

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

Business Writing:

A Roadmap to Better Communications



Letters

Memos

Emails

Reports

Proposals



- ♦ Reduce your writing time by 30%!
- ♦ Decrease errors!
- ♦ Use these tips and exercises to build your confidence in style, grammar, sentence structure and fluency!

By Karen Rayl

Business leaders claim that business writing is an essential — yet hard-to-find — skill in today's workplace. This workbook will build your confidence and proficiency in composing effective letters, memos, emails and more. You will discover the four-step writing process that will help decrease your writing time and avoid writer's block. Through exercises and tips, you will develop your ability to write clearly and concisely, as well as increase your grammar and proofreading mastery to make each document error-free!

***BUSINESS WRITING:
A ROADMAP TO BETTER COMMUNICATION***

By Karen Rayl

Soft Skills Publishing
P. O. Box 118697
Carrollton, TX 75011-8697
www.softskillspublishing.com

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ISBN 1-929728-03-4

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Karen Rayl and David Bassham bring their own unique perspectives to the top issues in today's organizations. Karen brings her more than 20 years of corporate communications and career counseling experience to these issues, while David provides the psychological perspective with his background in counseling psychology.

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Both David and Karen are professional educators who have many years of teaching and presentation experience. Through their company, Bassham, Rayl & Associates, based in Carrollton, TX, Karen and David provide training and consulting, as well as communications services, to corporations. These professional presenters work independently and together to provide organizations with insight on the "people" issues and competencies that improve employee performance and strengthen the bottom line.

Visit their website at [**www.bassham-rayl.com**](http://www.bassham-rayl.com).

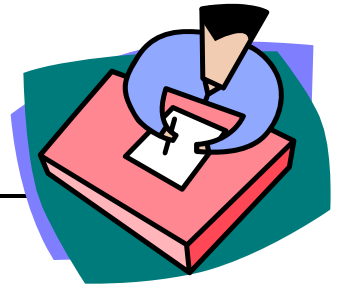


Table of Contents

ABOUT THE AUTHOR	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
DECREASE WRITING TIME: THE WRITING PROCESS	5
Why is Writing So Important?	
Prewriting	
Drafting	
Editing	
Postwriting	
DECREASE ERRORS: GRAMMAR REVIEW	13
Subject/Verb Agreement	
Common Indefinite Pronouns	
Commonly Confused Words	
Punctuation	
INCREASE READABILITY: WRITE CLEARLY AND CONCISELY	23
Put the Most Important Information First	
Take the Fat Out of Your Writing	
Eliminate Plague Phrases	
Eliminate Redundant Phrases	
Add Variety to Your Writing	
Use Parallel Structure	
INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS: TONE AND STYLE	29
INCREASE YOUR ABILITIES: WRITING LETTERS, MEMOS AND EMAIL	35
DECREASE YOUR LIABILITY: LEGAL ISSUES IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION	45
INCREASE UNDERSTANDING: WRITING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE	48
GET YOUR POINT ACROSS: REPORT AND PROPOSAL WRITING	51
EXERCISES	57
THE TEST	64
ANSWERS TO EXERCISES	67
ANSWERS TO THE TEST	73
PROOFREADING MARKS	75
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
ORDER FORM	77



IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

**DECREASE WRITING TIME:
The Writing Process**

WHY IS WRITING SO IMPORTANT?

Why is it so important to be a good writer? Who really cares about grammar, spelling and such? As long as your message gets across, what's the difference if there are a few errors?

Once you have been in the working world for a few months, see if you are still asking those questions. If you are, you don't get it. Most people you communicate with, especially those in management, care a great deal about good writing, especially if you are writing memos and correspondence to external customers as well as your internal customers within the organization. Punctuation errors, subject/verb agreement and misspelled words get in the way of communication. In fact, too many errors can change the meaning of your message without your realizing it. In addition, bad writing makes a negative impression on the reader.

When looking for employees, executives say that good writing is one of the hardest skills to find in job candidates. A 1998 OfficeTeam survey of executives with the nation's 1,000 largest companies found that 29% cited writing as the hardest skills to find.

Even with technology advances and the broader use of computers and word processing programs, writing is still a key aptitude. "One of the most surprising features of the information revolution is that the momentum has turned back to the written word," says Hoyt Hudson, vice president of Information Services at InterAccess, an Internet service provider in Chicago. "Someone who can come up with precise communication has a real advantage in today's environment."²

Alan Cunningham, a manager in the computer sciences department at NASA's Marshall Space Center, in Huntsville, Alabama, agrees: "Strong communication skills are vitally needed in today's business climate. You find yourself writing to gain the support of both internal and external customers."

Cunningham thinks good writing is especially important when communicating with customers in many types of documents, including business proposals, status reports, customer correspondence and documentation, technical support and email. Every job description for a new position on his staff, he says, includes the following line: "Required: effective organization and mastery of the English language in written and oral forms."

Indeed, good writing is often a key element in assessing a person's promotability. Good writing can increase a person's power. This workbook will help you learn the essentials in business writing through exercises and information.

Of course, one class and one workbook will not completely change your writing ability. Enhancing your writing skills is the same as improving any other skill: It takes lots of practice.

"Knowledge may be power, but communications skills are the primary raw materials of good client relationships."

Alan Cunningham, NASA

THE WRITING PROCESS: THE BEST WAY TO AVOID WRITER'S BLOCK

Writing is difficult for many people because they do not know how to start and then continue with a systematic process. The four primary steps to writing and editing are *prewriting*, *drafting*, *editing* and *postwriting*.

Many people try to edit their document as they write, making the process drawn out and rather frustrating. Many times this leads to a common writing problem: writer's block. You know you're blocked when you look at an empty sheet of paper and can think of nothing to put on it, or sit for minutes trying to think of a better word to use. Sometimes this occurs at the very beginning of a writing project, but it can happen any time during the process as well. By using this systematic approach, writer's block is virtually eliminated and your writing time is decreased.



PREWRITING

Prewriting is one way to avoid writer's block. You define your message and consider what information is needed to best communicate your meaning to your audience. You then start writing down your thoughts on your subject.

Brainstorm

By writing down key points about your subject, you start your thought processes moving. Prewriting is basically your own brainstorming session, where you let your thoughts guide you without any deterrent. Some call this method of prewriting "free writing," which is a good way to describe it. You are *freeing* your mind to put down your thoughts without any self-editing to block your way.

Remember Your Audience

When using the free writing approach to start your project, the next step is stepping back and looking at your jottings to begin determining what should remain and what can go. Think back to how you defined your message and the information needed to communicate your meaning. Remember who your audience is, and make sure your points are all necessary for them. For example, if you are writing a proposal to your boss, you may include some points that would not be necessary if you were writing a general overview of the proposal for top management.

Ask Yourself These Questions:

- ◆ How interested or involved in the subject is my reader?
- ◆ How knowledgeable is he or she on the subject?
- ◆ Does my reader understand the purpose of this document (e.g., to make a decision or be better informed)?
- ◆ If my reader has special concerns or strong views about the subject, what are they?
- ◆ How does my reader regard me personally and professionally?
- ◆ What is my reader's style of doing business?

Remember Your Goal

Another factor to consider in prewriting is your ultimate *goal* in this writing project. Are you trying to persuade your audience to do something as a result of this document (e.g., a proposal or recommendation report)? Are you trying to inform them of the facts in a situation (e.g., an executive summary in a report on survey findings)? Are you providing your opinion about a particular issue (e.g., an editorial for the newspaper)?

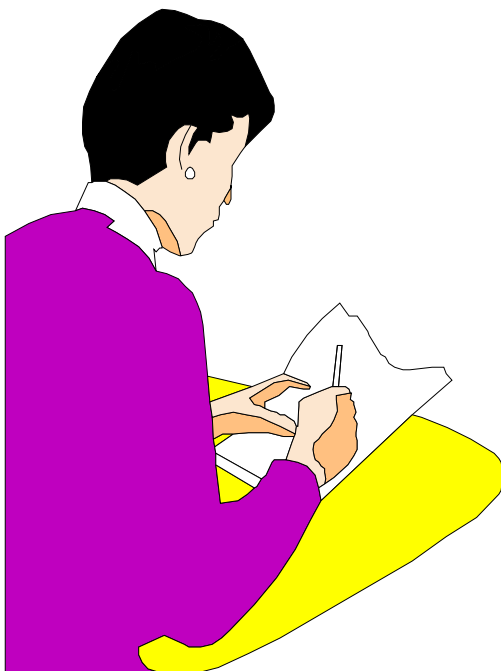
If your goal is to persuade, your prewriting should include your arguments for your recommendation – why this project is important and should happen. If your goal is to inform, you should include the basic facts that have come from your research and analysis. If your goal is to provide an opinion, you should consider your main thoughts that support your views.

DRAFTING

Many frustrated writers skip over the prewriting stage and try to start their writing process at the drafting stage, putting their thoughts into fully structured sentences that are organized by ideas. This sometimes stops the process altogether because the brain is forced to slow down and think of appropriate words and sentence construction.

Begin Organizing Your Document

To avoid this slowdown, writers should make drafting the second step after prewriting. At the drafting stage, writers can look at the thoughts they have put down in their prewriting, and determine the proper organization, logic and structure of their document. Some people like to organize their prewriting thoughts into an outline structure and then begin writing sentences from that. Some prefer to write sentences and paragraphs from these initial thoughts.



Each writer can determine which of these methods works best for him or her.

Consider Your Document's Purpose and Length

Keep writing until you feel you have looked at every appropriate thought from your prewriting and expanded on it. At that point, consider your purpose and go back and determine if more information is necessary in certain areas or even if you have written too much in one section. The drafting stage is also where you begin looking at the length of your document and determining if you have too little or too much verbiage to meet your purpose for your audience.

Don't Get Bogged Down By Grammar

At this point, you are actually writing your document, but a writer still should avoid getting bogged down in too much grammar and word usage questions at this point because that is covered in-depth in the next stage: editing. Don't stop and consider substitutes for indefinite words such as "thing." Just write it down and move on.

For example, if you are writing an executive summary in a report for a corporation's top management, you want to stick to the basic facts with some expansion to inform or persuade, depending on your goal. If you are writing a handbook or instruction manual, you may need to expand your thoughts further to fully explain them to the reader.

Keep the writing flowing. The best way to proceed in the drafting stage is to begin writing sentences from the thoughts you jotted down in prewriting. Begin expanding on each idea and forming paragraphs. Begin looking at your references and research to help you develop your factual or persuasive assessment for your audience.



Other Factors

If possible, find a comfortable place to do your writing where you will not be distracted by laughing employees, phone calls or visitors.

Take breaks, but try to get your first draft done before you quit for the day. Then you will be ready to either write a second draft or proceed into Editing.

EDITING

Once you feel you have written the correct length of document for your audience and purpose, it is time to start editing. Editing is probably the most important part of the writing process because it organizes, condenses, clarifies and polishes your finished product. Without this step, your document could be a rambling, vague piece of ungrammatical garbage. Your carefully researched report or proposal could end up hurting rather than helping your cause.

You are not only editing for grammar at this stage, you are also looking at your organizational structure and your document's format.

Organizational Editing

Organizational editing helps ensure that you have put each idea in its appropriate place so that each paragraph is appropriately supporting your purpose. A simple organization device is what public speakers remember when composing a speech: tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you've told them. In other words, be sure you have introduced your subject through a written section, a table of contents or an executive summary. Then, be sure you make your points concisely in properly ordered paragraphs. Finally, summarize your key points. At this point, you should emphasize your argument, recommendation or overall purpose for your audience.

