

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said."
-Peter F. Drucker

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

MODULE SUMMARY

BC 3

Revision 8.1

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS INSTRUCTOR'S SUMMARY

Title:	Business Communications
Hours:	9 hours
Description:	Business Communications is designed to improve participants' existing communication skills, both in writing and speaking. Writing topics include proper use of verbs, elimination of word clutter, proper sentence structure and correct spelling of commonly-confused words. After reviewing a wide range of writing tools, participants will be required to write a letter to a customer and a business memo. Students will also practice and speak publicly.
Objectives:	After completing this course, participants will have improved business writing skills, know the proper business letter and business memo formats, and have improved grammar and spelling skills, to include effective verbal speaking skills. The objectives of this module will be accomplished through in-class exercises combined with guidance and direction from the instructor.
Materials:	A marker board or chalkboard, a course outline handout, in-class exercises, blank paper, and a course evaluation for each participant.
Implementation:	The instructor will present the handouts for the two lessons, written communications and verbal communications. The participants will assist in reading and discussing the materials in preparation to complete the exercises and competencies for each lesson.
Topics:	Writing Basics Nine Rules for Choosing Words How to Alphabetize Use Proper Grammar Spell Commonly Misspelled Words Proper Use of Plurals How to Write a Business/Customer Letter How to Write a Business Memo How Well Do You Communicate? The Art of Communication Communication 101: Body Language Guide to Reading Body Language Managing Body Language Learning to Listen Communication Using the Phone Best Phone Practices Communication Technologies Your 15 Seconds of Fame-The Elevator Speech
Certification Requirements:	Master all competencies for Business Communications (see page BC6) Score 80% or higher on the Business Communications Online Quiz Score 80% or higher on the Work Certified™ Certification Exam

BC 4

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS COMPETENCIES

BC-34. Answers a minimum of four questions correctly during class lectures and exercises as evidenced by observation of performance.

BC-35. Demonstrates proficiency in alphabetization by completing the Alphabetizing Exercise with no more than one error as evidenced by product review.

BC-36. Demonstrates ability to effectively use verbal communication techniques as evidenced by participant publicly speaking through observation of performance.

BC-37. Demonstrates ability to write an effective business/customer letter by completing the Business/Customer Letter Exercise with no more than three errors as evidenced by product review.

BC-38. Demonstrates ability to write an effective business memo by completing the Business Memo Exercise with no more than three errors as evidenced by product review.

BC-39. Demonstrates ability to recognize effective business communications by achieving a score of 80% or higher on **online module quiz**

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS COURSE OUTLINE

LESSON 1

Course Introduction
Writing Basics
 Organize Your Information
 Proofreading- Correct Spelling/Plurals
 Grammar
 Appropriate Word Use
 Clarity and Tone
How to Write a Business/Customer Letter
How to Write a Business Memo

LESSON 2

How Well Do You Communicate?
The Art of Communication
Communication 101: Body Language
 Guide to Reading Body Language
 Managing Body Language
Learning to Listen
Communication Using the Phone
 Best Phone Practices
Communication Technologies
Your 15 Seconds of Fame-The Elevator Speech

Business Communications Module Online Quiz

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN OVERVIEW LESSON 1

This lesson plan is for three hours. Take two 10-minute breaks at appropriate times.

TOPIC	TIME	COPIES REQUIRED as HANDOUTS
Course Outline & Competencies	10 - 15 minutes	Competencies- page BC5 Course Outline - page BC6
Getting Started: Writing Basics	10- 15 minutes	Getting Started: Writing Basics – BC12
Writing Basics 1: Organizing Your Information	35 - 45 minutes	Writing Basics 1: Organizing Your Information- page BC13-14
Writing Basics 2: Proofreading Correct Spelling and Plurals	35 - 45 minutes	Writing Basics 2: Proofreading Correct Spelling and Plurals- page BC15 The Top 10 Basic Spelling Rules- page BC16 Most Commonly Misspelled Words- page BC17-18 Plurals- BC19 Exercise- Plurals- page BC20
Writing Basics 3: Grammar	35 - 45 minutes	Writing Basics 3: Grammar- page BC22-23 Basic Punctuation Rules- page BC24
Writing Basics 4: Appropriate Word Use- <u>Competency</u>	35 - 45 minutes	Writing Basics 4: Appropriate Word Use- page BC25-27 Alphabetizing Handout- BC28
Writing Basics 5: Clarity and Tone	35 - 45 minutes	Writing Basics 5: Clarity and Tone- page BC30-31 Sentence Structure Exercise- page BC32
How to Write the Business/Customer Letter How to Write a Business Memo Writing A Business/Customer Letter- <u>Competency</u>	45 - 60 minutes	How to Write the Business/Customer Letter -page BC34 Business/Customer Letter Handouts- page BC35-36 How to Write the Business Memo - page BC37 Business Memo Handout- page BC38 Additional Writing Tips- page BC39 Writing A Business/Customer Letter Handout- page BC40-41 Writing A Business Memo Handout- page BC42

