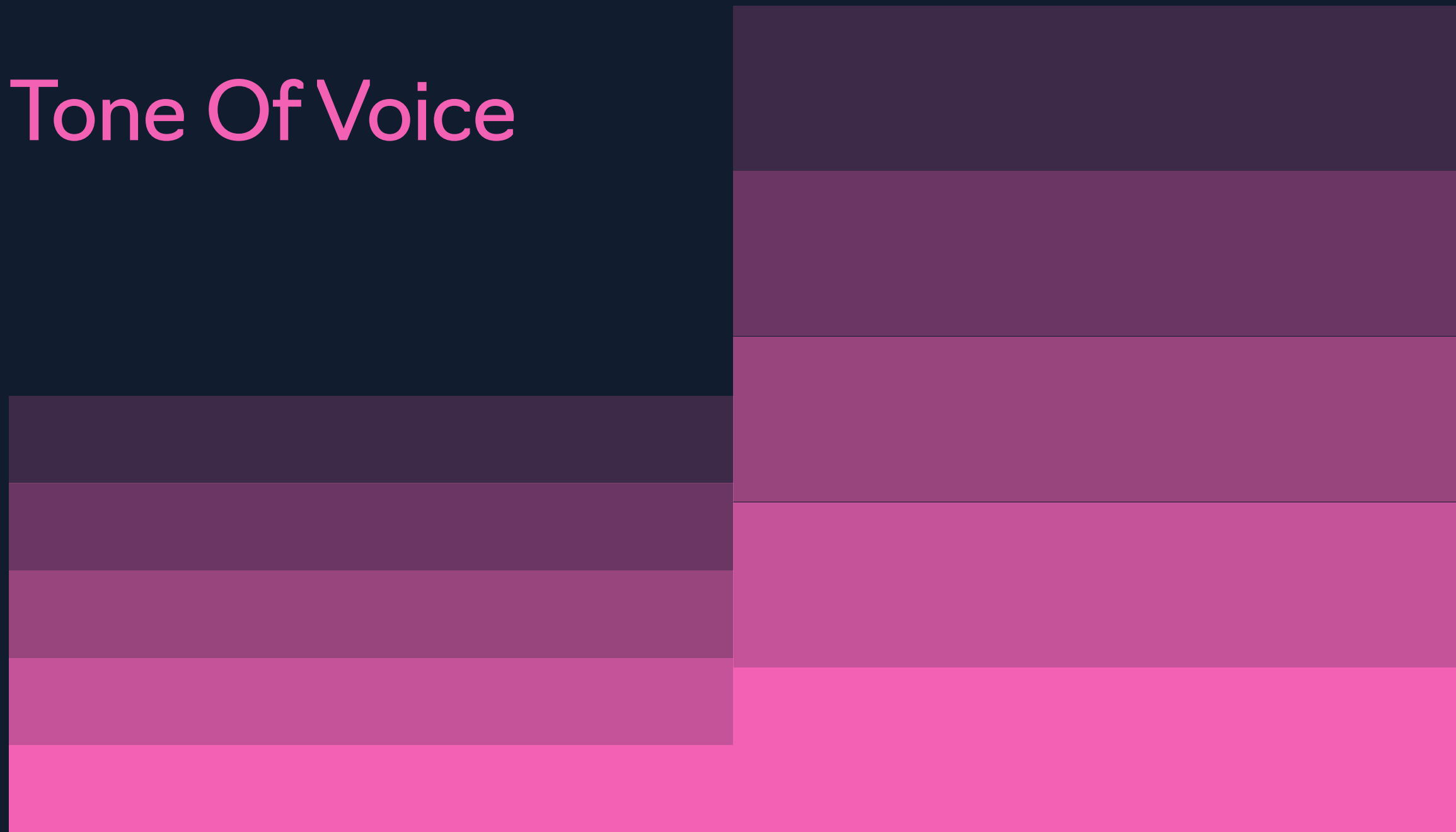


Go Beyond Boundaries

Tone Of Voice



How to go beyond boundaries in our writing

What mood or emotion do we want to convey to our audience? That of awe, wonder and possibility? That's all achieved by the way we write – reinforced by our brand style and imagery.

What we say and when we say it will give our brand a point of difference. It allows us to portray the depth of our character, flesh out our identity and show our audiences – from students to industry partners – who we are and why we're worthy of being their first choice.

This guide should be used as our north star for all things copy. Whether the task at hand is a print banner for an event, a social media advert, or a call-out for industry partners, the direction given here will give advice on how it should be written, and inspire turns of phrase too.

Let's explore how our voice should sound.

Our personality is adventurous, progressive and experienced.

Aberdeen is adventure. From its rugged coast to its edge-of-the-earth exposure, the global intellect to sparks of innovation, there's something that feels big about the experience. Students come from far and wide, on the trail towards growth, change, prosperity. Our tone can articulate that perfectly, using words that conjure ideas of grandeur.

