



CORPORATE COMMUNICATION COLLECTION

Debbie D. DuFrene, *Editor*

Writing for the Workplace

*Business
Communication for
Professionals*

Janet Mizrahi



BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS



Writing for the Workplace

Writing for the Workplace

Business Communication for Professionals

Janet Mizrahi



BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

Writing for the Workplace: Business Communication for Professionals

Copyright © Business Expert Press, LLC, 2015.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other except for brief quotations, not to exceed 400 words, without the prior permission of the publisher.

First published in 2015 by
Business Expert Press, LLC
222 East 46th Street, New York, NY 10017
www.busessexpertpress.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-63157-232-6 (paperback)
ISBN-13: 978-1-63157-233-3 (e-book)

Business Expert Press Corporate Communication Collection

Collection ISSN: 2156-8162 (print)
Collection ISSN: 2156-8170 (electronic)

Cover and interior design by Exeter Premedia Services Private Ltd.,
Chennai, India

First edition: 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

Abstract

Employers consider communication one of the most critical skills for workers today. *Writing for the Workplace: Business Communication for Professionals* is an easy-to-follow guide that provides strategies for effective professional communication. Written to address the needs of both students entering the workforce and business professionals looking to improve their written communication, the book offers guides to compose typical workplace documents, from effective e-mails and convincing reports to winning presentations and engaging resumes. This concise book offers busy readers concrete strategies to improve their workplace writing.

Part I addresses writing in today's fast-paced business and professional contexts and discusses writing as a process, professional writing style, writing tools, characteristics of effective workplace communication, and basic document design. Part II is a more detailed exploration of common written genres in the workplace and discusses correspondence such as e-mail messages, letters, memos, and social media for specific workplace situations. Part III delves into short and long reports and business presentations, and Part IV is dedicated to employment communication. Each section includes many sample documents and examines organization, tone, and genre elements. A list of common writing errors to avoid, helpful checklists, and easily scannable text make the book accessible and readable.

Keywords

business communication, business presentations, business writing, e-mails, employment communication, negative news, persuasive writing, professional communication, professional writing, reports, routine news, workplace writing

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Part I Writing as a Professional	1
Chapter 1 Fundamentals of Professional Writing	3
Chapter 2 Basics of Document Design	19
Part II Correspondence	27
Chapter 3 Routine and Positive Messages	29
Chapter 4 Persuasive and Bad News Messages	47
Chapter 5 Social Media and Text Messages	55
Part III Reports and Presentations	67
Chapter 6 Reports	69
Chapter 7 Presentations	83
Part IV Employment	91
Chapter 8 Employment Communication	93
<i>Appendix A 20 Common Writing Errors to Avoid</i>	107
<i>Appendix B Document Samples</i>	111
<i>Notes</i>	141
<i>References</i>	143
<i>Index</i>	145

Preface

For many, writing comes naturally. For others, it is a dreaded chore. Even if you enjoy writing, however, you may never have learned to write effective e-mails, memos, letters, or business reports. In many cases, the way you may have written in the past—using inflated language and long, rambling sentences to sound smart, or padding your work by repeating points to eke out a predetermined number of pages—is the exact opposite of the kind of writing valued in the professional world.

Many of us enter the workplace clueless about the right way to frame a request or compose a routine e-mail. We may wonder about issues such as how the document should look, what tone to adopt, or which organizational strategy to use. This book is designed to guide you through the steps to become a stronger, more effective writer in the world of work. Part I will focus on writing as a professional and cover topics such as the writing process, characteristics of professional writing, and the basics of document design. Part II will address correspondence. Part III will focus on reports and presentations. Part IV is devoted to employment communication. Appendix A contains explanations of common usage errors; Appendix B contains sample documents linked to specific chapters.

My hope is that this short guide will help you feel more confident as you write for every job you ever have.