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 1

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Course Outline & Competencies	Course Outline-page BC6 Competencies-page BC5	N/A	Review material on these documents.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Make sure you go over all competency requirements for this module with the members.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Getting Started: Writing Basics	Getting Started: Writing Basics – BC12	N/A	Overview of writing basics- Present this introductory information as a foundation to begin to introduce the 5 writing basics.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Writing Basics I: Organizing Your Information	Writing Basics I: Organizing Your Information- page BC13-14	N/A	This section of writing basics offers instructions in knowledge of the subject, details and purpose of a writing task. Remind the members of what they learned in Reading Comprehension regarding reading for main ideas . What they learned was that while main ideas are often the first sentence in a paragraph, that is not always the case.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 1

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Writing Basics 2: Proofreading Correct Spelling and Plurals	Writing Basics 2: Proofreading Correct Spelling and Plurals- page BC15 The Top 10 Basic Spelling Rules- page BC16 Most Commonly Misspelled Words- page BC17-18 Plurals- BC19 Exercise- Plurals- page BC20	Page BC21	Overview of the importance of proofreading and eliminating potential errors in writing. Stress the importance of having someone else review your work and ensure that your writing is appropriate for the intended reader. Making sure your words are spelled appropriately and accurately and checking for correct use of plurals will make your writing more professional and credible.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Writing Basics 3: Grammar	Writing Basics 3: Grammar- page BC22- 23 Basic Punctuation Rules- page BC24	N/A	A good tool to use to determine if you use a “,” (comma) or “;” (semi-colon) when combining sentences is the finger test. Use a finger to block out the word that joins the two parts of the sentence. If both portions can stand alone as sentences, use a semi-colon (;). If either portion cannot stand alone (e.g. is a sentence fragment), then use a comma (,).

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 1

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Writing Basics 4: Appropriate Word Use- <u>Competency</u>	Writing Basics 4: Appropriate Word Use- page BC25-27 Alphabetizing Handout- BC28	Page BC29	Instructor should stress that appropriate wording and effective presentation of information are the best way for a reader to understand the intended message.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

This is a competency requirement that all participants must perform correctly.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Writing Basics 5: Clarity and Tone	Writing Basics 5: Clarity and Tone- page BC30-31 Sentence Structure Exercise- page BC32	Page BC33	<p>Writing should flow smoothly as well as be clear and concise when transitioning from one topic to another.</p> <p>Writing that introduces a subject, continues with clear development of that subject, and ends with a concise conclusion will result in an effective message.</p>

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 1

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
How to Write a Business/Customer Letter?	How to Write a Business/Customer Letter -page BC34	N/A	In business writing you want to be direct without taking any chances that the readers will not get the main idea.
How to Write a Business Memo	Business/Customer Letter Handouts- page BC35-36		Following these style guides will assist in writing formats that are acceptable and effective in business.
Writing A Business/ Customer Letter- <u><i>Competency</i></u>	How to Write a Business Memo -page BC37		All writing tips can be helpful with the Pre-Employment module as well.
Writing A Business Memo - <u><i>Competency</i></u>	Business Memo Handout- page BC38		
	Additional Writing Tips- page BC39		
	Writing A Business/Customer Letter- page BC40-41		
	Writing A Business Memo - page BC42		

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

1. Review this information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.
2. The participant must write both the letter and memo to meet the competencies for this lesson.

This is a competency requirement that all participants must perform correctly.

TOPIC A: GETTING STARTED~ WRITING BASICS

The basics of good writing are easy to learn. First, realize that writing takes time and practice. It is important in writing to be clear, concise and able to express yourself and the message effectively!

1. Organize your Information

Know your subject, details, and the purpose of your writing.

2. Correct Spelling/Proper Plurals

Check your spelling to ensure that you are accurate as well as professional. Don't always count on spell-check. Use a proof reader!

3. Grammar

Using the correct format and usage of words, sentences, and make your letter, memo, or e-mail shine.

4. Appropriate Word Use

Using the appropriate word in your communications is crucial for good writing.

5. Clarity and Tone of Message

Is your reader receiving the message as you intended? Be sure to review the "tone" of your words.



Remember that in writing:

*Having more words doesn't mean it will be better!
Believe that you can always improve your writing skills!
Good writers are made, not born!*

Practice, practice, practice!

-Business Writing, Davidson 2001

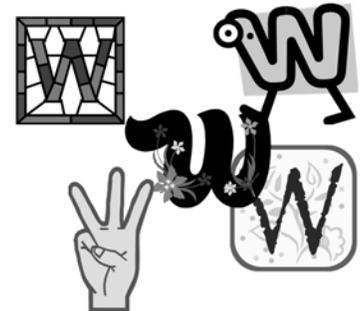
WRITING BASICS 1: ORGANIZE YOUR INFORMATION

“Know your subject, details, and the purpose of your writing.”

What are you writing, to whom are you writing, why are you writing, where are you establishing a platform for your information, and when must it be complete?

The questions to be answered when writing are the 5 W's:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?