Format Editing

You should look at your document's format and layout to be sure your document is reader-friendly and attractive. If you have too much text with nothing breaking it up, your report, proposal or white paper is harder to read and looks very dull. Put in "white space" with section headings; bullet points; and graphics, such as charts, graphs and tables (if appropriate). Be sure your margins are consistent and your bullet points or numbers are correctly lined up. Be sure your font is easily readable and the right size for most readers (usually 10 to 12 point is fine, but each font is differently sized).

If your organization has a standard format for various documents, you should follow it, of course. However, this doesn't mean you have no means to create a more attractive document. It still may be possible to put in headings or bullet points to break up your text and make your document more attractive to the reader.





Editing for Grammar

To many writers, this is the most challenging part of the process because they don't know proper grammar or why certain rules exist. More than just looking for errors in spelling punctuation, subject-verb agreement and sentence structure, this stage also requires looking for unclear and wordy writing.

Proofreading is the step in editing where you check very closely for the following:

- ◆ Spelling
- ◆ Punctuation
- ◆ Sentence structure
- ◆ Clarity
- ◆ Conciseness
- ◆ Fluency

Of course, after you have composed your document using your word processing software, you will want to do a spell-check and grammar-check. Be aware, however, that these programs are computer-driven. They cannot know for sure if you have made a spelling or grammar error in the context in which you are writing.

Therefore, after these initial checks, get your other proofreading tools together, such as a good dictionary and thesaurus. You also may want to have a style guide from your company, or use another style guide such as the UP (United Press) or AP (Associated Press) stylebooks used by journalists.

In addition, it is often a good idea to have someone else read your document before sending it out. Fresh eyes can see things the writer's eyes will overlook.

Proofreading Techniques:

1. Read at a slower pace and concentrate on the individual letters of words rather than on the meaning of the words.
2. Stay within your "visual span," the number of letters you can identify with a single glance (for most people, about six letters).
3. As you proofread, place a ruler or index card under each line as you proofread to focus your concentration and vision.
4. Read each paragraph backwards, from the last sentence to the first. This helps to prevent being distracted by the meaning of the words.
5. Read your final draft aloud to yourself or a co-worker. This helps you see errors you may have formerly overlooked.

Postwriting

Many writers stop at the editing step, but there is one more important step in the writing process. After you have completed your editing, set your document down for a few hours or overnight, and then check it again for errors.

If someone has given you directions or is overseeing your work, be sure to check with him or her to be sure you have met all the needs and can deliver on the promises made.

This is also a good time to switch your perspective from the writer to the reader. From the reader's point of view, is the document's meaning clear?

Other postwriting questions you should ask include:

- Have I met the reader's requirements or does he or she need more information?
- Am I making promises I cannot meet?
- Should I have someone else read this document to be sure no errors have been made?
- Does anyone need to give me a final okay before I send this out?

**[AT THIS POINT, TURN TO PG 64-65 IN THIS
WORKBOOK AND TAKE "THE TEST."]**

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

**DECREASE ERRORS:
GRAMMAR REVIEW**

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Words between subject and verb

Most writers don't have trouble with subject-verb agreement if the verb directly follows the subject. For example: The *fly* *is* bothering me. Those *flies* *are* bothering me.

The problems usually occur when there are words separating the subject and the verb, usually (but not always!) a prepositional phrase.

For example: Winners of the state contest (go or goes?) to the national finals.

Take out the prepositional phrase *of the state contest*, and the answer is easy: Winners *go* to the national finals. Your red-flag word is "**of**," which signals the beginning of a prepositional phrase.

Other examples:

One of the problems (is or are) broken equipment.

One of the problems **is** broken equipment.

Other words that can get in the way of easily matching the verb to the subject are :*including, together with, along with, accompanied by, in addition to, except* and *as well as*. These are also discounted in subject-verb agreement.

For example:

The moon, as well as Venus, (is or are?) visible in the night sky.

The **moon**, as well as Venus, **is** visible in the night sky.

The Big Dipper, along with many other constellations, (is or are?) easy to learn to find.

The **Big Dipper**, along with many other constellations, **is** easy to learn to find.

Compound subjects

When two subjects are connected by *and*, they make a compound subject that needs a plural verb.

For example: Rick *and* Jim are hungry.

Problems occur with indefinite pronouns that may be singular or plural. Here's a brief reference list for you.

Collective Nouns

Another confusing area in subject-verb agreement is collective nouns. A collective noun names a group of people or things, such as *family, group, audience, class, number committee, team*, etc.

The rule is: when the *group* acts as one unit, use a singular verb. When the *members* of the group act individually, use a plural verb.

For example:

The **senior class** nervously **awaits** final exams. (senior class acting as a unit)

The **senior class** **were** fitted for their graduation robes today. (senior class acting as individuals)

The **couple** in blue **is** engaged. (Couple is a single unit.)

The **couple** **say** *their* vows tomorrow. (Separate actions for each person in the couple.)

COMMON INDEFINITE PRONOUNS			
ALWAYS USE PLURAL VERB	both many		
ALWAYS USE SINGULAR VERB	another anybody anyone anything each either	every everybody everyone everything neither nobody	no one nothing one somebody someone something
SINGULAR OR PLURAL DEPENDING ON CONTEXT	all any more	most none some	

Plural Nouns That Look Singular

Some words look as though they are singular when they are in fact plural, especially words ending in *-a* like *criteria*, *bacteria*, and *phenomena*. The singular forms for these are *criterion*, *bacterium*, and *phenomenon*.

Use plural verbs: The bacteria *multiply* rapidly (not *multiplies*); *These are* important criteria (not *This is* an important criteria).

In Latin, *data* and *media* are plural nouns. Although in spoken words, it is common to make them into singular nouns, in formal writing, they should be plural nouns with a plural verb.

Dealing with Dangling Participles

A *participial phrase* that comes at the beginning of the sentence is always followed by a comma and modifies the subject of the sentence.

Participial phrases sometimes appear to modify a word that they cannot logically modify. The word it should modify does not appear in the sentence, thus causing what is known as a dangling participle. These often make good jokes; but they can be confusing and it's best to avoid them.

A participle should describe the grammatical subject of the main clause, as in the sentence

CORRECT: "Walking down the road, I bumped into a friend." (I was walking)

A dangling participle is one that the speaker really intends to describe something other than the grammatical subject of the sentence.

DANGLING: "Riding along on my bicycle, a dog knocked me over." (A dog was riding?)

In this sentence it appears that the participle *riding* must relate to *dog*, so we end up with a dog that has first stolen a bicycle and then ridden it carelessly! The speaker really means *riding* to relate to *me*.

CORRECTED: "A dog knocked me over as I rode my bicycle."

Modifying the wrong subject or actor is a common mistake. Check your sentences to be sure you're not "dangling"!

Using Active Versus Passive Voice

We often hear that active voice "punches up" our writing, and it is true that active verbs and voice do make writing more dynamic. However, passive voice is more appropriate in certain instances, especially in business communications.

We use passive voice to purposefully leave out the actor or subject of the sentence in an effort to sound more diplomatic. For example, if you are communicating bad news or negative feedback, use of passive voice can take the sting out of the message.

Example:

Active: You are past due on your registration payment.

Passive: Your registration payment is past due.

The passive example is less confrontational. It takes the actor out of the sentence so that the message does not appear to blame someone.

Use passive voice:

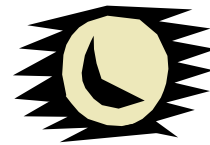
1. when you don't know the actor (The door was left unlocked.)
2. when the actor is unimportant to the point you're making (The office will be open on Monday.)
3. when the emphasis is clearly not on the actor but on the acted upon (What happened to the employee who took that money from Petty Cash? The employee was fired.)

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS

The list of words that are constantly misused is very long. These are just a few of the pairs of words that are most often confused with each other. Whenever you are in doubt about proper word usage, check your dictionary.

DO NOT CONFUSE

- **affect** and **effect**: **affect** means “make a difference to,” whereas **effect** means “a result” or “bring about (a result).”
- **appraise** with **apprise**: **appraise** means “assess,” while **apprise** means “inform.”
- **complement**: “a thing that enhances something by contributing extra features,” with **compliment**, which means “an expression of praise” or “politely congratulate.” Also used to mean “free” as in “complimentary tickets.”
- **compose**, meaning to “form by putting together,” with **comprise** meaning to include or contain. The team is *composed* of a variety of individuals. The team *comprises* a variety of individuals. **NOT**: The team *is comprised of* a variety of individuals.
- **council**, “an administrative or advisory body,” with **counsel**, “advice or guidance.”
- **definite**, “certain, sure,” with **definitive**, “decisive and with authority.”
- **discreet**, “careful not to attract attention or give offence,” with **discrete**, “separate, distinct.”
- the possessive **its** (as in *turn the camera on its side*) with the contraction **it's** (short for either **it is** or **it has**, as in *it's my fault*; *it's been a hot day*).
- **perquisite** and **prerequisite**: a **perquisite** is a special right or privilege enjoyed as a result of one's position; **prerequisite** is something that is required as a prior condition for something else. **Prerequisite** can also be an adjective, meaning “required as a prior condition.”
- **who's** with **whose**: **who's** is a contraction of **who is** or **who has**, while **whose** is used in questions such as *whose is this?* and *whose turn is it?*
- **your** with **you're**: **you're** is a contraction of **you are**, while **your** is a possessive determiner used in phrases such as *your turn*.



PUNCTUATION (a brief summary)

Quotation Marks

These punctuation marks (the British call them *inverted commas*) come in two forms, double and single.

- The *double quotation marks* (opening “ and closing ”) are used to enclose the words of a direct quotation: *She said, “I’ll never see you again.”* (They are never used in indirect or paraphrased quotations: *She said she’d never see him again.*)
- They are also used to enclose words or phrases quoted from others or words that may be slang or that are in some other way being used peculiarly: *The speaker tried to put a favorable “spin” on his denial. The “pacification plan” was in fact simply a euphemism for a bloody conquest.* But be sparing: most editors discourage the use of such quotation marks for effect rather than for a substantive reason, and overuse of these marks in any writing is affected.
- Convention also calls for *double quotation marks* around the titles of short stories, short poems, short musical compositions, and the names of plays, chapters in books, and radio and television programs: Frost’s “The Road Not Taken,” “Eye Witness News.” (Titles of longer works usually require italics instead, and sometimes the decision is arbitrary or simply conventional: books of the Bible, for example, are almost always italicized rather than placed in *quotation marks*, and the same is true of the titles of Shakespeare’s plays.)
- A key problem with *quotation marks* is knowing which other marks of punctuation go inside the closing *quotation mark(s)* and which belong outside. Most stylebooks and most editors follow these rules: periods and commas belong inside, colons and semicolons outside. Other marks—question mark, dash, and exclamation point, for example—go inside when they belong with the quoted material, outside when they belong to the main sentence. When quoting a long passage of two or more paragraphs, the usual procedure is to use no *quotation marks* and instead to set off the entire passage of quoted matter by indenting it. If you decide to use *quotation marks* instead, however, the usual procedure is to begin each paragraph of the long quotation with *quotation marks* but to use a closing *quotation mark* only at the end of the final sentence in the quoted passage. In any event, use only one of these methods with any given quotation.
- *Single quotation marks* are restricted mainly to enclosing a quotation within a quotation: *The dealer said, “I’m sorry, I thought you said ‘I pass.’”* Note that a period goes inside both final *quotation marks* when the two quotations end together.

