

## Communication 4312 – Style of Writing

Style – you already have it. You didn't know? Then what is it?, you may ask. It's you. It's who you are. The way you write reflects everything about you. Such as?.....

Where you were born, where you went to school, who your parents are, how you learned to read, whether you heard stories growing up, whether English is a second language, whether you were good at grammar, how you sound when you talk, the way you carry yourself, etc., etc., etc.

Is the way you write distinctive? That is, is it noticeable when compared with others in the class. Well, yes. Could I identify your writing if you didn't have your name on it? To a certain extent, yes. I think I could identify many of you.

And, conversely, I'm sure that you could pick out my writing by now. If I showed you examples of several of the teachers you have had, including me, you could without a doubt pick out my writing, couldn't you?

Your writing is going to change as time passes. You might consciously consider how you'd like your writing to develop. But, thinking about it isn't going to be the reason it changes. It will get better the more you read and the more you write. Big surprise, huh?

One way to understand your style is to pay attention to the way others write. When you read certain writers, notice that you get involved in the way they write – the cadence, the pacing, the structure, the dialogue, etc.

When it comes to reading, not everyone likes the same things. For the most part, we tend to gravitate toward writers whose style is most like the style we like. When I was young I read Ernest Hemingway and imitated him. I liked the simplicity of his style. Even then I seemed to know that was the way I wanted to write.

So, keep looking at writers, and keep reading. Whether it's a children's book or Shakespeare or a Russian novel, one of these days you'll run across just the right writer for you. And perhaps you already have.

■ David McHam