You should answer at least **two** of these in your first paragraph, and leave your readers wondering about the other three in order to entice them to read on. The opening statement - you know **when** (today), you know **who** (I've just finished...) and you know **what** (an online class on business writing). Be honest, aren't you even a little curious to find out **where**? And you'd love to know **why**!

While the overall organization of your writing helps readers follow your ideas, you should also use strategies. Writing strategies prepare readers for the organization of your writing. These strategies include using visual clues to guide readers, as well as transitional markers from paragraph to paragraph.

Building reader expectations helps your readers anticipate the content of your writing. This way, readers are not caught off guard by upcoming details. You build your readers' expectations by:

- Informing readers of what you are writing about within the first two paragraphs.
- Telling readers the order in which you will discuss your topic. For example, "In this proposal, I first provide a literature review, followed by my original research."
- Stating three ideas when you say three ideas exist. For example, "Faculty members voiced three opposing arguments."
- Providing a table of contents for longer reports.

Effective transitions inform readers of changes within your writing. By using transitions, your readers are prepared for the flow of your ideas. Effective transitions logically connect paragraphs with one another.

Transitions are used to:

- Introduce an idea:
First, readers will know this is the first idea.
- Introduce examples:
For example, this is a transition.
- Indicate a contrast:
However, be sure your transitions accurately show how ideas relate to one another.
- Prepare readers for more information about the same idea:
In addition, transitions connect sentences to one another. Words such as "and," "or," "nor," "but," "so," "for," "yet" link sentences together.
- Indicate a conclusion:
Finally, readers will know this is the last idea.

Quick Guide to Organizing Information

- Sorting out from the collected data the essential information that your reader(s) will need
- Developing sentences to accurately express and convey the information
- Grouping these sentences together in a structure of paragraphs that express the main idea(s).
- Arranging the paragraphs into an overall format that shows their relationship to one another and ultimately leads to a conclusion

Iacone, Salvatore J., Write to the Point, 2004.

WRITING BASICS 2: PROOFREADING~CORRECT SPELLING/PROPER PLURALS

“Check your spelling to ensure that you are accurate as well as professional! Don’t always count on spell-check! Use a proofreader!”

The importance of proofreading your writing cannot be stressed enough! Ensuring the accuracy of your spelling can be one of the most stressful and tedious tasks in writing. The spell-check button? Let’s *not* count on it...

The irony of proofreading is that nothing is ever guaranteed 100%! There are mistakes in books, newspapers, and other periodicals that have been carefully perused and proofread by others. Why? Because as long as there is a human doing the proofreading, mistakes will be made and overlooked. The most meticulous proofreader can still mistake *there* and *their*, as well as *affect* and *effect*. The key in all good writing is to minimize the risks of errors in spelling and use of plurals.

The most important thing in proofreading is to make sure that you are reviewing for accuracy of spelling, grammar and correct format. You should not be criticizing the content, which is referred to as editing rather than proofreading.

Some Common Proofreading Errors

- Letter and space omission
- Punctuation errors
- Spelling errors
- Grammar and usage errors
- Lowercase instead of uppercase

THE TOP 10 BASIC SPELLING RULES!



10. The letter **Q** is always followed by **U**; in this case the letter **U** is not considered to be a vowel.

Qwerty is one of the Modern-English words that contain **Q** not followed by **U**

9. The letter **S** never follows **X**.
8. The letter **Y**, not **I**, is used at the end of **English** words.

Examples of this rule include **my**, **by**, **shy**, and **why**.

7. To spell a short vowel sound, only one letter is needed.

Examples of this rule include **at**, **red**, **it**, **hot**, and **up**.

6. Drop the **E**. When a word ends with a silent final **E**, it should be written without the **E** when adding an ending that begins with a vowel. In this way, **come** becomes **coming** and **hope** becomes **hoping**.
 5. When adding an ending to a word that ends with **Y**, change the **Y** to **I** if it is preceded by a consonant. In this way, **supply** becomes **supplies** and **worry** becomes **worried**.
 4. **All**, written alone, has two **L**'s. When used as a prefix, however, only one **L** is written.
- Examples of this rule include **also** and **almost**.
3. Generally, adding a **prefix** to a word does not change the correct spelling.
 2. Words ending in a vowel and **Y** can add the suffix **-ed** or **-ing** without making any other change.

and the #1 Basic Rule of Spelling is...

“**I** before **E**, except after **C**, unless it says **A** as in **neighbor** and **weigh**.”

MOST COMMONLY MISPELLED WORDS

ACCEPT - to receive

The United Way gratefully accepts donations.

EXCEPT - apart from; excluding; to take or leave out

The bookstore will welcome donations of all books, except romance novels.

ADVICE - recommendation; guidance

The guidance counselor offered advice on how best to apply to the college.

ADVISE - to offer guidance or wisdom

The former President advised the Senator to stop lying to voters.

ALLOWED - permitted; acceptable

The non-students would be allowed to attend this year's party.

ALOUND - audibly; out loud

She read the story aloud in class, with no errors!

BOARDER - paying guest in a house

He was going to take in more boarders until the last room was rented.