Remember that British editorial conventions differ.

Parentheses

Parentheses (the singular is *parenthesis*) are the punctuation marks we use to set off explanatory or other additional material not needed in the main sentence.

Stylistically, *parentheses* are a way of setting off an aside in a syntactic structure. Paired dashes can do this too—they're the most vigorous of such marks—and *parentheses* are a bit stronger than paired commas for a similar purpose. Conventionally *parentheses* are also used to set off numbers, as in (1), (2), etc.; to repeat and confirm a number or give an abbreviation in a text, as in *There were fifteen hundred three (1,503) applicants* and *The agency was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA)*; and to indicate alternative possibilities, as in forms to be filled out: *Fill in name(s) of occupant(s) of this address.*

Conventional combinations of *parentheses* and other marks of punctuation are these:

- a full sentence within *parentheses* begins with a capital letter and ends with a period or other terminal mark, all placed within the *parentheses*;
- inside a sentence, the materials within *parentheses* need not be capitalized nor have end punctuation within them but may include a question mark or an exclamation point;
- abbreviations within *parentheses* may end with a period;
- within a sentence, punctuation will go not immediately before a parenthetical insertion but directly after the final parenthesis mark, as in *He gave his name (grudgingly), but he refused to give his address*;
- and a parenthetical remark within *parentheses* will be surrounded by square brackets, not by a second set of *parentheses* (in mathematical expressions, the reverse is true: material already containing parentheses will be enclosed by square brackets, which in turn may be enclosed by braces).

Colon

This punctuation mark (:) can

- signal a forthcoming list, as in *He sold sundries: needles, thread, pins, buttons, and thimbles*;
- introduce a further amplification or a summary of what has just been said, as in *After years of work, he finally had it: the championship*;
- let one clause explain another, as in *He was late: his car had broken down*;
- lead into a long quotation, as in *Jefferson wrote: When in the course of human events,...; and (5) do such separating tasks as these: Henry IV, Pt. I, II:iv:122; Dear Sir;; New York: Longman, 1987; and 11:15 A.M.*

Comma

This punctuation mark (,) has many uses, usually separating one element of a expression from another without actually setting them completely apart.

- It separates independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions such as *and* (*He ordered them, and he paid for them*) and sets off nonrestrictive modifiers, appositives, and other parenthetical elements (*Fred, who teaches Spanish, is being promoted; George Smith, my uncle, has died; His humor is, I think, bizarre*).



- The *comma* also separates sentence adverbs and adverbial clauses and phrases from the main clause they precede, and if the adverbial clause interrupts the main clause, *commas* surround it (*Furthermore, I don't believe that she's guilty; I don't believe, furthermore, that she's guilty*).
- *Commas* separate words in series (*a horse, a dog, and a cow*; note that formal editors require the *comma* after *dog*, but journalists do not use it, and the British don't use it either) and in a string of adjectives modifying a noun (*a dark, windy, unpleasant day*).
- The *comma* can introduce, enclose, and end direct quotations (*I said, "Go home"; I said, "Go home," and I threw him out; "Go home," I said*).
- It also separates contradictory expressions (*It's green, not blue*), sets off direct address (*Yes, Fred, I'll be there*), and marks off certain rhetorical questions (*He's a fool, isn't he?*).
- The *comma* can make clear that a word or words have been omitted in an otherwise repetitive locution, as in *Some like it hot; others, cold*, and serves to prevent ambiguity, as in *For John, Henry was a model*.
- The *comma* also performs a range of stylistic chores, which sometimes differ slightly from publisher to publisher and stylebook to stylebook. It may separate date and year (*July 4, 1776*), city from state (*Chicago, Illinois*), day from date (*Monday, April 10*), a name from a title in apposition (*David Hankins, Building Monitor*), and the last name from the first, when they are presented in reverse order (*O'Hara, James D.*). In each of these cases, a *comma* may (and sometimes must) follow the second element as well.
- *Commas* also mark the thousands in a long number (*\$10,000,000*) and often signal the end of salutation and complimentary close in personal letters (*Dear Milton, Love, Harriet*).

Dash

The dash (—) is a mark of punctuation similar to but physically longer than a hyphen and used for other purposes. It can be used to

- Signal an interruption in syntax and in the idea of a sentence: *When the governor understood how—did you hear the phone?*
- to introduce a summarizing phrase following a list of details (as a colon might be used): *We had studied math, English, chemistry, philosophy, history—the whole liberal arts curriculum.*
- replace commas or parentheses that enclose grammatically parenthetical clauses or phrases: *They took every precaution—it seemed to take forever—to ensure our safe arrival.*
- set off an interjected question or exclamation: *The need now—urgent, is it not?—is for more funding.*

The *dash* also appears in attributions of quotations: *Water, water, every where, nor any drop to drink. —Coleridge*. Finally, the *dash* is frequently used in informal writing—especially in personal letters—to suggest the spontaneity, breeziness, and relaxed structure we usually find in conversation. It can be effective when so used, but its overuse to avoid other punctuation and to evade the requirements of more conventional syntax can be trying for the reader, even in a personal letter. In more formal writing overuse can suggest that the writer is hasty, careless, and imprecise.

Ellipsis

An ellipsis is the use of periods or other marks to indicate the omission of words in a quotation: “*Better late than never, but....*” Conventionally, use three periods within a sentence. When your *ellipsis* ends with the end of a phrase, clause, or sentence in the original, use four periods or three plus whatever mark ended the original.

Exclamation Point

The *exclamation point* (!) is the punctuation mark used to give the sort of emphasis to a word, phrase, or sentence that suggests loud, vigorous, forthright delivery. *Never! Free at last! Never darken my door again!* In formal writing, use the exclamation point sparingly. Rely on your words, not your punctuation, to emphasize your point.

Hyphen

This is the mark (-) English uses to

- link the parts of some compound words (*drug-dependent, blow-dry*), including most of those containing prepositions (*mother-in-law, top-of-the-line*);
- combine single-word proper nouns such as place names (*the London-Paris flight*), although in printed matter *the New York-London flight* and *the Saint-Lambert-Montreal route*, will look slightly different, because printing uses the en dash to form compounds when one or both of the words are made up of two words or are already hyphenated).
- put between some prefixes and the root words to which they’re joined (*non-Christian, self-destruct, pre-Columbian*); to avoid ambiguity in compound modifiers (*blue-green enamel, a slow-moving van*. However, *a slowly moving van would not be hyphenated* because *-ly* adverbs and the adjectives they modify are not hyphenated;
- use between parts of fractions as these are spelled out, especially as modifiers (*a three-fourths majority*); to mean “up to and including” when used between numbers or dates (*50-59, 1922-1930*, although here Edited English requires en dashes);
- divide elements of compound two-digit numbers over twenty (*twenty-one, ninety-nine*). Note that even if you use a *hyphen* between parts of an adjective or adverb (*an eighteenth-century statesman*), you should not do so in a modifier plus a noun (*She lived in the eighteenth century*).
- link the parts of a word divided for lack of space at the end of a line of writing; in this use the *hyphen* appears at the end of the last syllable for which there is room on that line, with the rest of the word then appearing at the beginning of the next line. Good desk dictionaries show you where words may conventionally be divided, usually with a dot or space between syllables where a *hyphen* may go. Generally editors try to avoid hyphenating any word at the end of a line when the word already has a hyphen in it.

Question Mark

This punctuation mark (?) appears at the end of sentences that are questions. In direct quotations, the *question mark* falls inside the final quotation mark; “*Where?*” *she asked*. In indirect quotations, no *question mark* is used: *She asked where he had been*.

Semicolon

This punctuation mark (;) has two important uses in written English.

- It coordinates (separates yet connects evenhandedly) two independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction: *I ran to the door; no one was there.*

Notice particularly its use when independent clauses are joined by conjunctive adverbs such as *however* and *furthermore*. These are not coordinating conjunctions, and therefore a comma is not enough punctuation; a *semicolon* does the job: *We were there early; nonetheless, they had already left.* With a coordinating conjunction such as *and* or *but*, a comma would serve: *We arrived early, but they had already left.*

- The *semicolon* also serves to separate clauses or phrases in series constructions when these already contain commas (*He had a tall, black horse; a wagon, which someone had given him after the battle; and a threadbare, tattered carpetbag*) and elsewhere where there are already other commas.

Another point about the *semicolon*: the convention is that the *semicolon* always belongs outside the final quotation marks: *He said, "I hit him"; he smiled wickedly.*



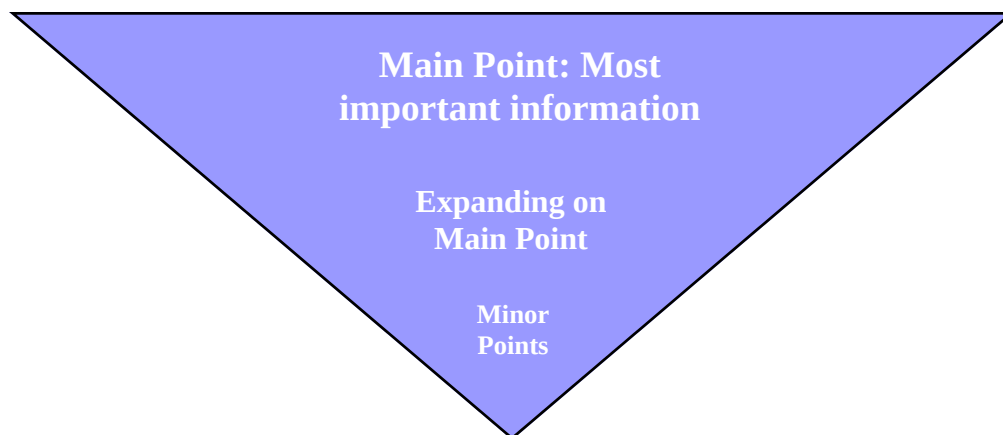
IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

**Increase Readability:
Write Clearly and Concisely**

Put the Important Information First

Unlike expository or creative writing, business writing is no-nonsense, get-to-the-point composition, and messages should be written in a clear and economic format, in letters, memos, and emails. Business writing can be compared to newspaper writing in that you have to have a good headline (subject line), if applicable, and organize it with your most important information first.

Using the Inverted Pyramid Style



Most people don't read the newspaper all the way through. They scan the headlines, and if the headline catches their attention, they begin reading the first sentence. If that is also of interest, they may read most of the article.

As in newspaper writing, your first sentence in any written business communication (called the "lead" in a newspaper article) should include your main point. Each sentence or paragraph after that should expand on this point. The least important points should be at the end because, just like a newspaper article, this may not even be read.

Keep in mind that managers and executives get numerous emails, memos, reports, etc. every day. If your memo or email doesn't quickly get to the point, the reader may file it for later reading, which may hold up your project, or even worse, throw it out!

Cut the Fat Out of Your Writing

Getting to the point in your business writing also means eliminating needless, redundant wording. We have become accustomed to adding certain words and phrases because we see hear and see them constantly and don't really think about what they add to our writing.

Editors and many readers would prefer you get rid of these plague phrases and redundant writing to keep your communications crisp, clean and concise. As you will see in the following tables, cutting these words and phrases shortens the sentence without changing the meaning.