Acknowledgments

I am lucky to have people in my life who have made me a better teacher and writer. Thanks to my colleagues at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB): Dr. LeeAnne Kryder, my most ardent advocate and friend; Jeffrey Hanson, whose expertise and kindness never cease to amaze me; and Dr. Gina Genova, the best collaborator anyone could ask for. I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey for always pushing me and for making me part of her team, and Dr. Dana Loewy, whose intelligent guidance and superb edits I so appreciate. And last but certainly not least, thanks to my husband, Perry Hambright, whose knowledge of graphics continues to make me look good.

PART I

Writing as a Professional

CHAPTER 1

Fundamentals of Professional Writing

Whether you are a student about to step into the world of work or a more seasoned employee with years of experience, you must be able to communicate effectively to advance your career. Employers consistently rank good communication skills—speaking with customers and colleagues, presenting information, and writing—in the top tier of desired skills for both new hires and current employees. The ability to concisely and accurately convey meaning to different people is a prerequisite in today’s fast-paced world.

Writing like a professional—whether the document is printed or on the screen—is best taken on as a process, with careful attention paid to detail. This chapter will describe how to break down all writing tasks into a series of steps to streamline the process as well as describe the characteristics that all professional writing should embody.

Writing as a Process

Many people think that good writing flows out of the brain, into the fingers, and onto the page or screen. Nothing could be further from the truth. Professional writers know that writing, like any acquired skill, requires patience and persistence. Whatever we are composing—whether an e-mail message or a proposal for a new business—the key to writing well is to consider writing a process rather than a one shot deal. Your prose will be better and will take you less time to compose if you look at writing as a series of tasks. For those who suffer from writer’s block or who shudder at the thought of writing, I can promise that if you break down writing into several component parts, the result will be better and you will feel less anxious.

The task of writing can be broken down to three separate steps, for which I’ve developed an acronym: **AWE**, short for assess, write, and edit.

These three steps should be completed for every piece of writing that will be seen by another person. The only writing that doesn't require this process is personal writing.

Step 1: Assess

Before you ever put your fingers on the keyboard or put pen to paper, begin by assessing the writing situation and define your **audience and purpose**. I advise making this step formal: Write down your answers.

Knowing the audience—your reader—is imperative for successful writing. Writers need to be very clear about the end user because the language and style we use depends upon who will read what we write. In essence, we have to psych out the reader to accomplish our writing goal. We cannot do that unless we analyze the reader accurately.

Define the characteristics of your reader as is shown in Table 1.1:

Begin the audience analysis portion of the first stage of the writing process (assessing) by completing an audience profile template, using the criteria mentioned in Table 1.1.

The next part of assessing the writing situation is defining your **purpose**. The reason or purpose for writing in the professional world falls into three basic categories: informing, persuading, or requesting. Informative writing is a large category that includes generalized information, instructions, notifications, warnings, or clarifications. Persuasive writing makes an impression, influences decisions, gains acceptance, sells, or recommends. Requests are written to gain information or rights and to stimulate action.

Unless you define the desired outcome of the written task, you cannot possibly achieve that task's objective. Are you writing an e-mail in response to a customer complaint? Are you using social media to generate traffic to a website selling nutritional supplements? You must be clear about what you want your words to accomplish before you write.

Sometimes you do not have all the information on hand that you need to write your document. Once you have defined for whom you are writing and what you want to accomplish, continue your analysis of the writing situation by gathering the information to produce the document. Sometimes that will entail conducting **research**. Sometimes you may just need to download information from your experience. Either way, have your information on hand *before* you begin to write. Nothing is