BORDER - boundary or edge, particularly of a geographical region.

Illegal aliens continue to stream across the border in record numbers.

BRAKE - a mechanical device that causes a vehicle to slow or stop

He applied the brake slowly while backing out of the driveway.

BREAK - to shatter; destroy

To say her heart did not break when he left her would not be true!

BREATH - noun, air inhaled or exhaled

His honesty was a breath of fresh air.

BREATHE - verb, to inhale or exhale

I will breathe a sigh of relief when errors in reference books are eliminated.

CAPITAL - an upper case letter; seat of government; assets, funds or financial resources

His company had sufficient capital to open new facilities in the state capital of Topeka.

CAPITOL - the actual building in which the legislature of a country or state meets

The governor announced she would approve the funding for the roads in a speech given today at the capitol.

CITE - refer to; to quote; document

The research paper would ultimately cite twelve sources that were later proven not to exist.

SIGHT - vision; spectacle

The snow-covered peaks surrounding Mammoth Mountain are a sight to behold.

SITE - location; position; place

The site of the new bank was abandoned when it was discovered to be haunted by the ghost of Jesse James.

COMPLEMENT - something that completes; brings to perfection

The wine complemented the roast and vegetables.

COMPLIMENT - an expression of praise or flattery

She received many compliments on her new book.



COUNCIL - a group that consults or advises

The city council voted unanimously to organize the Holiday parade.

COUNSEL - to advise

The student was counseled before deciding to take the popular course in basket weaving.

DESERT - arid region; abandon

Contrary to popular belief, many deserts are abundant with plant and animal life.

DESSERT - a sweet course served at the end of a meal

**The easiest way to differentiate the spelling of these two words, is to remember that you always want two servings of that scrumptious dessert. The scorching desert is spelled with just one "s" but that delicious dessert is spelled with two.*

HEAR - to perceive sound

He could hear the footsteps of the approaching zombies, but it was too late to escape.

HERE - at this place; at this point in time

Here at the Lincoln Library, we work to improve the accuracy of the reference sources we all rely on, both online and off.

ITS - of, or belonging to

The book and its author were both in attendance at the signing.

IT'S - contraction for "it is"

It's going to take months before all the errors are documented.

PRINCIPAL - a person who has authority; primary; most important

The school principal resigned when it was discovered he was actually a bank robber.

PRINCIPLE - a fundamental truth; the original source; integrity

He was a man of principle.

STATIONARY - motionless; standing still

The police report indicated his car was not stationary at the time of the accident.

STATIONERY - writing paper and envelopes

Sandy purchased office supplies downtown at the new stationery store.

THEIR - possessive form of they

Their scientific study was full of inaccuracies and falsified data.

THERE - indicates location; in attendance

He went there to do some research on former President.

THEY'RE - contraction for "they are"

They're going to plan a vacation to Niagara Falls, NY.

PLURALS

The correct use of plural and possessive forms may seem like a minor issue. In effective writing, however, incorrect forms, especially misuses of apostrophes, stand out like red flags!!

Plural forms

The plural form of a noun indicates simply that there are **more than one** of the person or thing in question. For most nouns, the plural form includes the letter "s" at the end of the word:



dogs cats
mirrors trees

Nouns ending in s, z, ch, sh, and x

Nouns with these letters at the end call for an "es" in the plural form. This added syllable makes pronunciation easier:

beaches wishes
bushes foxes

Nouns ending in o

Some nouns ending in o are pluralized with an "s," while others call for "es." These words must be memorized, because there is no simple rule to explain the differences.

echo becomes echoes
auto becomes autos
potato becomes potatoes

Nouns ending in y

To form the plural of nouns ending in y, drop the y, and add "ies."

family becomes families
story becomes stories
baby becomes babies

Irregular plural forms

man becomes men fungus becomes fungi
woman becomes women person becomes people

Thief becomes thieves (note that not all words ending in "f" follow this pattern: roof/roofs)

**EXERCISE
PLURALS**

1. There are too many box in our attic. _____
2. How many picture did you take on your trip? _____
3. Cheryl doesn't enjoy washing dish. _____
4. There are three church in our little community. _____
5. Our soccer team has had four wins and three loss. _____
6. We put ten of our best crystal glass on the table. _____
7. Our watch don't show the same time. _____
8. Why are all school bus painted yellow? _____
9. We saw some bright flash of light coming from the woods. _____
10. Jennifer was able to purchase the prize rose for her garden. _____
11. Grant drove over fifteen hundred mile to get to California. _____
12. How many rodeo did the horse and his rider win? _____
13. Susan enjoy shopping trip to the outlets for new clothes. _____

14. Sam pledged over forty dollar to the campaign fund. _____
15. The injury required use of crutch for two month. _____

**EXERCISE~PLURALS
ANSWER KEY**

1. boxes
2. pictures
3. dishes
4. churches
5. losses
6. glasses
7. watches
8. buses
9. flashes
10. roses
11. miles
12. rodeos
13. enjoys, trips
14. dollars
15. crutches, months

TOPIC B: WRITING BASICS 3: GRAMMAR

gram-mar, n.:

1. The study of the way the sentences of a language are constructed; morphology and syntax.
2. An account of these features; a set of rules accounting for these constructions: *a grammar of English*.
3. Knowledge or usage of the preferred or prescribed forms in speaking or writing: *She said his grammar was terrible*.