Eliminate These Plague Phrases

As to whether	I think we should decide as to <i>whether</i> we should all vote for officers.
Being that or being as	Being that <i>Because</i> I was the youngest child, I got all the hand-me-downs.
Each and every	Each and every time I see John, I think of our class together.
Had ought or hadn't ought	You hadn't ought <i>not</i> to tease your sister.
Irregardless	Irregardless <i>Regardless</i> of what you think, I am going to write this memo.
Kind of or sort of.	We were kind of <i>somewhat</i> pleased with the results.
Would of, Could of or Should of	We would of <i>have</i> come to see you, but didn't think you wanted us to.
On account of	On account of <i>Because</i> of the rain, we had to cancel the party.
Is comprised of	The group is comprised of <i>comprises</i> a cross-section of the company.
Try and Don't try <u>and</u> do something	I'll try and <i>to</i> get to that report tomorrow.
Thusly	Thusly , <i>Therefore</i> , we should all cut our departmental budgets.
Utilize or Utilization	The teachers banned the utilization <i>use</i> of erasable paper.

Eliminate These Redundant Phrases

Instead of writing . . . Eliminate the unnecessary phrases like this.

all things considered	All things considered , Connecticut's woodlands are in better shape now than ever before.
as far as I'm concerned	As far as I'm concerned , There is no need for further protection of woodlands.
at the present time or at this point in time	This is because there are fewer farmers at the present time now .
because of the fact that	Woodlands have grown in area because of the fact that farmers have abandoned their fields.
by virtue of the fact that	Our woodlands are coming back by virtue of the fact that because our economy has shifted its emphasis.
due to the fact that	Due to the fact that Because earnings are low, we will be cutting expenses next year.
for all intents and purposes	The era in which we must aggressively defend our woodlands has, for all intents and purposes , passed.
for the most part	For the most part , People's suspicions are based on a misunderstanding of the facts.
for the purpose of	Many woodlands, in fact, have been purchased for the purpose of to create public parks.
have a tendency to	This policy has a tendency to tends to isolate some communities.
in a manner of speaking	The policy has, in a manner of speaking , begun to hold up progress in the more rural parts of our state.
in a very real sense	In a very real sense, this This policy works to the detriment of those it is supposed to help.
in my opinion	In my opinion, this This wasteful policy ought to be revoked.
in the case of	In the case of this particular policy , Citizens of northeast Connecticut became very upset about this policy.
in the final analysis	In the final analysis, the The state would have been better off without such a policy.
in the event that	In the event that If enough people protest, it will probably be revoked.
in the nature of	Something in the nature of like a repeal may soon take place.
in the process of	Legislators are already in the process of reviewing the statutes.
it seems that	It seems that they They can't wait to get rid of this one.
the point I am trying to make	The point I am trying to make is that Sometimes public policy doesn't accomplish what it sets out to achieve.
what I mean to say is	What I mean to say is that Well-intentioned lawmakers sometimes make fools of themselves.

Add Variety to Your Writing

Even in business writing it is possible to use some creativity and variety to decrease the boring prose. Sentences can be varied and thoughts emphasized by re-positioning subjects or modifiers, using inverted word order, using occasional questions and repeating important words or ideas.

Adding Information

Adding information to a basic sentence can make it more interesting, informative and effective. For example:

Earnings have increased.

Third-quarter earnings have increased 35% over last year.

Due to management changes, expense control and employee attrition, third-quarter earnings have increased 35% over last year.

Using Introductory Words or Phrases

Another way to vary sentence structure is to start sentences with introductory words, phrases or clauses. For example:

Fortunately, we found a new team member to help us with the assignment.

Along with our other team members, Jim should be a great help in completing this project.

Inverting word order

Occasionally, you can vary sentences by not using standard word order. For example:

Standard: The mayor walked in.

Inverted: In walked the mayor.

Standard: The results came in slowly.

Inverted: Slowly came the results.

Repeating Important Words or Ideas

Sometimes you may want to repeat some words to help emphasize meaning. Choose the words carefully to use those words containing a main idea or words that use rhythm to focus attention on a main idea. For example:

To make our business plan we must look at expenses: **expenses** for supplies, **expenses** for equipment and **expenses** for salaries.

Happiness requires three things, **success** in work, **success** in love and **success** in life.

Sentences can be varied by changing structure, changing length, adding information, inverting word order and many more methods. None should be used to extreme, but mixing sentence types can add interest and creativity to the dullness of business

Parallel Structure in Professional Writing

It is important to be consistent in your wording in professional writing. This is called parallelism. When you are expressing ideas of equal weight in your writing, parallel sentence structures can echo that fact and offer you a writing style that uses balance and rhythm to help deliver your meaning. You can use parallel structure in any kind of writing that you do, whether that writing is on or off the job.



Incorrect:

My degree, my work experience, and ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job.

Correct:

My degree, *my* work experience, and *my* ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job. (Same words to provide even weight to each idea.)

Incorrect:

To get into the program, you must have computer skills, be able to write and know how to effectively interact with people.

Correct:

To get into the program, you must *be able to* use a computer, *be able to* write and *know how to* effectively interact with people. (Same use of verbs for each idea.)

OR

To get into the program, you must have good skills with *computers*, *writing* and *people interaction*. (Changing verb/nouns differences by using only nouns .)

**TURN TO PAGES 58-61 AND COMPLETE THE
EXERCISES ON THIS SECTION.**

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

**INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS:
Tone and Style**

TONE AND STYLE IN BUSINESS WRITING

What is Tone?

A business writer should consider the tone of their message, whether they are writing a memo, letter, report, or any type of business document. Tone is present in all communication activities. Ultimately, the tone of a message is a reflection of the writer and it does affect how the reader will perceive the message.

Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind when considering what kind of tone to use in your letters and how to present information in that tone:

Be confident. You can feel confident if you have carefully prepared and are knowledgeable about the material you wish to express. The manner in which you write should assume a confident tone as well. As you prepare business documents, you want the reader to do as you ask or to accept your decision. In order to make the document effective, you must write confidently. Consequently, a confident tone will have a persuasive effect on your audience. The reader will become more inclined to accept your position, and will notice the confidence that you have. Employers are inclined to hire individuals that appear confident and sure of their abilities. This does not mean however; that you should appear overconfident. This can easily be interpreted as arrogant or presumptuous.

Be courteous and sincere. A writer builds goodwill for him or herself by using a tone that is polite and sincere. It is important to strive for sincerity in tone because without sincerity, politeness can sound condescending. Consider the words and phrases you use in your document and how your reader will likely receive them. If you are respectful and honest, readers will be more willing to accept your message, even if it is negative.

For example: **Not:** You didn't read the instructions carefully, thus your system has shut down.

But: The system may automatically shut down if any installation errors occur.

Use appropriate emphasis and subordination.

Ideas placed in the first paragraph of a document or message receive the most emphasis, followed by information placed in the last paragraph. You can subordinate an idea by placing it in middle paragraphs of your message because these paragraphs receive the least emphasis. **Emphasis:** Smoking will no longer be permitted in the building. The committee on employee health and safety reached this decision after considering evidence from researchers and physicians on the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Subordination: The committee on employee health and safety has finished considering evidence, and they have reached the decision that smoking will no longer be permitted in the building.

- u Use active voice to emphasize the person or thing performing an action and passive voice to emphasize the action that is being performed. **Active:** Scientists have conducted experiments to test the hypothesis. **Passive:** Experiments have been conducted to test the hypothesis.
- v The language you use to describe your ideas can also suggest how important that idea is. Use phrases such as "most important," "major," or "primary" when discussing ideas you want to emphasize and phrases such as "a minor point to consider" or "least important" to discuss ideas you want to subordinate. **Emphasis:** Our primary consideration must be cost. **Subordination:** A minor point to consider is appearance.
- w Repeating important ideas is good way to emphasize them as well. Be careful not to overuse this strategy; you will lose your readers' interest if they believe you are needlessly repeating information.
Example: Our primary consideration must be cost — cost to purchase, cost to operate, and cost to maintain.
- x Any information that stands out from the rest of the text will be emphasized.
Bolding, underlining, CAPITALIZING, indenting, and **highlighting** will convey emphasis to your reader. Do not use this strategy frequently or the design effect will be lost.

Use Nondiscriminatory Language

It is very important that the business writer communicate in a way that expresses equality and respect for all individuals. Discriminatory language can come between your message and your reader. Make sure your writing is free of sexist language and free of bias based on such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.

Suggestion	Not:	But:
Use neutral job titles.	Chairman	Chairperson
Avoid demeaning or stereotypical terms.	After the girls in the office receive an order, our office fills it within 24 hours.	When orders are received in the office, they are filled within 24 hours.
Avoid words and phrases that unnecessarily imply gender.	Executives and their wives	Executives and their spouses
Omit information about group membership.	Connie Green performed the job well for her age.	Connie Green performed the job well.
If you do not know a reader's name or gender, use a nonsexist salutation.	Dear Gentlemen:	To Whom it May Concern: Dear Personnel Manager: Dear Customer:
Do not use masculine pronouns.	Each student must provide his own lab jacket.	Students must provide their own lab jackets. Or Each student must provide his or her own lab jacket.

Stress the Benefits For the Reader

Write from the reader's perspective. Instead of simply writing from the perspective of what the reader can do for you, write in a way that shows what you can do for the reader. A reader will often read a document wondering "What's in it for me?" It is your job to tailor your document accordingly.

Not: I am processing your order tomorrow.

But: Your order will be processed tomorrow and you should receive it in five to ten working days.

Stressing reader benefits will help you to avoid sounding self-centered and uninterested.

Write at an Appropriate Level of Difficulty

It is essential that you write at an appropriate level of difficulty to clearly convey your message. Consider your audience and prepare your writing so that the reader will clearly understand what you are saying. In other words, prepare your style of reading to match the reading abilities of your audience. Complex words, jargon, acronyms or terms may not be understood by readers outside the company. Accordingly, do not over-simplify terms or provide insufficient examples for audiences that are knowledgeable on your topic.

Accentuate the Positive

Your letters will be more successful if you focus on positive wording rather than negative, simply because most people respond more favorably to positive ideas than negative ones. Words that affect your reader positively are likely to produce the response you desire in letter-writing situations. A positive emphasis will persuade the reader and create goodwill.

In contrast, negative words may generate resistance and other unfavorable reactions. You should therefore be careful to avoid words with negative connotations. These words either deny--for example, *no*, *do not*, *refuse* and *stop*--or convey unhappy or unpleasant associations--for example, *unfortunately*, *unable to*, *cannot*, *mistake*, *problem*, *error*, *damage*, *loss* and *failure*.

When you need to present negative information, soften its effects by superimposing a positive picture on a negative one.

- Stress what something *is* rather than what it *is not*.
- Emphasize what the firm or product *can and will do* rather than what it *cannot*.
- Open with *action* rather than *apology or explanation*.
- Avoid words that convey unpleasant facts.

Compare the examples below. Which would be more likely to elicit positive reader response?

Negative	Positive
In response to your question about how many coats of Chem-Treat are needed to cover new surfaces: I regret to report that usually two are required. For such surfaces you should figure about 200 square feet per gallon for a good heavy coating that will give you five years or more of beautiful protection.	In response to your question about how many coats of Chem-Treat are needed to cover new surfaces: One gallon is usually enough for one-coat coverage of 500 square feet of previously painted surface. For the best results on new surfaces, you will want to apply two coats.
Penquot sheets are not the skimpy, loosely woven sheets ordinarily found in this price class.	Penquot sheets are woven 186 threads to the square inch for durability and, even after 3-inch hems, measure a generous 72 by 108 inches.
We cannot ship in lots of less than 12.	To keep down packaging costs and to help customers save on shipping costs, we ship in lots of 12 or more.

