans, systems, statistics, or charts, and requiring elaboration and explanation; or very simple information. You should present only that background material that is essential to an understanding of the substance of the presentation. It is extremely important that the techniques of the information briefing be mastered first, because the skills required to objectively present only the essential facts are difficult to achieve. Further, the information briefing forms an essential part of each of the other three types of briefings.

**FORMAT FOR THE INFORMATION BRIEFING**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   a. Greeting. Following protocol, recognize the senior members of the audience. Recognize others present, as appropriate. Identify yourself.

   b. Purpose. Explain the purpose, thesis statement, and scope of the briefing.

   c. Procedure. Indicate procedure if a demonstration, display, or tour are involved.

2. **BODY**

   a. Organization. The body should follow the organization that best provides for arranging, supporting and presenting the main and supporting ideas of the briefing in a logical sequence. Be clear and concise, using specific examples to make your presentation as vivid as possible. The sequence varies, depending on the subject. The sequence may be chronological, such as what has happened, what is happening now, and what you see happening; or you may use a cause-and-effect sequence, such as an after-action report. Remember, whatever sequence you use, you need to tailor it to the subject.

       b. Use visual aids effectively. How can they help your audience visualize the main ideas of your presentation, or will it confuse them by clouding the issue?

       c. Plan for effective, smoothly executed transitions. Let the listeners know where you are taking them. One of the most effective techniques to help you organize the body of your briefing is to clearly state your thesis statement and major supporting points up front in the introduction.

       d. Be prepared to answer questions at any time.

3. **CONCLUSION**

   a. Ask for questions.

   b. Concluding statement. The close will normally consist of the statement: “Sir/Ma’am, this concludes my briefing. Do you have any further questions?”

   c. Announce the next briefer, if appropriate.
APPENDIX D3

BRIEFING POINTS TO REMEMBER

BE CLEAR. Follow the Army standard for writing in your briefings: “Easily understood in a single rapid hearing” is a good extension from the Army writing standard.

PACE YOURSELF. The average speaker talks at a rate of about 125-150 words per minute, but the only way you will know how long your briefing will take is through rehearsal. Good speakers pace themselves. They may emphasize a key point by speaking slowly, by repetition, or by increasing their volume for emphasis. However, don’t speak so slow that your audience becomes bored, nor so fast that you appear to be racing through your topic.

VISUAL AIDS. Make sure your visual supports are simple, and visible. Be sure to proofread. Do not risk being embarrassed by distracting errors.

REHEARSE! You may need many rehearsals so that you can give a smooth briefing. Use a video cassette recorder, an empty classroom, a mirror, or your spouse or classmate to critique your efforts.

NERVOUS. Expect to be nervous. The best public speakers have learned to expect some tension, and accept it as a natural part of speaking. Some things you can do to keep your nerves in control are:

   a. On the morning of the briefing, jog, walk, or mediate to keep your energy level high.
   b. Just before your briefing, do a few exercises to calm your nerves.
   c. Loosen up your mind and your voice by telling someone in vivid terms your expectations of the briefing.
   d. Use your imagination. Use what works for you!!

ENTHUSIASM. Be enthusiastic about your subject. Some nervousness will provide the stimulation for this enthusiasm. Variety in the rate of your speech, the pitch, and the loudness of your voice will increase the effectiveness of your presentation and is something you can control.

YOUR HANDS Avoid holding anything in your hands unless you are skilled in its use (pointers or a pen). Invariably the novice will begin waving these things around.

BODY LANGUAGE. You are your best visual aid. Use your body in the communication process by making each gesture count. Rehearse to avoid distracting movements and gestures.

EYE CONTACT. Watch your audience and maintain eye contact during your briefing. Their reactions will tell you how your briefing is going.

USING CHARTS, ETC. If you have technical points or statistics, you may find penciled notes on your charts are better than note cards. Remember to look at your audience and not stare at your charts. Avoid sheets of paper; note cards are more convenient.

HANDOUTS. If you are giving handouts to your audience, wait until the end of your briefing to distribute them. If you give handouts before you begin or during your briefing, the handouts may be a distraction. People will be reading the handouts instead of listening to you.