Many people misspell common words, mix up similarly spelled words, or use the wrong format of a word sounding the same, but with a different spelling. In business, you cannot afford to make simple mistakes. These common grammar mistakes make you look unprofessional and can cost you an opportunity, a customer, or even help put you out of business.

Here are some of the most common mistakes:

1. Subject/verb agreement. Most people know the basics on this one. You match a singular verb to a singular noun and vice versa. For example, you would say, "The man **IS** doing his job." and not "The man **ARE** doing his job." Many people get mixed up, however, when it comes to subjects such as "everyone" or "nobody". These confusing nouns are singular even though they refer to more than one person. So you would say "Everyone **HAS** something important to do." or "Nobody **WANTS** to waste money." rather than "Everyone **HAVE**..." or "Nobody **WANT**..."

2. Mixing up the present and past tenses. This is more of a concern in fiction writing, but it does come up in business correspondence as well. Sometimes product or service descriptions are written in the present tense in order to convey a sense of immediacy. If you do this, make sure that you remain in the present tense throughout the passage of writing. The only exception to this is if you make it clear to the reader that you are now talking about something in the past--i.e. "Even five years ago, people weren't able to instantly get in touch with each other."

3. Not putting the proper endings on past tense verbs. You probably know that most past tense verbs end with -ed : walked, picked, stated, etc. English is riddled with exceptions, however, and it is easy to mess up if you are in a hurry. Always double check your correspondence or have a proof-reader go over it with you. Most importantly, do not forget to add the proper ending to past tense verbs. Sentences such as "Every day he walk past the place across the street without thinking about going inside." sound uneducated, and it is quite simple to catch and fix these errors.

4. Apostrophe errors. Apostrophes are used for two reasons: to show letters that have been deleted from contractions (i.e. can't instead of cannot) or to show possession ("A diamond is a girl's best friend.") It is becoming more and more common for people to misuse apostrophes to denote the plural tense. Do not use apostrophes in this manner. For example, signs at a school should read, "Only teachers may use copiers." not, "Only teacher's may use copiers."

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5. Not using commas correctly. Commas are supposed to be used to tell the reader to take a breath before the rest of the sentence. Some people use them in place of periods, which is incorrect. If the second half of the sentence can stand on its own, either split it into two sentences or use a semi-colon.

In addition to these errors, it is common to mix up the spelling of words that sound alike. Here are five such common grammar mistakes that also make you look unprofessional:

1. Using the wrong form of "there". There are three words that sound alike: there, they're, and their. The first of these words is used as a noun, the second is a contraction for they are, and the third indicates possession.

2. Then and than. Then refers to something happening next, while than is used as a comparative word.

3. Lose and loose. It is becoming common to spell "lose" with two o's; however, this is incorrect. Loose means not tight; lose that extra o when you're trying to say "lose".

4. To, two, and too. "To" is a tricky word; it is used as part of a verb or a preposition. Add an extra o if you mean also, and always make sure you are using "two" to refer to a number.

5. It's and its. "Its" does not follow the rules for possessives discussed above. Instead, the apostrophe is only used if you are contracting "it is". Sentences such as, "Your phone loses its charge easily." should not contain an apostrophe.

Grammar can be complicated and overwhelming. The lists above contain most of the common grammar mistakes that make you look unprofessional; if you learn these rules, you will make a better impression on potential clients and customers than many of your competitors.

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(writeworld.org/post/26892665533/the-10-most-common-grammar...)

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BASIC PUNCTUATION RULES

Period .

Use a period to end a complete sentence.

Examples:

Sara completed her degree last May.

Comma ,

Commas are used to separate a list of items. A comma is included before the conjunction 'and' which comes before the final element of a list.

Examples:

I like reading, listening to music, shopping, and visiting with my friends.

Question Mark ?

The question mark is used at the end of a question.

Examples:

Where do you live?

Exclamation Point !

The exclamation point is used at the end of a sentence to indicate great surprise. It is also used for emphasis when making a point.

Examples:

The surprise birthday party for Jim was a great success!

Semicolon ;

A semicolon is used to separate two independent clauses.

Examples:

Steve enjoys playing music; he can't get enough of band practice.

Colon :

A colon can be used to provide additional details and explanation.

Examples:

John had many reasons for choosing the car: the price was right, the color was his favorite, and he could get the rebate offer immediately.

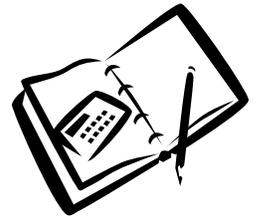
WRITING BASICS 4: APPROPRIATE WORD USE

“Using the appropriate word in your communications is crucial for good writing!”