TURN TO PAGE 62 AND COMPLETE THE EXERCISES ON THIS SECTION.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

**INCREASE YOUR ABILITIES:
Writing letters, memos and emails**

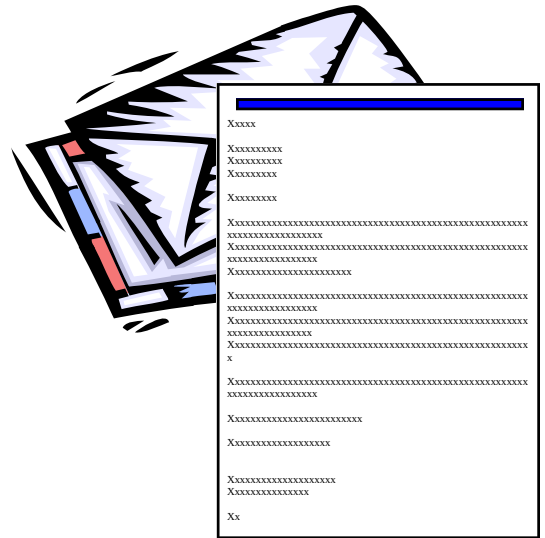
WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

The business letter is far from dead. Even with new technology that allows us to send emails and mobile messages, we still write business letters for such purposes as cover letters for resumes, proposals and reports, complaints and responses to complaints, direct mail marketing and more.

Tips for Good Business Letters

Following are some simple tips to use when composing your business letter.

1. Before writing, think about what you want to accomplish with this letter. Write down the purpose and the points that support that purpose.
2. Don't "bury the lead," as they say in newspaper writing. Your first paragraph should contain the purpose of your letter.
3. Stay pleasant or at least business-like. Do not use negative phrasing if at all possible. (See pg. 31 on positive writing.) Think about how you would respond if you received this letter.
4. Don't use stuffy, overused phrases, such as "in compliance with your request" or "enclosed herewith."
5. After you have written your letter, review it for words and sentences that do not contribute to your purpose. Be sure to make your point, but don't go overboard with unnecessary information.
6. Check your use of active versus passive verbs. If your letter is full of passive verbiage, it will appear rather weak. Use active verbs whenever appropriate. (See pg. xx on using active or passive verbs.)
7. Try not to write in anger. Once you've sent this letter out, it's down in black and white and may haunt you in the future. Handling problems in an upbeat manner can be surprisingly effective.
8. At the end of your letter use an action step to suggest the reader's next move or you own (e.g., "I will give you a call next week to discuss this further." or "Please call me so we can set up an appointment.")
9. Be sure your letter is typo-free and has a presentable format. Even the most well written letter may not be effective if it is badly formatted and contains errors.



Business Correspondence Format

Many larger corporations have a style handbook that provides guidelines for all written materials that are sent internally and externally. If a handbook is available, go by its guidelines. If your company does not have a guide, or you are writing for yourself, you can follow a simple format usually used in business letters.

Commonly Used Formats: The most common layout of a business letter is known as block format. Using this format, the entire letter is left justified and single spaced except for a double space between paragraphs. Another widely utilized format is known as modified block format. In this type, the body of the letter is left justified and single-spaced. However, the date and closing are in alignment in the center of the page. The final, and least used, style is semi-block. It is much like the modified block style except that each paragraph is indented instead of left justified.

Letter Templates: Most computers are equipped with word processing software that includes business templates, which takes much of the guesswork out of formatting letters. Microsoft Word, for example, includes the Letter Wizard, which allows you to fill in information to make a perfect looking letter. However, even without a template, business letters are not hard to format.

Accepted Fonts: Important to the readability of a letter is the font. The generally accepted font is Times New Roman, point size 10 or 12, although other fonts such as Arial (point size 10) may be used. When choosing a font, always consider your audience. If you are writing to a conservative company, you may want to use a conventional font, such as Times New Roman. However, if you are writing to a more liberal company, you have a little more freedom when choosing fonts. One thing to remember when choosing fonts and font sizes is the readability if the letter is faxed to someone. Small type is extremely hard to read on a fax copy. If you are sending it as an email attachment, some people may not have your unusual font in their software.

Punctuation: Use a colon after the salutation, not a comma (e.g., Dear Miss Smith:). Use a comma after the closing (e.g., Sincerely,).

Copies and Enclosures: If you are sending a copy of the letter to someone, put "cc:" or just "c:" and the name of the person you are copying. Put this two spaces below the signature line. If you are sending enclosures, space down two more lines after the "cc" and type "Enclosures:" and either list the enclosures or note how many enclosures are attached [e.g., Enclosures (2)].

COMMUNICATING WITH EMAIL AND MEMOS

Memos are the meat of company communications. And with the wonderful advent of email, memos can be sent, read and responded to in a matter of minutes.

Emails and memos have many purposes, including informing the reader about new information, such as policy changes or financial information, or by persuading the reader to take an action, such as attend a meeting, approve a project or review a report.

Regardless of the specific goal, emails and memos are most effective when they connect the purpose of the writer with the interests and needs of the reader.

Because in most companies, most memos are sent electronically, we will cover information about both forms of communication, including when it may be more appropriate to send a paper copy.

Email



Probably, the biggest advantage of electronic communications is the speed with which we can send and respond to messages. In addition, we can whisk complete documents, presentations, proposals and even photos to recipients with the click of our mouse!

Instantaneous communication also has its drawbacks, however. Because it is so easy to use, many people forget to properly proofread messages before they are sent. In addition, it is just too easy to send an angry response to someone before giving it the extra thoughts that came before one could send a paper document. Many have learned the hard way that just because we can send an email quickly doesn't mean we can forget the basics of good business writing.

Anyone who has an email account has probably had the displeasure of reading an email full of punctuation and spelling errors. These errors can be waved aside in personal emails, but business email is the same as any other business correspondence. It should be free of errors. In addition, it should have the same clarity and conciseness present in all good written communication.

When to Use Email

Email has become the darling of communications professionals because it can be sent to a large number of people simultaneously, saving time, paper and postage costs. Once you have taken the time (or had someone else) compile an email distribution list, future communications are simple.

Updating a project team that is scattered across the organization, or even across the country, can easily be done through email. This way, you can quickly get out news to your team and they can reply to everyone or just to you by return email.

If you want to ask a few questions – do a quick survey – to a select group of people, email is an excellent survey tool. People are much more likely to respond to a few questions via email than a paper survey because it involves only a few typed words and a mouse click to respond. Just be sure to keep the number of questions to a few and keep the questions simple enough to answer “yes” or “no” or quick phrases.

To make a quick announcement or reminder of a company activity, program or meeting, emails can take the place of paper flyers that are pinned to a bulletin board and ignored. Even if the readers only see your succinct subject line, they have been exposed to your message regardless of whether they read the entire message.

Two things to keep in mind with “broadcasting” emails:

- Be sure the email list is kept current, with addresses added when new people come in and old addresses deleted when they go.
- when using a long list of names in your “Send To” space, you may not want everyone in your audience to see the whole list. In this case, you can put the names in your “BCC” space instead. Then, your send list is invisible to your recipients.

These are just a few examples of the beauty of electronic mail. However, there are also some times that email is *not* the way to communicate.

When Email May Not Be the Best Way

Although email is probably the fastest way to send a message to someone, it may not always be the *best* way. Before one sends an email message, these elements should be considered:

- Is this message longer than one page?
- Does this message require sending a large file attachment?
- Does everyone who needs to receive this message have a computer with which to receive this email?
- Is this message confidential and only for a select group of people?
- Will this message be considered appropriate by the organization’s management?

Send brief messages. Because of the new popularity of email, it is quite common to receive dozens of new emails a day. To be sure your email is read, it better to keep your messages brief and to the point. If the message will be rather long, more than a page, it may be better to send a short summary of the information in the email and either attach the larger document or send it in a hard copy (or both).

Check before sending large file attachments. If you have a large file you want to attach to an email, be sure it won't take too long for the other person to download. It is very annoying to have one email message take minutes to download and hold up the rest of your emails while doing so. (People who are using a modem rather than DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or other faster transfer methods are more likely to have a long wait downloading a large file.) You may want to send a message telling the recipient that you would like to send them a large attachment and make sure they are willing to accept it.

Does everyone in your audience have email? Who is the audience for this message? Do all of them have ready access to email, or are some of them in the field most of the time without quick email access? If you are dealing with a varied audience, some of whom do not have email access, don't just send an email to those who have it and assume it will get out to the others somehow. Be sure you send out both a hard copy and electronic message to reach everyone who needs the message.

Don't assume your emails are "secure." We sometime make assumptions that email messages are secure and cannot be seen by anyone but those on the distribution. In most cases this is true. However, it makes sense to check your network security systems (through your Information Services Department or whoever handles your computer systems) before assuming all messages are secure. If you are sending a confidential financial document, for example, you should ensure that it cannot be "hacked" by outsiders first.

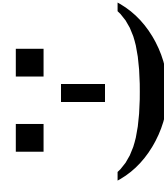
Don't assume your emails are "private." Some people are under the misunderstanding that email is not only secure but also private. It is important to realize that in many corporations, email is considered company property. In other words, any email an employee sends via a company computer can legally be viewed by company management. If an employee is sending links to a favorite game website or sexually explicit photos, he or she may very well get a call from the Human Resources Department!

Use of Electronic Acronyms or Shorthand

The early use of email was primarily for computer experts talking to each other. They developed a series of clever acronyms and punctuation shorthand to relay certain thoughts. These include such things as:

- **F2F** (Face to Face)
- **FYEO** (For Your Eyes Only)
- **TIA** (Thanks in Advance)
- **FAQ** (Frequently Asked Questions) - now accepted in general use

- :-) Happy, smiling
- :-[Sad, sarcasm
- (:/ Sarcasm
- :-# My lips are sealed



Most email users these days are not aware of all these acronyms and punctuation symbols, and it is wiser not to use them to ensure your message is clear. Using these shortcuts may be okay in casual use with friends, but definitely *does not belong in business communications*.

Other Tips for Effective Email and Memo Communication

- Make your communication brief and businesslike.
- Do not use nicknames or be too casual in the heading or message.
- Spelling always counts. has a spell-check feature, use it.
- Check your email frequently.
- If you have an urgent message, use the phone.
- Use abbreviations, acronyms and jargon sparingly if at all.
- Sign your message with your name and email address. For messages going outside your organization, you should probably also include your title, company name, phone number and a fax number.
- Be sure your attachments *are* attached or enclosed before sending.

Memo, Email or Voice?

- **Are you sending bad news?** If so, an email probably will come across as rather impersonal and cold. Unless this is the tone you want, you should probably use a phone call or face-to-face meeting rather than a quick email.
- **Does your supervisor prefer email, paper or voice?** Learn how to communicate with your boss. Does he or she like to receive email updates or paper memos or quick meetings? Use the method your supervisor prefers to get the best results. The same applies to other people you communicate with often, e.g., customers, executives, vendors, etc.
- **Are you trying to settle a disagreement** with a customer or co-worker? An email message tends to start a back-and-forth electronic discussion, whereas a phone call may settle the issue in one conversation.

Your Subject Line

An attention-grabbing subject line in either your email or memo is essential to get your audience's attention in the midst of all the others they receive. Just like a newspaper headline, it should give enough information for the reader to understand what the message contains, but be brief and to the point.

Your subject line:

Should be descriptive, not vague. For example, a subject line: “Year-End Results” is not as descriptive or interesting as “Year-End Results Show 150% Increase.”