Scotland, Aberdeen, campus – our progressive nature runs deep. Going first? Always. Asking for the world to be better? That's us. But it's not only that we're forward-thinking, no, it's also about our incessant forward motion. When you study at or partner with Aberdeen, you're joining a shared momentum. Onwards.

Some say ancient, we say experienced. Because the former can come across a little stuck-in-its-ways, and that's the opposite of our brand. When you've been around since the 1400s, you know a thing or two about how things can be done. Our knowledge is your springboard – see how it's happened before, and innovate how it'll happen next time.

Our voice

Our tone of voice is a part of our identity and it defines the way in which we write and speak; not just what we say but how we say it.

Much like a person, what we say is dictated by our principles, experiences and aspirations.

How we say it is informed by our personality.

- We look beyond traditional ways and means
- We aim to inspire and to leave an impression
- We are curious and creative in our approach
- We have a wealth of knowledge and a duty to share it
- We are dedicated in our pursuit of progress
- We think bigger and we act for impact

Guiding principles

Always start a conversation

Identify your audience from the outset and remember to refer to them as you write. What do they care about? What grabs their attention? What will inspire them to take action?

Showcase our brand pillars

Purpose, Practice, People, Place and Platform – these pillars are foundational to who we are and in every story we tell, we must look to demonstrate at least one.

Get straight to the point

These days, nobody has time to read reams of copy to work out what you're saying. Be clear about your message, get to your point quickly and make it worth reading.

Let our personality shine

Talk like a human, be personal.

Try using we/you/us where possible.

If it serves your message, don't be afraid to go beyond the boundaries of grammar and punctuation.

Consistency is key

The more consistent we are with our voice, the more likely it is that people will understand what makes us unique. Consistency helps us gain attention, respect and, crucially, trust.

Use metaphors, but sparingly

Don't be afraid of metaphor.

'The north', for example, is rich with implications of direction, exploration and potential. But don't overdo it. One per piece of communication.

Our voice

Professional

but never highbrow

We're proud of our heritage and our expertise but we showcase both in a progressive way.

Imaginative

but never eccentric

Rather than opt for the obvious, we can be playful with language. But we don't stray too far.

Clever

but never pretentious

We're not afraid to show our smarts or share our successes. But we never boast or brag.

Inspiring

but never preachy

While we speak from a position of influence, we are careful not to talk down to anyone.

When we speak,
we are **bold**.

How can a university that breeds
innovation be anything but
inspiring? Aberdeen is a hub for all.



When we speak,
we are **inspiring**.

Global challenges are waiting for
new ways of thinking – bright
minds with even brighter solutions.



When we speak,
we are **inclusive.**

Welcome to Aberdeen
– a city open to all, a
university ever-evolving.



Tone of voice

Think more...

→ *Innovation is just an idea away when you're surrounded by radical thinking.*

Rather than...

→ *We want to be leading innovation in terms of our subject areas.*

Diction

Big words. Big words that mean big things. That's how we craft sentences, and that's how we make a big impact. Aberdeen is all about discovery, so let's build suspense, throw in some surprises and keep our audience hooked with imagery of exploration.

Sentence structure

Ask big questions. Use short sentences. Then, pepper in a longer one – even using dashes – to disrupt the flow in the best way. It keeps it interesting... An adventure for the eyes. We want to show how exciting it is here, and how exciting the future will be when you've had the Aberdeen experience. So let's show off.

Tone of voice

Think more...

→ *Collaboration leads to eruptions of innovation, new ideas to fix age-old issues.*

Rather than...

→ *At the University of Aberdeen, students work together with staff to try and solve problems.*

Diction

Keep up the pace of forward momentum. We look up and onwards in our pursuit of knowledge and change, so our words need to match that intent. Find words or phrases that lead into each other, like knowledge seekers, change makers, boundary breakers. It sounds like something you'd want to be part of.

Sentence structure

Mix longer lines of copy with shorter pops for emphasis. For impact. It allows us to show our future-focus in an engaging and thoughtful way. That mix also gives the reader a pause to reflect on what we're saying. And that's key. See? It's a great trick to add rhythm to our writing, and allows the eye to dance along the page.

Tone of voice

Think more...

→ *Explore ideas and innovations that serve others as part of our ancient tradition of modern thinking.*

Rather than...

→ *We are an ancient university that keeps abreast of changes in a range of sectors.*

Diction

Sometimes being around for a long time makes people think: boring, stuffy, heard it all before. But we're flipping that on its head. Juxtaposing our experience with newness, and how it leads to innovation will catch the eye of a forward-thinking audience. Who doesn't want to venture forward with a strong foundation beneath them?

Sentence structure

As thought-leaders and the trusted go-to in a range of areas, we can afford to be a little more formal when we're leaning on our experience TOV pillar. Let's still use shorter lines. For impact. But if we need to explain ourselves a bit more, we can use longer form to do so. Having that flexibility reflects our brand, as we build knowledge upon knowledge both in learning and sharing.



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