Table 1.1 Audience profile template

Audience characteristic	Rationale
Age	Writing for children differs from writing for adults or teens. Your tone, word choice, and medium may differ greatly depending on the age of the reader.
Gender	Writing for an all-male audience will differ from writing for an all-female audience. Likewise, if the audience is mixed, you may make different language choices than you do for a homogeneous group.
Language proficiency	The reader's knowledge of English will affect your word choice, sentence length, and other stylistic elements.
Education level	You may be writing for an audience with a 10th grade reading level or one comprised of college graduates. Each audience will have different expectations and needs, both of which you as the writer must be aware.
Attitude toward writer or organization	You must know if the audience is skeptical, frightened, pleased, or hostile toward you, the topic, or the organization. Anticipate your audience's reaction so you can write in a way that will support the document's purpose.
Knowledge of the topic	A document may be geared to people who are experts in a field or who know nothing about it. Even within an organization, several different audiences will exist. You may emphasize different aspects of a topic depending upon the readers' knowledge level.
Audience action	What do you want your audience to do after reading? Click a link for more information? Call to take advantage now? You must have a clear vision of your goal in communicating for your writing to be effective.

more frustrating than being on a deadline to compose a writing job and realizing that you do not have the information you need.

Once you have the information, **organize** it. For shorter pieces, think about the organizational structure you need to follow to attain your writing purpose. We will discuss these writing strategies in greater detail in Section 2. For longer pieces, begin by creating categories of information. From these sections, draft an **outline** with headings.

This assessing portion of the writing process will make the actual writing much easier. Why? It is always easier to begin writing if you have something on the page rather than nothing.

Step 2: Write

Enter the second step of the writing process—writing a draft—knowing that it is not the last step. A draft by definition is not final. Its purpose is to transfer the information you have gathered onto the page. For short documents such as routine e-mails, consider composing offline. (It's too tempting to write and hit send without carefully going over your draft!) Begin by including the information you've gathered, making sure you include each point. For longer documents, use your outline. Write section by section, point by point. If you have trouble with one section, move to another.

Your goal at this stage of the writing process for both short and longer documents is to put something down on paper (or the screen) that you will revise later. It's a waste of your valuable time to labor over any individual word or sentence as you write your draft; the word or sentence may be eliminated by the final version. If you cannot think of the precise word you need, leave a blank and return later to fill it in. If you are having difficulty wording a sentence smoothly, leave a bracketed space or perhaps type a few words as a reminder of the gist of what you want to say. The important point to remember is that a first draft is one of several stabs you'll take at this work.

If you write using information you have taken from other sources, avoid using someone else's words or ideas without attributing them. **Plagiarism** occurs when you use or closely imitate the ideas or language of another author without permission. Even if you paraphrase through rewording, you should still cite the source to avoid plagiarizing. With the abundance of material available to us with a few keystrokes, it's tempting to cut and paste and call it a day. But you leave yourself and your organization open to criminal liability for copyright infringement laws if you use words, images, or any other copyrighted material. Besides, you will never learn to express yourself if you use others' words.

Before you move to the next step, I advise printing your draft. But don't read it immediately. Let it marinate. It's too hard to edit our own copy immediately after we've written it. We need to let some time pass before we return to a draft so that we can be more objective when we edit.

Step 3: Edit

I saw a great T-shirt at a meeting for the Society for Technical Writers. On the front was the word *write* in bold type. Following that was line after line of the word *edit*. The final boldface word at the end of the last line was *publish*. Of course, the idea is that writing requires more editing than writing.

Editing is a multistep process and begins by looking at the overall effectiveness of the piece. As you read your draft, return to your audience and purpose analysis and ask yourself if the content meets the needs of the audience while it accomplishes your purpose in writing. Does the document provide all the information readers will need to do what you want? Does it make sense? Is it well organized? If not, go back and make changes.

Once you are certain that the content is correct and complete, it's time for **paragraph and sentence level editing**. This is where you'll need a good style guide (see discussion of Writing Tools), unless you are one of the few who have perfect recall of all grammatical rules. Begin by examining the effectiveness of each paragraph. By definition, a paragraph is a group of sentences about one topic; the topic is generally stated in the first sentence of a paragraph and is called a topic sentence. Good paragraphs have **unity**, which means they stay on topic, so first check each paragraph for unity. Make sure your paragraphs aren't too long. Long paragraphs scare readers off.