Should clearly describe the message's contents. If you receive a lot of junk email, you know how many marketers will use a misleading subject line to get you to pull up their email. This usually works once or twice, but most readers catch on to this quickly. Especially in business communications, be sure your subject line accurately describes the contents of your email.

Should avoid using jargon and acronyms. Even if your message is intended for an internal audience, resist using jargon and company acronyms in your subject line. Even though it is assumed everyone in the company understands it, it is surprising how many may not. For one thing, they may not use the same jargon that you use.

Necessary Attachments

One of the most common mistakes in using email is forgetting to attach the attachments referred to in the message! This also happens with memos.

Your email's attachments will be listed, but in a memo, be sure to refer to any attachments with a notation below your closing, like this:

“Attached: XYZ Company’s Vacation Policy”

Memo



To John Smith
Cc
Bcc
Date June 25, 2002
SUBJECT: **June 24th Meeting Minutes**

*Don't think about it, about it, about it, think you mean think about, about have, could have. **On account of** Use because instead **Oriente** The new students become oriented, not orientated. The same thing applies to administrate -- we administer a project.*

Plus Don't use this word as a conjunction. Use and instead.
Point in time Forget it! At this time or at this point or now will do the job.
So as to Usually, a simple to will do.

Suppose to, use to. The hard "d" sound in supposed to and used to disappears in pronunciation, but it shouldn't disappear in spelling. "We used to do that" or "We were supposed to do it this way."

Thru This nonstandard spelling of through should not be used in academic prose.

Very, really, quite (and other intensifiers) Like basically, these words seldom add anything useful. Try the sentence without them and see if it improves.

Get to the Point

With the deluge of emails, paper and telephone calls, your message has a better chance of being read if its most important information is right up front. Remember the *Inverted Pyramid Style* discussed earlier? As in newspaper writing, your first sentence (called the “lead” in a newspaper article) should include your main point.

Each sentence or paragraph after that should expand on this point. The least important points should be at the end because, just like a newspaper article, this may not even be read. (News writers also put the least important information last because an editor would cut an article from the end to fit it to the space available.) Keep all of your messages simple, clear and error-free to get the best results.

**TURN TO PAGE 63 AND COMPLETE THE
EXERCISE ON THIS SECTION.**

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**DECREASE YOUR LIABILITY:
Legal Issues in
Business Communication**

Legal Issues With Electronic or Paper Communications

With the increased use of email, legal issues has arisen. The following primarily concerns email communication, but should also be kept in mind with any business correspondence.

Email is a quick and easy communication tool, but it should be used with forethought. Unlike paper, email cannot be destroyed in the traditional sense. Several copies of your email are usually stored or archived within the system and may be found if needed or looked for.

As was mentioned earlier, email is generally the property of whoever owns the system, i.e., your company. This ownership provides the company with the legal right to check your email for such issues as protecting copyright and intellectual property rights. Your employer also has the right to monitor email to gauge moral and proper use of the Internet, as well as to prevent productivity loss.

Remember:

- ♦ **Do not consider your email to be private.** Don't ever write anything you wouldn't want your management, or even your co-workers, to see.
- ♦ When replying to someone's message, **check the list of recipients** before you respond. You may not want your reply to go to everyone on the list. And, if you do reply to the entire distribution, there is a chance your message may be forwarded to persons who should not receive it.
- ♦ If a message you've received is personal, or even informal, **let the sender know you'll be forwarding the message** before you pass it along to someone else.
- ♦ **Do not send email to coworkers, vendors or other acquaintances with messages that would not be approved by either your boss or your company management.**
- ♦ **Do not use email to vent personal feelings or attitudes.** If you feel the need to vent to someone, do it by talking to a friend behind closed doors or off company property.

- ♦ **Don't reply to a message in anger.** It is very easy to write a blasting reply to a message and send it off before really thinking about it. Always take a while to cool off before you send a reply to an upsetting message. Don't forget, once your email has been sent, you usually cannot get it back.
- ♦ **Carefully review your messages,** and perhaps have someone else review them, before sending them to make sure the meaning is clear and not open to misinterpretation.
- ♦ **Avoid using humor or sarcasm,** which can easily be misinterpreted.

How the Law May Use Email and Other Communications

Email and other forms of communications used inappropriately could result in lawsuits and costly litigation. Always be careful with what you write and send out. Prosecuting attorneys count on the fact that your email archives and file drawers will hold incriminating information.



Remember this:

- ♦ Legally archived or deleted messages can be acquired by a court of law or government agency for use in antitrust, discrimination, termination, or copyright infringement investigations.
- ♦ Email should not be used for discussing sensitive issues, such as suspicions, employee performance, hiring or firing. Stating a negative opinion or feeling about an employee in an email lends merit in a legal proceeding related to discrimination or termination.
- ♦ Certain comments, suggestions and even graphics delivered by email to others can give merit to a harassment claim.
- ♦ Use your common sense. If you even *begin* to wonder if something is inappropriate, don't do it.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS!

Newsletter Date

Volume 1, Issue 1

INCREASE UNDERSTANDING:
Writing for the
International Audience

COMMUNICATING INTERNATIONALLY



Several important details should be considered when writing to an international audience. Do they understand your language? Although English is considered the common language of business, many countries' employees do not use it often enough to speak it fluently or understand it completely. You may need someone to translate your message for certain audiences. Have a person familiar with the foreign language look over your document before sending it out even if you are using translation software programs. Many of these programs can translate your message into an even more confusing jumble of words.

Be aware of these factors:

Dates are written differently all over the world. For example, if you write that a meeting will take place on 6/8/02, Americans will understand this as June 8, 2002. Europeans would see this as August 6, 2002. Japanese, who use a year/month/day order would be extremely confused.

Times should be clarified. Although Americans use a 12-hour clock, Europeans use a 24-hour clock. When communicating across the ocean, be sure you provide both a 12-hour time (e.g., 5:00 p.m.) and a 24-hour time (17:00). Also, be sure you take the time zone into account. If your message is going to people in California, New York and London, saying the phone conference will take place at 4:00 p.m. is likely to make a few people miss the meeting. Be sure to clarify the time zone, e.g., 4:00 p.m. EST (Eastern Standard Time).

Measurements and money values can be confusing as well. Unlike the United States, most countries use the metric system. Therefore, when communicating abroad as well as domestically, it makes sense to use metric measurements with the American equivalent [e.g., The race was 10 kilometers (6.2 miles)]. When mentioning monetary amounts, be sure you are clear what country's money you are referring to. For example, "the amount is \$25.00 (U.S. dollars)" If appropriate, translate the amount into the reader's money system.

Avoid using humor or sarcasm in your international email messages. Different cultures interpret jokes and humor in different ways, which may cause a problem.

A good rule of thumb when communicating internationally is to **put yourself in your audience's shoes**. Keep in mind that acronyms, regional references, company slang, etc., probably will not be understood even by members of your organization based overseas.

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**GET YOUR POINT ACROSS:
Proposal and Report Writing**

PROPOSAL WRITING

Proposals are written to provide solutions to an identified problem or need. In some cases, a proposal is written in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP), in which the information required in the proposal is supplied by the requesting organization. In many internal corporate settings, employees may write a proposal to supply a solution to a problem (identified by management or by the proposal writer) and request funds to carry it out.

Before You Start Writing

Before writing a proposal, appropriate research should be completed and documented to back up the proposal. Without proper research, your proposal will not be taken seriously. This pre-work may include researching the problem or need: has anyone ever tried another solution?; why is this problem important?; who is affected by the problem; etc. In addition, you will want to assess potential costs for your solution and get legitimate estimates to include in your proposal. You also will want to estimate the time involved in your proposed solution to put together an informed timeline.

Parts of a Proposal

Certain information should be included in a formal proposal. The following is a good general outline of a proposal; however, some companies have their own proposal formats. Be sure you check on this before writing or submitting a proposal within your organization. (Informal proposals may be shorter based on the information required by the requesting party.)

Title Page: Contains a name or title for the proposal which gives readers an idea of its contents

Table of Contents: provides readers an easy and quick reference to the various sections of the proposal

Executive Summary or Abstract: a brief summary of the contents of the proposal (see pg. 55 for tips on writing a good abstract)

Background (may be called “Current Situation”):

- What is the problem?
- What major events led up to this proposal?
- Who identified the problem?
- Who proposed the need for a solution?

Benefits and/or Goals:

- ♦ The general benefits that will be derived from the proposed solution
- ♦ Goals of the proposed solution

Program Overview:

- ♦ What activities are proposed? Can include an outline of all proposed activities.
- ♦ Who will carry out these activities? What are their capabilities?
- ♦ When and where will these activities occur?

Resources Required:

- ♦ What materials, software, hardware, facilities and personnel will be needed?
- ♦ How much is this going to cost? (general costs or a detailed breakdown)

Proposed Timeline: detailed time schedule providing major milestones for the proposed solution.

Evaluation Strategies: how will everyone know that the solution was successful?

Appendix

- ♦ Supporting materials (tables, charts, reports, suppliers, bios, etc.)
- ♦ Project cost-benefit analysis data
- ♦ Budget with detailed breakdown of costs, if not supplied under “Resources Required”

Proposals Should Be Error-Free

As is true in any written communication, a proposal should be error-free to have enough credibility to be accepted. Do the spell-check and grammar-check on your word-processing software for the first review. Then, because these programs do not catch everything, do a manual review by carefully reading through the entire proposal. If possible, have someone else check your proposal as well. It is hard for the writer to catch everything because he or she is so used to what the proposal says. If it is not possible to have someone else read your document, then put it aside for several hours or overnight, then come back and do another review. This “rest” from the document sometimes helps the writer see errors not seen in previous reviews.

REPORT WRITING

There are many types of reports in the business world. Reports that inform, persuade, recommend, etc. All should include some basic elements. The sections mentioned below may be named differently or combined as necessary, but all the information mentioned below should be included to make your report complete and understandable.



Purpose

Determine the main questions you must answer in this report. For example: Does this proposal include the elements we need to change our company logo? Will this proposal fit the current marketing budget? What will need to be added or changed in this proposal to satisfactorily meet our needs?

Once you have determined the main questions, and the subordinate questions they involve, you can formulate your *statement of purpose*. For the questions above, the statement might be: *The purpose of this report is to determine the feasibility of accepting the proposal from*

ABC Company to change our company logo.

Methods

Describe the methods you used to evaluate or analyze your subject. Some of the methods could be benchmarking (going to other companies to “benchmark” their actions in a similar situation); testing (e.g., putting the product or service through various tests to determine its endurance or developing a pilot program to test the proposed program); surveying (asking a selected audience their feelings about the subject).

Your organization may have a set of standard questions upon which you evaluate the subject. This makes this job fairly easy, but be sure you have answered all questions completely to satisfy this requirement.

Scope

This would explain how big the program is and how many people or areas it will affect. For example, you may be evaluating a \$2 million program that will provide 20 additional jobs across the country.

Results

At this point, you provide the information you have gathered from your methods above, organizing it into appropriate and easy-to-follow segments. For example, you may organize your findings by Section I – Survey Method; Section II – Survey Demographics; Section III – Raw Survey Results (i.e., the numbers, no analysis).

Recommendations

Analyze the data you have gathered and reported in the *Results Section* and list your recommendations.

Conclusions

To conclude your report, you summarize all of the above in a concise paragraph that includes all necessary information to provide closure for the reader.

Writing Abstracts

Qualities Of A Good Abstract

Two types of abstracts are commonly used: descriptive and informative. While the descriptive format gives a short explanation of what the report is about, an informative abstract gives a longer summary of the report and includes the conclusions presented. An informative abstract format is most commonly used in executive summaries in corporate reports.