Words are the symbols for what we perceive with our thoughts. They communicate what we think, feel and do. The more complex the idea or thought, the more difficult it is to express it precisely in words.

Plain language writing emphasizes the use of the clearest words possible to describe actions, objects and people.

The choice of words you use should be based on what will be clearer for your reader. Have your document read and reviewed by a person you trust and someone who is likely to use it. To help you draft easy to understand documents, here are some guidelines on your choice of words.



Use Simple, Everyday Words

Use simple, familiar words instead of unfamiliar words.

Write as if someone is asking you what you mean. If you are writing for a diverse audience, sometimes you must be an interpreter as well as a writer.

Here are a few examples of simple words and phrases you might substitute:

Instead of:	Use:
accomplish	do
ascertain	find out
disseminate	send out, distribute
endeavor	try
expedite	hasten, speed up
facilitate	make easier, help
formulate	work out, devise, form
in lieu of	instead of
locality	place
optimum	best, greatest, most
strategize	plan
utilize	use

Cut out unnecessary words

Here is a sample list of some alternative words for common, wordy expressions:

Instead of:	Use:
with regard to	about
by means of	by
in the event that	if
until such time	until
during such time	while
in respect of	for
in view of the fact	because
on the part of	by
subsequent to	after
under the provisions of	under
with a view to	to
it would appear that	apparently
it is probable that	probably
notwithstanding the fact that	although
adequate number of	enough
excessive number of	too many

Avoid using jargon

Using jargon can cause problems because your reader may not understand it. Also, be wary of trendy, fashionable expressions such as "level playing field", "downtime" and "touch base". The fact that they are trendy will also mean that they will soon date your writing. Avoid them!

Instead of:

You will receive reactivation and assistance consistent with your requirements.

Use:

You will get the amount of help you need.

Whatever!



Avoid or explain technical words

Whenever possible, avoid words that your readers do not know. Every occupation and interest group has special terms. These terms become a problem only when you can't distinguish between terms that are necessary work tools and terms that are jargon.

If you must use a technical term define it - either by giving a definition or by giving an example.

Glossaries are more difficult to use if they are placed at the end of a book or booklet. Try placing a box defining the words on the same page as where the word is first used.

Instead of:

Economic espionage may be defined as the illegal or clandestine acquisition of critical Canadian economic information and technology by foreign governments or their surrogates
Canadian Security Intelligence Service Public Report, 1992

Use:

Economic espionage means foreign governments or their agents illegally obtaining critical Canadian economic and technological secrets.

Don't change verbs into nouns

Nouns created from verbs are hard for the reader to understand and give the sentence an impersonal tone. When you write a noun that is derived from a verb, see if you can turn it back into a verb.

Instead of:

The *requirement* of the department is that employees work seven and one-half hours a day.

Use:

The department *requires* employees to work seven and one-half hours a day.

Instead of:

You will work on the *establishment* of goals for the hiring, training and promotion of designated group employees.

Use:

You will *establish* goals for hiring, training and promoting employees from designated groups.

Avoid chains of nouns

Chains of nouns are strings of two or more nouns used to name one thing. They are often difficult for a reader to understand.

Noun chains take some effort to untangle. They lack connecting words such as **of, for, about, in** and the possessives that would clarify how the nouns relate to each other.

Instead of:

World population is increasing faster than world food production

Use:

The world's population is increasing faster than its food production.

Choose your words consistently

Be consistent in what you call something. Avoid using two or more names for the same thing.

Do not be afraid to repeat the same word or the same idea if it is important.

Use acronyms carefully

Acronyms are formed from the first letter of words which they represent. Remember that not everyone may know what the letters stand for. Put the acronyms in brackets the first time you use the proper term. Then you can use the acronym in the rest of your text. Some acronyms like U.S.A. or U.S.M.C. may be so well known that they need no explanation.

But, when in doubt, spell it out.

The above tips and suggestions offered by PlainTrain, Inc.

COMPETENCY ALPHABETIZING

(Suggestion: Use Microsoft Word to demonstrate the *Sort* Function)

Alphabetize the following top Fortune 500 Companies:

Wal-Mart Stores
Exxon Mobil
Chevron
General Motors
General Electric
Bank of America Corp.
AT&T
Berkshire Hathaway
Hewlett-Packard
International Business Machines

Alphabetize the following names: (by last name first)

Thomas Luddington
Callum Vaughan
Robert Holecroft
Ellen Courtenay
Hugh Rogers
Thomas Foxe
Edward Nuygen
Darby Glande
Edward Kelle
Jasmine Gostigo

Alphabetize the following words:

solar
table
hobby
absolute
guest
forward
basement
errand
generous
argue
language
immediate

ALPHABETIZING ANSWER KEY

Alphabetize the following top Fortune 500 Companies:

AT&T

Bank of America Corp.