Next check your paragraphs for **cohesion**, meaning that each sentence leads logically to the next. A common writing error is to jump from one idea to the next without providing a logical connection between those two ideas. Unless each idea expressed in a sentence logically segues to the next, your reader will not be able to follow. Writers link ideas several ways:

1. Using transitional words and phrases. Transitions are broken down into types: adding information, contrasting information, comparing information, illustrating a point, and showing time.
2. Using pronouns that refer back to a specific noun.
3. Repeating keywords to remind a reader of a central idea.

Table 1.2 illustrates the types of transitions writers use to compose cohesive sentences and paragraphs.

Table 1.2 *Types of transitions*

Type of transition	Words or phrases used
Additive—used to augment an idea	additionally, again, also, and, in addition, moreover, thus
Contrast—used to show how ideas differ	although, but, conversely, however, instead, on the other hand, yet
Comparison—used to link similar ideas	likewise, similarly
Time—used to show a sequence	after, finally, first, in the meantime, later, next, second, soon

Once all paragraphs are edited, examine each sentence. Now is the time to nitpick grammar and stylistic elements. Pay special attention to egregious errors such as:

1. Subject and verb agreement
2. Comma splices
3. Sentence fragments
4. Run-on sentences
5. Dangling modifiers

Find every pronoun to make sure it agrees with its antecedent and that the noun to which it refers is clear. Make sure you have written numbers in the correct way, using numerals and spelling out numbers appropriately. Stay in the same verb tense.

Also beware of dangling modifiers, phrases that confuse readers by saying something other than what is meant. They often appear in an introductory phrase at the beginning of a sentence but omit a word that would clarify meaning in the second part of the sentence. Look at the following sentence:

After finishing the copy, the website was difficult to understand.

The website did not finish the copy; therefore the meaning is obscure. Perhaps the sentence should have read:

After finishing the copy, the writer found that the website was difficult to understand.

As you edit, take some time to **read** your document **aloud** and make marks next to areas that require editing. This is the single best way to

improve your writing. Professional writing should sound natural. If you find yourself stumbling as you read your copy, the chances are good that you have a problem; your ears will not allow you to pass over stylistic elements that your eye will just ignore. Listen for frequent repetition of the same word, for short, choppy sentences, and for sentences that begin with the same word or phrase. Make sure your sentences have variety in length, aiming for a good mix of short, medium, and longer sentences. Note whether you have started too many sentences with *there is*, *there are*, *this is*, or *it is*. Overuse of this wordy construction is a red alert for any professional writer to rewrite. Finally, make sure you have used words according to their actual definition, called the denotation. (Use the Avoiding Wordiness Checklist at the end of this chapter to help you edit for conciseness.)

The final element of the editing portion of the writing process is **proofreading**. Proofreading includes editing your copy for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and typos. Begin by double-checking the correct spelling of names. Then make sure you've correctly used words that are commonly mistaken (i.e., affect and effect, complimentary and complementary). If you have included a phone number or a URL in the content, determine both are correct by phoning or checking the link.

A warning about using your word processor's spell check function: Spell check is far from fail proof. Just the omission of one letter (say the last *s* in *possess*) can change the word's meaning, and the program won't pick that up. *Posses* is a word (the plural of *posse*) but it isn't the word you meant to use. Additionally, a spellchecker won't find names spelled incorrectly or words not in its dictionary.

Proofreading for punctuation is critical. Proper use of commas makes a huge difference in a document's readability. Be especially on the lookout for inserting commas after introductory phrases and between two independent clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction. Likewise, tossing in a comma or semicolon haphazardly or omitting a comma or semicolon are common writing errors that affect readability. Both can affect flow and meaning. Consider how the comma alters these two sentences:

That, I'm afraid, has not been the case.

That I'm afraid has not been the case.

The first sentence refers to a previous statement and conveys the meaning that an earlier statement is untrue. The second means that the individual claims to be unafraid.