An effective abstract/executive summary:

- Is brief, using one or more well-developed paragraphs—rarely more than a page.
- Uses an introduction-body-conclusion structure in which the parts of the report or proposal are discussed in order
- Adds no new information but simply summarizes the report
- Is intelligible to a wide audience

Steps For Writing Effective Abstracts

To write an effective abstract, follow these four steps:

1. Reread your report or proposal with the purpose of abstracting information in the main parts: e.g., purpose, methods, scope, results, conclusions, and recommendations in a report.
2. After you have finished rereading your report or proposal, write a rough draft *without looking back at your document*. Consider the main parts of the abstract listed in Step 1. Do not merely copy key sentences from your report as this may result in too much or too little information.
3. Revise your rough draft to
 - correct weaknesses in organization and coherence
 - drop superfluous information
 - add important information originally left out
 - eliminate wordiness
 - correct errors in grammar and mechanics.
4. Carefully proofread your final copy.

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**EXERCISES
THE TEST
PROOFREADING MARKS**

Exercise 1

SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT

Circle the correct words in the following sentences.

1. Humorists (believe, believes) that the best introduction for a speech (is are) jokes and humorous observations.
2. Elizabeth Brown has developed one of the programs that (encourage, encourages) people to laugh at (his, his or her, their) own problems.
3. Each of our personnel officers (say, says) (he or she, they) (prefer, prefers) to hire workers who (has, have) a sense of humor.
4. Sales representatives find that almost anyone (listen, listens) more attentively to a person who (make, makes) an amusing comment.
5. The cluster of personal traits that (produce, produces) star quality (is, are) called charisma, a state that bestows special power on (its, their) bearers.
6. Charisma is one of the (quality, qualities) that (allow, allows) an individual to empower (himself, herself, himself or herself, themselves) and others.
7. Power and authority alone (do, does) not guarantee charisma; to produce it, (it, they) must be combined with passion and strong purpose.
8. A charismatic leader (has, have) the ability to draw other people into (his, her, his or her, their) dream or vision.
9. Not all leaders who (possess, possesses) charisma (enjoy, enjoys) having this ability to attract and influence (his, his or her, their) followers.
10. A charismatic leader (is, are) often creative, especially in (his, his or her, their) capacity for solving problems in original ways.
11. Today, a number of major corporations (offer, offers) (its, their) executives charisma-training courses to enhance leadership qualities.
12. A corporation that (offer, offers) this type of training for (its, their) executives finds that (it, they) (retain, retains) the top officers longer.
13. None of the officers at our company (has, have) gone through this type of training.

Exercise 2

WRITING EXERCISES:

Parallel Structure

Correct the following lists and sentences by using parallel structure.

1)

- Prepared weekly field payroll
- Material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- Recording OSHA regulated documentation
- Change orders
- Maintained hard copies of field documentation

2)

On the web page there is much wasted space which is unappealing to the viewer. Following are suggestions for eliminating the unwanted blank space:

- Move some of the text into the blank space
- Centering the picture
- Centering the picture and add text to each side
- On the right of the picture, tell a little bit about the picture (who owns the balloon, what year and where this picture was taken, etc.)
- Have pictures that stretch the length of the screen, like with a panoramic camera
- Or as a last resort even take the picture out

3)

1. The committee members read the petition, discussed its major points, and the unanimous decision was to ignore it.
2. Having a solid marriage can be more satisfying than the acquisition of wealth.
3. As a way of getting ahead, to keep their self-respect, and for simple survival, wise employees handle problems bosses with a variety of strategies.
4. Difficult bosses not only affect their employees' performances but their private lives are affected as well.

Revise for Clarity and Emphasis

1. Call me any evening except Tuesday after 7 o'clock.
2. Visiting colleagues can be tiring.
3. Janice dislikes working with Claire because she's impatient.

Revise for Inappropriate Use of Passive Voice or Active Voice

1. The evaluation was performed by us.
2. A rockslide buried the mine entrance.
3. Our test results will be sent to you as soon as verification is completed.
3. Your report confused me.

Revise for Conciseness and Redundancy

1. I have admiration for Professor Jones.
2. Due to the fact that we made the lowest bid, we won the contract.
3. On previous occasions we have worked together.
4. She is a person who works hard.
5. This report is the most informative report on the project.
6. I am aware of the fact that Sam is trustworthy.
7. Our disposal procedure is in conformity with federal standards.
8. We need to have a discussion about the problem.
9. I have just come to the realization that I was mistaken.
10. Your conclusion is in agreement with mine.
11. In the month of August, we had three fire drills.
12. The end result of the study was that we needed more printers.

Revise for "There is," "There are" and "It" Sentence Openers

1. There is a coaxial cable connecting the antenna to the receiver.
2. There is a danger of explosion in Number 2 mineshaft.
3. It was his bad attitude that got him fired.
4. It is necessary to complete both sides of the form.

Edit/Revise for Jargon Usage, “Fat” Writing, Plague Phrases and Triteness

1. For the obtaining of the X-33 word processor, our firm will have to accomplish the disbursement of funds to the amount of \$6,000.
2. Upon receipt of the RFP, the DSMs began assigning sections.
3. Jim is a bright star in our company, always busy as a beaver and cool as a cucumber.
4. As a small business owner, you are no doubt aware that DSL and T-1 connections provide the fastest internet speeds.
5. At this point in time we cannot ascertain the reason as to why the screen door was left open.
6. As a result of the study, Mrs. Carson, who is employed as a nutritionist at the University of Michigan, recommends the daily intake of megadoses of Vitamin C.
7. Basically, in light of the fact that Congressman Fuenches was totally exhausted by his last campaign, there was an expectation on the part of the voters that he would not reduplicate his effort to achieve office in government again.
8. Last but not least, it is to be hoped that we can discover a means to create an absolutely proper and fitting tribute to Mr. Jones.
9. At what point in time will a downturn in the stock market have a really serious effect on the social life of people as a whole?
10. Bothered by allergies, a condition that made them sneeze, some of the preschool children had sinus troubles that caused them to miss several days in nursery school this spring.
11. The existence of computers and computer technology has greatly influenced commercial enterprise and information exchange.
12. Due to the fact that it was 5:00 p.m., attentive focusing on the speaker's lecture was not always completely possible.

Exercise 3

EXERCISE: POSITIVE WRITING

On a separate sheet, rewrite the examples below to make them sound positive.

1. No special training programs are normally offered other than that of the graduate course in technical engineering. Our employees do not have to continue their education: however, we offer a tuition refund program to assist in this regard. We require advanced degrees in specialized jobs where a lesser level of education would not be appropriate.
2. With our rigid quality standards, returns of Sports United merchandise run less than .02 percent of our total line. Because of an oversight in our stitching department, a damaged needle was inadvertently used and caused the threads to come loose in these particular bags. Since we now have a check on all our machine needles before work each day, you can be assured that the stitching on our carrying bags will not loosen again and should last the lifetime of the bags. Thank you for calling our attention to the loose stitching.
3. We are sorry that we cannot furnish the club chairs by August 16.
4. I have no experience other than clerking in my father's grocery store.
5. ABC Dog Biscuits will help keep your dog from getting sick.

Rewrite the following to accentuate the positive.

We appreciate your attendance at the upcoming trade show and hope you will find it to be a good experience. Unfortunately, we must ask everyone to abide by some rules:

1. Do not use more than one extension cord per booth and DO NOT overload the electrical power.
2. Comply with recommendations from floor personnel.
3. Do not borrow items from the hospitality room, such as scissors, tape, paper, etc.

Failure to comply with any of the above rules will make the trade show less effective for everyone. Thank you for your cooperation.

Exercise 4

EXERCISE: EDITING/PROOFREADING **Edit and Simplify the Following Paragraph**

Managers: It has come to my attention that some inflammatory and fallacious memos have been circulated among our more fledgling employees. Obviously, we want to keep our place of employment exclusive of such misleading propaganda. It is imperative that you, as our managers, curtail this reprehensible activity by scrutinizing your personnel to find the perpetrators of this malicious commentary. We want our workplace to be unfettered by such disingenuous literature and our employees to comprehend that we do not subscribe to or condone this type of dishonest, unscrupulous behavior.

EXERCISE: GET TO THE POINT **Edit the Following Email Message**

Exercise 5

To: Betty Smith

From: Bill Miller

Date: February 20, 2002

Subject: News!

If all our news from management was this good, we would probably like working here more! I don't know if you've heard that the Sales Department now has a new office location. Down at the new campus facility down the street! We will have much more room and better window views. I wanted to let you know that you have a new office on the 24th floor over there; you will be co-located with us because you work so closely with the sales staff. I think we will all like working there. I'm glad to pass this exciting new on to you! :-)

Bill

Ext. 5156

The Test

THE TEST

EDIT THE SENTENCES ON THESE TWO PAGES. Look at grammar, spelling, sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, “overwriting” and triteness. (These sample sentences should be considered part of a document and do not need extra detail added.)

1. All three companies internal expenses increased dramatically during the last year.
2. The project was given to Shankar and myself for completion by Thursday.
3. Neither he nor the board members wants to schedule another Friday afternoon meeting.
4. Although the quarter's earnings fell short of projections the mood at the company was optimistic.
5. Copies of the report go to: the controller, accountant, and the CFO.
6. The consensus of opinion is that the principal affect of the buyout was to eliminate local competition.
7. She requested that the proposal be reworked to accommodate recent legislation, that was targeted at computer software companies such as ours.
8. His sales expertise is unparalleled, however, his ability to maintain client relationships is quite poor.
9. Smaller than its predecessor, the design team presented a streamlined model of the new laptop.
10. An analysis of the company's industry position revealed three shortcomings. Excessive buyer power, potential substitutes, and it cannot prevent entry from other firms.
11. According to Lupe less than 14 percent of the employees took all of their sick leave, they preferred to roll it over and add it to their vacation time.
12. While Holger has been here longer than me, my performance record speaks for itself.

(continued on next page)

The Test

THE TEST - PG. 2

13. The creation of cross functional teams are crucial for eliminating production backlog.
14. He gave a presentation on risk assessment in the conference room.
15. When a manager is faced with strife between coworkers, one can expect them to use their personal skills to smooth out the situation.
16. Mr. Li wants to look into developing new product lines, such as, computer games, accounting software and foreign language programs.
17. The changes in personnel though apparently a result of company growth makes the stockholders apprehensive.
18. I sent the blueprints over to the client's office yesterday and I expect that we will get her approval within the next two or three days unless there is a major problem with the amendments.
19. Peter Walsh the senior partner in the firm welcomes the opportunity to hire fresh talent.
20. He had looked forward to the possibility of expanding into the electronics industry now his company is in a position to do so.
21. This would provide the underwriters with loss information and will promote a more timely release of renewals.
22. Between you and I, Ms. Stern never gave us a deadline.
23. Its unclear how new sales manager will influence sales.
24. It goes without saying that we would like you to give consideration to our plans for restructuring the department.
25. Causes of the decrease in sales are: late deliveries, a shortage of salespersons, and they couldn't keep up service contracts.