Berkshire Hathaway

Chevron

Exxon Mobil

General Electric

General Motors

Hewlett-Packard

International Business Machines

Wal-Mart Stores

Alphabetize the following names: (By last name first)

Courteney, Ellen

Foxe, Thomas

Glande, Darby

Gostigo, Jasmine

Holecroft, Robert

Kelle, Edward

Luddington, Thomas

Nuygen, Edward

Rogers, Hugh

Vaughan, Callum

Alphabetize the following words:

absolute

argue

basement

errand

forward

generous

guest

hobby

immediate

language

solar

table

TOPIC C: WRITING BASICS 5: CLARITY AND TONE OF MESSAGE

“Is your reader receiving the message as you intended? Be sure to review the “tone” of your words!”

Success in business writing depends on effective communication, whether you are sending an email, creating a report, or writing a letter. You have had an opportunity to review the elements of business grammar and format, spelling, use of words, and proofreading. Clarity and writing tone are the final elements necessary to ensure that your documents, letters, and memos are providing the message you intended to offer your reading audience. In business, why does it matter if your writing is clear or not? Surely, anyone with half a brain can make out what you’re trying to say!

Try this one.....

“The purpose of this letter is to provide information you requested regarding there is in existence a grace period regarding payment of said medical insurance policy. Please be advised that the aforementioned is of a duration of 10 days following premium due date previously established at the onset of said policy.” (Iacone, 2004)



Ok, whew! Or this...

“After the due date, your medical insurance policy allows a 10-day grace period to submit payment.” (Iacone, 2004)

Same information, less baffling.....

When your message is *important* enough to make you want to get it across clearly, and when it's *important* to the reader that he or she understand it fully, clarity is obviously essential.

Here are some tips to help you keep your important writing clear in order to accomplish your purpose:

1. Be very clear about what it is you want to say.
2. Have a clear understanding of who you want to convey the subject matter to... Focus on that audience (and no other), and get some accurate idea of how to introduce your subject to that audience so they will willingly read your writing or listen to you.
3. Clearly focus on the purpose of your writing and what you need to accomplish with it. If you are offering directions or instructions to your readers, then prepare the foundation so there is no doubt about what you are asking them to do.

4. Make sure you use words that you understand and can easily define.
5. Take time to use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A person who is familiar with grammar, spelling, and punctuation might reject your message (even though your message is valid and valuable) if he or she believes your errors indicate poor judgment on your part.
6. Use words and expressions that your readers are familiar with; if you use a term, abbreviation, or phrase outside of their presumed vocabulary, use it -- but give a helpful definition in parenthesis.
7. Ensure your paragraphs and sentences are reflective of the message and request for action. Eliminate the extras that only “decorate” the words and provide no value to the message. **Sentence structure** is crucial to clarity. It ensures that your information is presented smoothly and clearly to the reader and that you appear polished and confident.

Examples:

Before: It seems that of the two companies, Bloomington’s has greater sales.

Rewrite: Of the two companies, Bloomington’s sales are greater.

Before: Lorna Riley, who is our choice for the position, arrives Tuesday for her interview and assessment.

Rewrite: Lorna Riley, our choice for the position, arrives on Tuesday for her interview and assessment.

EXERCISE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Review the sentences below and rewrite them to reflect clarity and demonstrate effective sentence structure.

Before: Please be advised that the new database system will be available on the December 1 due date.

Rewrite: _____

Before: George Owen, who is the top candidate in our community for mayor, will be speaking in the community center on Tuesday.

Rewrite: _____

Before: Last week the vending machine broke down and we had it repaired and it is now working properly.

Rewrite: _____

Before: The Board of Directors meeting, usually held on Thursdays, is now being moved to Mondays.

Rewrite: _____

Before: In order to ensure the compliance with the legal expectations of our company policy, all must receive training to prevent any issues that could complicate and cause reprimands of staff.

Rewrite: _____

Before: The future site, which was originally chosen in 2008, will be developed this coming Spring 2011.

Rewrite: _____

EXERCISE ANSWER KEY SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Review the sentences below and rewrite them to reflect clarity and demonstrate effective sentence structure.

Before: Please be advised that the new database system will be available on the December 1 due date.

Rewrite: The new database system will be available on the December 1.

Before: George Owen, who is the top candidate in our community for mayor, will be speaking in the community center on Tuesday.

Rewrite: George Owen, the top candidate for mayor, will be speaking in the community center on Tuesday.

Before: Last week the vending machine broke down and we had it repaired and it is now working properly.

Rewrite: The vending machine is now working properly.

Before: The Board of Directors meeting, usually held on Thursdays, is now being moved to Mondays.

Rewrite: The Board of Directors meeting is now on Mondays.

Before: In order to ensure the compliance with the legal expectations of our company policy, all must receive training to prevent any issues that could complicate and cause reprimands of staff.

Rewrite: In order to ensure compliance with our company policy, all staff must receive training.

Before: The future site, which was originally chosen in 2008, will be developed this coming Spring 2011.

Rewrite: The future site will be developed in the Spring of 2011.