Capitalization is another part of the proofreading stage. Use your style guide to know when to capitalize nouns and titles and be consistent. Next examine the appearance of what you've written. Remember that copy must not only be well written; it must look attractive on the page or screen to maximize readability. You may find the Editing and Proofreading Checklist at the end of this chapter a helpful tool to guide you through this portion of the writing process.

You will find a list of common writing errors to avoid in Appendix A.

Professional Writing Characteristics

Writing for the world of work has certain characteristics that form the underpinning of anything you write, from an e-mail to your boss, to a resume for a new job, to a proposal for new business. Integrate the following elements into your work.

Accuracy

One of the best ways we can illustrate to our readers that we are professionals and experts is through accuracy. Inaccuracies show a carelessness that few professionals or organizations can afford in a competitive, global marketplace. Attention to accuracy is therefore paramount to professionals.

Active Voice

To enliven your prose, avoid using passive voice construction when you can. Passive voice makes the object of an action the subject of a sentence, as the following example illustrates:

Passive voice	<i>The e-mail was written by me.</i>
Active voice	<i>I wrote the website.</i>

However, if you wish to obscure the person committing an action, you *should* use passive voice. You do so by avoiding naming the actor, as is illustrated below:

Passive voice	<i>The students were given poor grades.</i>
Active voice	<i>The professor gave the students poor grades.</i>

If you have trouble identifying your own use of passive voice, you can adjust the Grammar Tools in Microsoft Word's Preferences, which when activated, will point out passive voice construction. If you are using passive voice purposefully because you want to sound objective, great. But if you have used passive voice unintentionally, change it.

Avoiding Gender, Racial, or Age Bias

English doesn't make biases easy to avoid. The best way to stay away from the he or she conundrum is to use the plural of a word. To avoid racial or age biases, beware of stereotypes when composing. Even if you feel the reference is complimentary, those to whom you refer may find that reference offensive.

Clarity

If a reader has to reread to understand anything you write, you have not done your job. Every sentence you write that another person will see should be easy to read. Clarity comes from using words the audience will recognize and using them correctly. Stay away from jargon or SAT-prep vocabulary. One way to check your work for clarity is to give your draft to someone who knows nothing about what you are writing. If that reader can understand the document, it is probably clear.

Conciseness

Busy professionals are impatient and expect brevity. No one wants to wade through wordy prose to get to a point. As mentioned earlier, the

Avoiding Wordiness Checklist at the end of this chapter contains some tips to make your writing more concise.

Conversational Prose with Smooth Flow

The rhythm of any prose needs to be conversational and natural. The best way to achieve good flow is to read your document aloud and keep amending until you are able to read without hesitation. Use simple, plain language in sentences that are not complex or convoluted. Make sure your punctuation does not impede your reader by adding unnecessary halts or by avoiding pauses that will aid understanding.

To make your prose more conversational, you can also use contractions when appropriate. Instead of *they will*, use *they'll*. You can also begin your sentences with *and* or *but*, which many English teachers taught as an inviolable rule. Sometimes beginning a sentence with a conjunction gives prose just the right rhythm to create that highly desired conversational tone.

Correctness

Poor grammar and words used incorrectly make both the writer and the organization appear ignorant and sloppy. To hone your grammatical skills, work with a grammar guide next to you. (The use of writing tools is discussed later in this chapter.) Consult the guide when you are unsure about any writing issue. Make use of your word processor's grammar and spell check, but do not rely on them solely. Another way to work on grammar issues is to create a *never again* table (see Table 1.3). This is a three-column table (see the following sample) that lists a grammatical error, the rule that governs the problem, and a mnemonic device to remember the solution. When you

Table 1.3 *Never again table*

Grammar problem	Rule	Mnemonic device
Its versus It's	It's always = it is	The dog bites its tail because it's plagued with fleas.
Effect versus affect	Effect = noun Affect = verb	Ibuprofen adversely affects my stomach, but the medicine's effect cures my headache.

keep a list of grammatical errors and refer to it as you compose, you will eventually learn to correct the problem. Keep adding and erasing errors until you no longer need to consult the chart.