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ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1 :SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT—Pg. 58

1. Humorists **believe** that the best introduction for a speech **are** jokes and humorous observations. [The second answer is “are” because “jokes and humorous observations” is actually the subject rather than the object of this sentence. Change it around to *Jokes and humorous observations are the best introduction for a speech, humorists believe.*]
2. Elizabeth Brown has developed one of the programs that **encourages** people to laugh at **their** own problems.
3. Each one of our personnel officers **says** **he or she** prefers to hire workers who **have** a sense of humor.
4. Sales representatives find that almost anyone **listens** more attentively to a person who **makes** an amusing comment.
5. The cluster of personal traits that **produces** star quality **is** called charisma, a state that bestows special power on **its** bearers.
6. Charisma is one of the **qualities** that **allows** an individual to empower **himself or herself** and others.
7. Power and authority alone **do** not guarantee charisma; to produce it, **they** must be combined with passion and strong purpose.
8. A charismatic leader **has** the ability to draw other people into **his or her** dream or vision
9. Not all leaders who **possess** charisma **enjoy** having this ability to attract and influence **his or her** followers.
10. A charismatic leader is often creative, especially in **his or her** capacity for solving problems in original ways.
11. Today, a number of major corporations **offer** **their** employees charisma-training courses to enhance leadership qualities.
12. A corporation that **offers** this type of training for **its** executives finds that **it retains** the top officers longer.
13. None of the officers at our company **has** gone through this type of training.

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 2: WRITING EXERCISES—Pg. 59-61

Parallel Structure

- **Prepared** weekly field payroll
- **Purchased, expedited and returned** material
- **Recorded** OSHA regulated documentation
- **Changed** orders
- **Maintained** hard copies of field documentation

On the web page there is much wasted space which is unappealing to the viewer. Following are suggestions for eliminating the unwanted blank space:

- **Move** some of the text into the blank space
- **Center** the picture
- **Center** the picture and add text to each side
- **Tell** a little bit about the picture on the right of the picture (e.g., who owns the balloon, what year and where this picture was taken)
- **Have** pictures that stretch the length of the screen, like with a panoramic camera
- Or, **take** the picture out as a last resort even take

1. The committee members read the petition, discussed its major points, and **unanimously decided** to ignore it.
2. Having a solid marriage can be more satisfying than **acquiring** wealth.
3. **To get ahead, keep their self-respect, and simply survive**, wise employees handle problems bosses with a variety of strategies.
4. Difficult bosses not only affect their employees' performances but their private lives *are affected* as well..

Clarity and Emphasis

1. Call me any evening after 7 o'clock, except Tuesday.
2. Visiting colleagues can be a tiring activity.
3. Janice dislikes working with Claire, who is impatient.

Inappropriate Use of Passive Voice or Active Voice

1. We performed the evaluation.
2. The mine entrance was buried under a rockslide.
3. As soon as we verify our test results, we will send them to you.
4. The report was confusing.

Conciseness and Redundancy

1. I admire Professor Jones.
2. Because we made the lowest bid, we won the contract.
3. We have worked together before.
4. She works hard.
5. This is the most informative report on the project.
6. I know that Sam is trustworthy.
7. Our disposal procedure conforms with federal standards.
8. We need to discuss the problem.
9. I have just realized that I was mistaken.
10. Your conclusion agrees with mine.
11. In August, we had three fire drills.
12. The study's result was that we needed more printers.

“There is,” “There are” and “It” Sentence Openers

1. A coaxial cable connects the antenna to the receiver.
2. A danger of explosion exists in Number 2 mineshaft.
3. His bad attitude got him fired.
4. Both sides of the form must be completed.

Jargon Usage, “Fat” Writing, Plague Phrases and Triteness

NOTE: There may be other variations.

1. Our firm will have to pay \$6,000 for the X-33 word processor.
2. Upon receiving the Request for Proposal (RFP), the District Sales Managers (DSMs) began assigning sections.
3. Jim is a top employee because he stays busy yet retains his cool composure.
4. Because signing up for an application service provider (ASP) requires little technical expertise, businesspeople can shop for applications they previously could only get from their Information Services (IS) departments.
5. We can't find out why the screen door was left open.
6. My sister, a nutritionist at the University of Michigan, recommends daily megadoses of Vitamin C.
7. Because Congressman Fuenches was exhausted by his last campaign, voters expected he would not seek re-election.
8. We hope to find a fitting tribute to Mr. Jones.
9. When will the stock market's downturn seriously affect the population's social life?
10. Some preschool children missed several days in nursery school this spring because of sinus troubles caused by allergies.
11. Computer technology has greatly influenced business and information exchange.
12. It was hard to focus during the speaker's lecture.

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 3: PG. 63

POSITIVE WRITING

1. We can furnish the club chairs by August 20.
2. My experience includes clerking in my father's grocery store.
3. ABC Dog Biscuits will help keep your dog healthy.
4. We offer a special graduate course in technical engineering. In addition, we offer a tuition refund program to assist employees who want to continue their educations. Some specialized positions require advanced degrees.
5. Our rigid quality standards allow Sports United to offer the best merchandise to its customers. Occasionally, we find that our production equipment causes an irregularity in a product. We have adjusted our equipment, and you can be assured that your future Sports United purchases will last even longer than the warranty. Thank you for calling our attention to this matter.

Positive Writing (This is one possible rewrite.)

We appreciate your attendance at the upcoming trade show. To ensure this show is a good experience for everyone, please help us by:

- ◆ Using only one extension cord per booth to avoid overloading the electrical power.
- ◆ Working with our floor monitors, who may come by to make certain recommendations.
- ◆ Packing an “emergency kit” of supplies, such as scissors, tape, paper, etc. Our hospitality room may not have any extras.

By helping us with these items, this show will be more effective and rewarding for everyone. Thank you for your cooperation!

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 4: EDITING/PROOFREADING

Simplified Paragraph—Pg. 63 (This is one possible rewrite.)

Managers: I have found evidence that some false information has been distributed through memos to our new employees. Obviously, we want to keep our workplace and our employees free of such misinformation, and I would like all of you to make every effort to find the persons responsible for these actions. We want our employees to understand that we will not excuse this or any other type of dishonest activity.

EXERCISE 4: EDIT EMAIL —pg. 63 (This is one possible rewrite.)

To: Betty Smith
From: Bill Miller
Date: February 20, 2002
Subject: Moving to New Offices

Good news! You will be joining the Sales Department in their move to new offices in the campus facility down the street as of March 18th. As I believe you know, you will be co-located with us because you work so closely with the sales staff. We will have offices on the 24th floor with much more room and better views than we have currently. I think we will all enjoy working there.

Bill
Ext. 5156

ANSWERS TO THE TEST: Pg. 64-65

1. All three companies' internal expenses increased dramatically during the last year. (possession)
2. The project was given to Shankar and me for completion by Thursday. (personal pronouns)
3. Neither he nor the board members want to schedule another Friday after meeting. (correlative conjunctions, noun-verb agreement)
4. Although the quarter's earnings fell short of projections, the mood at the company was optimistic. (commas with dependent clauses)
5. Copies of the report go to the controller, the accountant, and the CFO. (colons, parallel structure)
6. The consensus is that the principal effect of the buyout was to eliminate local competition. (redundancy, affect/effect)
7. She requested that the proposal be reworked to accommodate recent legislation targeted at computer software companies such as ours. (no comma—nonrestrictive element; concise construction)
8. His sales expertise is unparalleled; however, his ability to maintain client relationships is quite poor. (commas, conjunctive adverbs, semicolons)
9. The design team presented a streamlined model of the new laptop that was smaller than its predecessor. (dangling modifier)
10. An analysis of the company's industry position revealed three shortcomings: excessive buyer power, potential substitutes, and possible entry from other firms. (colons, sentences fragment, parallel construction)
11. According to Lupe, less than 14 percent of the employees took all of their sick leave; they preferred to roll it over and add it to their vacation time. OR: According to Lupe, less than 14 percent of the employees took all of their sick leave. They preferred to roll it over and add it to their vacation time. OR: According to Lupe, less than 14 percent of the employees took all of their sick leave because they preferred to roll it over and add it to their vacation time. (comma and introductory phrase, comma splice, causal relationship)
12. While Holger has been here longer than I, my performance record is better. (subjective case, trite—meaningless phrasing)
13. The creation of cross-functional teams is crucial for eliminating production backlog. (hyphen, subject-verb agreement)
14. He gave a presentation in the conference room on risk assessment. (ambiguous modifier)

(continued on next page)

(Answers to The Test—continued)

15. When a manager is faced with strife between coworkers, one can expect him or her to use his or her personal skills to smooth out the situation. BETTER: When managers are faced with strife between coworkers, one can expect them to use their personal skills to smooth out the situation. (noun-pronoun agreement)
16. Mr. Li wants to look into developing new product lines, such as computer games, accounting software, and foreign language programs. (comma usage) NOTE: The comma before the last word or phrase in a series is used in formal grammar, but in journalistic or certain company styles, it may not be used.
17. The changes in personnel, though apparently a results of company growth, make the stockholders apprehensive (restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses, subject-verb agreement)
18. I sent the blueprints over to the client's office yesterday, and I expect that we will get her approval within the next two or three days unless there is a major problem with the amendments. OR: I sent the blueprints over to the client's office yesterday. I expect that we will get her approval within the next two or three days unless there is a major problem with the amendments. (comma, new sentence)
19. Peter Walsh, the senior partner in the firm, welcomes the opportunity to hire fresh talent. (appositives, commas)
20. He had looked forward to the possibility of expanding into the electronics industry, and now his company is in a position to do so. OR: He had looked forward to the possibility of expanding into the electronics industry; now his company is in a position to do so. OR: He had looked forward to the possibility of expanding into the electronics industry. Now his company is in a position to do so. (run-on sentence, comma, semicolon, new sentence)
21. This would provide the underwriters with loss information and would promote a more timely release of renewals. OR: This will provide the underwriters with loss information and will promote a more timely release of renewals. (consistent verb tense) NOTE: Another version would be to leave out the second "would" or "will" in the above sentence.
22. Between you and me, Ms. Stern never gave us a deadline. (pronoun case)
23. It's unclear how the new sales manager will influence sales. (its versus it's, articles)
24. We would like you to consider our plans for restructuring the department. (cliché, concise construction)
25. Causes of the decrease in sales are the late deliveries, the shortage of sales staff, and the inability to keep up service contracts. (parallel structure, semicolon)

PROOFREADING MARKS

/	the concluding stroke after each insertion and also used to separate two or more marks*	⊙	period
↵	delete; take it out	↵	comma
⌋	close up within line	⌋	colon
()		↵	semicolon
<u>close up</u>	close up between lines	↵	apostrophe
↵	delete and close up	↵/↵	quotation marks
^	insert here (something)	(/)	parentheses
#	insert space	[/]	brackets
sq #	space evenly between words	$\frac{1}{M}$	em-dash standard-dash
stet	let it stand	$\frac{1}{N}$	en dash (1941-1945)
tr	transpose	=	hyphen
Cap	set in capitals (CAPITALS)	√	superscript (π^2)
lc	set in lowercase (lowercase)	^	subscript (H_2O)
sm cap	set in small capitals (SMALL CAPITALS)	=	align horizontally
ital	set in italic (italic)		align vertically
bf	set in boldface (boldface)	⌊	move left
sp	spell out (abbrev)	⌋	move right
¶	Begin new paragraph.	⌋⌋	center horizontally
run in	Do not begin new paragraph	⌋	center vertically
break	begin new line	wf	wrong font
		9	inverted letter
		x	broken letter

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About Karen Rayl

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Karen and David have co-authored *Six Steps to Building a Successful Career*, *Sexual Harassment: Developing and Maintaining a Sexual Harassment Free Workplace*, and workbooks, *Business Writing: A Roadmap to Better Communications*.

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