Parallelism

Good writing often uses a device called parallelism, or parallel structure. Writers use parallelism instinctually because it appeals to our natural desire for symmetry. Parallelism matches nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, and phrases with phrases: “For *faster* action, *less* stomach upset, and *more* for your money, use XX.” Readers expect parallelism, especially in sets of two or three items, and in bulleted and enumerated lists. Using parallel phrasing correctly is key to writing in the workplace.

Positive Voice

Positive voice uses affirmative words to make a point. For example, instead of saying, “We are out of green T-shirts,” we would emphasize the positive and say, “Order any size of our orange and gray T-shirts.” Avoid downbeat words or words that can convey a negative connotation and rephrase in a positive way. Instead of, “No coupons will be honored after April 30,” say, “Coupons will be honored through April 30.”

Reliance on Strong Nouns and Verbs

Good writing uses nouns and verbs to do the heavy work and saves adverbs and adjectives for rare occasions. Instead of “Our brightly-colored, twinkling lights will be reminders of the happiest, most memorable times you and your family will ever enjoy,” say, “Our dazzling lights will twinkle their way into your family’s memories.” Replace “Our auto policies are competitive,” with “Our auto policies beat the competition’s.” Avoid using the most boring and overused verb in the English language: to be. Check for overuse of *is*, *are*, *were*, and *was* and see if you can eliminate them by using a stronger, more specific verb. We can’t entirely avoid adverbs or adjectives or *to be*, but we can be mindful of how often we use them.

Sentence Variety

Sentence variety is linked to conversational prose and has two elements. The first is sentence beginnings. As you edit, look at the way your sentences begin. Do three in a row begin with *The*? Do two sentences within two paragraphs begin with *There are*? Avoid writing sentences that begin with the same word or phrase. The second way to attain sentence variety is to vary sentence length. Short, choppy sentences make prose annoyingly staccato. Natural-sounding prose combines short, medium, and longer sentences.

One way to check your sentence length is to look at how the periods line up. If you see a vertical or slanted line of periods, you need to alter some of the sentence lengths. This can be accomplished in several ways. Join two sentences whose content is closely linked by embedding the gist of one sentence into another. Combine two sentences with a coordinate conjunction to create a complex sentence. Or try an alternate sentence beginning such as an introductory phrase, which will add sentence variety.

Simple Words

Avoid jargon. Always, always, always choose the simpler, more recognizable word over the longer, more showy one. Instead of *rhinovirus* say *a cold*. Opt for *e-mail* over *electronic message*. In *utilize* versus *use*, *use* wins! (Also notice how the number of words your reader has to wade through goes down with simpler words.)

Shorter Paragraphs

Long paragraphs are appropriate for essays, but they have no place in professional documents. Big blocks of type scare readers away. The longest paragraph should be no more than six to eight lines. Always be aware of how a paragraph appears on a page (or a screen) and take pity on your audience—don't make your reader slog through dense prose.

Style: Formal versus Informal

Writers must wear different hats and adjust their writing style—sometimes called voice or tone—to the task at hand. In professional writing, we

always aim for a natural style, as mentioned earlier. However, we must sometimes be even more specific about the style we choose.

Choosing to use an informal or formal writing style depends on the audience and the document's purpose. There is no clear-cut way to determine when to use each style; sometimes, an e-mail may require formality. Most of the time, however, e-mails are informal. To determine which style fits your needs, understand that informal writing allows the writer and reader to connect on a more personal level. It can convey warmth. Formal writing, on the other hand, produces the impression of objectivity and professionalism.

Some genres, however, have generally accepted styles. Use Table 1.4 to help guide you in choosing which style best suits your task.

Table 1.4 Formal and informal writing styles

	Formal style	Informal style
Types of documents	Letters Long reports Research Proposals	Most communication within the organization including e-mail, IM, memos, text messages Routine messages to outside audiences Informal reports
Characteristics	No personal pronouns (I, we) No contractions Objective voice or use of passive voice No figurative language or clichés No editorializing Limited use of adjectives No exclamation points Longer sentences Some technical language	Use of personal pronouns Use of contractions Shorter sentences, easily recognizable words Limited use of warm, inoffensive humor

Writing Tools

Just as a doctor wouldn't enter an examination room without a stethoscope or a carpenter wouldn't pull up to a job site without a hammer, no writer can be without the tools of the trade: a good dictionary, thesaurus, and style guide.

Many excellent writing reference books are on the market, both in electronic and print format. I use both. Although I often visit www.dictionary.com when I compose, I also rely on my hard copy dictionary. Dictionaries in book format allow us to browse, and sometimes the writer will happen upon a word or meaning, which doesn't happen when you use [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com). The same goes for the thesaurus. I find the thesaurus built into Microsoft Word to be very weak. As a writer, I need to make the most out of the bounteous English language. A hard cover thesaurus is worth its weight in gold as far as I'm concerned. I use *Roger's 21st Century Thesaurus* edited by Barbara Ann Kipfer, PhD. I particularly like that it's organized like a dictionary.

Many good style guides are likewise available. For a grammar guide, I use Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, 7th edition, but many excellent grammar reference books are available.

Many good grammar websites can also be useful. The Grammar Book (<http://www.grammarbook.com/>) and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) are handy and reliable websites to look up any grammar issues you may have.

The important thing to remember is to keep your tools nearby as you compose. The more you use these references, the less you'll need them. You will internalize the rules of writing as you use them.

Conclusion

Writing well on the job is key to career success. By breaking down writing into stages called the writing process, your end product is more likely to accomplish its ultimate purpose. When composing on the job, effective writers integrate many elements that will distinguish their work as professional, well-edited, and clear. Whether you choose hard copy or digital, use writing tools including a dictionary, thesaurus, and grammar guide to create professional documents. Doing so will help you excel in the workplace.

Avoiding Wordiness Checklist

Wordy phrase and example	Solution	✓
Avoid beginning a sentence with <i>There are</i> or <i>It is</i> . <i>There are four points that should be considered.</i> <i>It is clear that cashmere is warmer.</i>	Begin sentences with the true subject. <i>Consider these four points</i> or <i>Four points should be considered.</i> <i>Cashmere is clearly warmer.</i>	
Avoid beginning sentences with <i>That</i> or <i>This</i> . <i>Choosing teams should be done carefully. This is because a good mix will generate better results.</i>	Connect to previous sentence. <i>Choosing teams should be done carefully because a good mix will generate better results.</i>	
Use active voice rather than passive. <i>Rain forests are being destroyed by uncontrolled logging.</i>	Passive voice depletes prose of vitality and can almost always be rewritten in active voice. <i>Uncontrolled logging is destroying rain forests.</i>	
Omit <i>that</i> or <i>which</i> whenever possible. <i>The water heater that you install will last 15–20 years.</i>	Unless <i>that</i> or <i>which</i> is required for clarity, omit it. <i>The water heater you install will last 15–20 years.</i>	
Avoid prepositional phrase modifiers. <i>The committee of financial leaders meets every Tuesday.</i>	Replace with one-word modifiers. <i>The financial leaders committee meets every Tuesday.</i>	
Avoid <i>be</i> verbs. <i>New Orleans is one of the most vibrant cities in the United States.</i>	Replace with a strong verb. <i>New Orleans vibrates with activity like no other U.S. city.</i>	
Tighten closely related sentences of explanation. <i>When hanging wallpaper, three factors need to be considered. The factors are X, X, and X.</i>	Join closely related sentences of explanation with a colon to avoid repetitions. <i>When hanging wallpaper, consider three factors: X, X, and X.</i>	
Tighten closely related sentences. <i>MRIs are used to diagnose many ailments. MRIs create an image of organs and soft tissues to diagnose.</i>	Omit repetitious phrasing in second sentence. <i>MRIs diagnose many ailments by creating images of organs and soft tissues.</i>	

(Continued)

Avoiding Wordiness Checklist (*Continued*)

Wordy phrase and example	Solution	✓
Tighten verb phrases with auxiliary + ing verbs <i>Management was holding a staff meeting.</i>	Replace is/are/was/were/have + verb with a one-word verb. <i>Management held a staff meeting.</i>	
Avoid using <i>there is/are</i> within a sentence. <i>When creating a mail list, there are many pitfalls.</i>	Find an active verb to replace <i>there is/are</i> . <i>When creating a mail list, many pitfalls exist.</i>	
Remove redundancies. <i>An anonymous stranger may be dangerous.</i>	Know the true meaning of a word. <i>Strangers may be dangerous.</i>	

Editing and Proofreading Checklist

Check your draft for the following	✓
Document content is tailored to meet the needs of the audience and attains writing purpose	
Copy is edited for conciseness	
Body paragraphs have unity and cohesion and are shortened for visual appeal	
Transitions in and between paragraphs adequately link ideas	
Grammar is correct	
Punctuation is used correctly	
Copy has good rhythm and flow; uses a natural and conversational tone	
Sentences show variety in beginning and length	
Names are spelled correctly; phone numbers and URLs are accurate	
Words are used correctly	
Capitalization is consistent and adheres to specific stylebook guidelines	
Document adheres to specific genre formatting guidelines	
Document shows professionalism	

THE BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS DIGITAL LIBRARIES

EBOOKS FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS

Curriculum-oriented, born-digital books for advanced business students, written by academic thought leaders who translate real-world business experience into course readings and reference materials for students expecting to tackle management and leadership challenges during their professional careers.

POLICIES BUILT BY LIBRARIANS

- *Unlimited simultaneous usage*
- *Unrestricted downloading and printing*
- *Perpetual access for a one-time fee*
- *No platform or maintenance fees*
- *Free MARC records*
- *No license to execute*

The Digital Libraries are a comprehensive, cost-effective way to deliver practical treatments of important business issues to every student and faculty member.

**For further information, a
free trial, or to order, contact:**

sales@businessexpertpress.com

www.businessexpertpress.com/librarians

Writing for the Workplace

Business Communication for Professionals

Janet Mizrahi

Employers consider communication one of the most critical skills for workers today. *Writing for the Workplace: Business Communication for Professionals* is an easy-to-follow guide that provides strategies for effective professional communication. Written to address the needs of both students entering the workforce and business professionals looking to improve their written communication, the book offers guides to compose typical workplace documents, from effective e-mails and convincing reports to winning presentations and engaging resumes. This concise book offers busy readers concrete strategies to improve their workplace writing.

Janet Mizrahi is a continuing lecturer in the writing program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her teaching focus is professional writing for business, public relations, marketing, and journalism. Prior to her academic career, Ms. Mizrahi worked in corporate communications and wrote strategic and operating plans, capital appropriations requests, and special projects. As a marketing communications writer, she has worked in a variety of industries and has produced all types of business and marketing communications. Ms. Mizrahi also has experience as a journalist at a daily newspaper where she wrote feature articles, a column, book reviews, and magazine pieces. She is the author of *Fundamentals of Writing for Marketing and Public Relations* and *Web Content: A Writer's Guide* for Business Expert Press and blogs for BizComBuzz. A regular presenter at the Association of Business Communication, Ms. Mizrahi received her BA from the University of California, Berkeley, and her MA from UCLA.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION COLLECTION

Debbie D. DuFrene, Editor



BUSINESS EXPERT PRESS

ISBN: 978-1-63157-232-6



9 781631 572326