TOPIC D: HOW TO WRITE THE BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

Business/customer letters are the main way businesses officially communicate with their customers and other businesses. A good business/customer letter is brief, straightforward, and polite. Business/customer letters are the product of the person writing them and reflect the personal preferences of the writer. However, always learn the preferred style of your company as you are a representative of the company and all correspondence should be uniform, as in stationery and envelopes. A **business letter** is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8½"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery. The block style is becoming more widely used to eliminate visual clutter.



The Business/Customer Letter Style Guide

1. The Heading.

This contains the return address (usually two or three lines) with the date on the last line. Sometimes it may be necessary to include a line after the address and before the date for a phone number, fax number, e-mail address, or something similar. Often a line is skipped between the address and date. That should always be done if the heading is next to the left margin. It is not necessary to type the return address if you are using stationery with the return address already imprinted. Always include the date.

2. The Inside Address.

This is the address where you are sending your letter. Make it as complete as possible. Include titles and names if you know them. This is always on the left margin. If an 8½" x 11" paper is folded in thirds to fit in a standard 9" business envelope, the inside address can appear through the window in the envelope. An inside address also helps the recipient route the letter properly and can help should the envelope be damaged and the address become unreadable. Skip a line after the heading before the inside address. Skip another line after the inside address before the greeting.

3. The Greeting.

The greeting can also be referred to as the salutation. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word "Dear" and always includes the person's last name. It normally has a title. Use a first name only if the title is unclear--for example, you are writing to someone named "Leslie," but do not know whether the person is male or female. The greeting in a business letter always ends in a colon.

4. The Body.

The body is written as text. A business letter is never hand written. Regardless of format, skip a line between paragraphs. Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

5. The Complimentary Close.

This short, polite closing ends with a comma. It is either at the left margin or its left edge is in the center. It begins at the same column as the heading.

6. The Signature Line.

Skip two lines (unless you have unusually wide or narrow lines) and type out the name to be signed. The signature line may include a second line for a title, if appropriate. The signature should start directly above the first letter of the signature line in the space between the close and the signature line. Use blue or black ink.

John L. Stone
1616 West 5th Street
Abilene, Texas 58774
Home: (477) 337-2929 Cell: (477)333-3030.
jlstone@whoohoo.com

August 10, 2010

Fred Johnson, President
Johnson's Carpet Cleaning
588 State Street
Abilene, Texas 58774

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I am writing to you to express my satisfaction with the recent services of your company at my home here in Abilene. I had your team of professionals come to my home last Wednesday to clean the carpets in my family room, dining room, and living room.

The team of three, Joe, Bill, and Catherine, were on time and showed confidence in knowledge of their job. I am expecting out of town guests this week and am thrilled with the appearance of my home since I received this service.

Please accept my sincerest appreciation for the work and professionalism of this team! Job well done! I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my experience with you or potential customers. You may contact me at my home number, (477) 337-2929, or my cell phone (477)333-3030.

Sincerely,

John L. Stone

John L. Stone



Balloon City, Inc.
1587 Anthem Drive
Arlington, Virginia 24335
Phone:(804) 223-4991/Fax: (804)223-4990

January 24, 2010

Delores Harrison, Superintendent
Franklin County School Board
3344 Schoolhouse Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 23998

Dear Ms. Harrison:

I am writing to you in reference to the project mishap that occurred on this past Saturday, January 22, 2010, at your district team meeting with the order of balloons and streamers. I understand that you had a choice in selecting Balloon City as your decoration vendor and we appreciate that choice. Having the decorations delivered damaged and replaced in a timely fashion in preparation of your meeting is our fault and responsibility.

The discrepancy in the blue color streamers are a vendor issue. The popped balloons should have been replaced with extra balloons and the portable helium tank in the delivery truck. Our staff who delivered and set up the decorations did not come prepared with the extra balloons and tank, nor were there extra matching colored streamers available to replace the irregular, blue colored streamers. Our staff made an effort to correct the decorations by returning to our store and warehouse to get the replacement materials to finish the project. This delay was frustrating and embarrassing to you as your guests were arriving and the decorations were still going up.

Please accept my sincerest apology for these errors. This is not how we intend to manage projects for our customers. Therefore, I am offering this project order to you at no cost and a future project order at a discount of 25%. We hope that you will allow us to serve you again and demonstrate our capability in designing and decorating your event in a correct and timely manner. As a result of this project mishap, we have instituted a new project planner form and checklist to prevent any future incidents like this.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lockhart
Patricia Lockhart
President, Balloon City, Inc.

BC 36

Revision 8.1

Work Certified™ 1.2016

HOW TO WRITE A BUSINESS MEMO

Business memos are interoffice correspondence sent between employees in a company to communicate ideas, decisions, requests or announcements. A business memo helps members of an organization communicate without the need for time-consuming meetings. Memos solve problems by presenting new information or persuading readers to take action. Examples of this are introducing corporate policy changes or asking the reader(s) to change a current work procedure. The goal in writing a memo is the same as with other correspondence: effectively communicate the purpose to the reader(s).

The Business Memo Style Guide

1. Header Section

The required elements of a business memo:

MEMORANDUM

Date:

To: Name or column of names of those people to whom memorandum is being sent.
(using rank from most senior down)

From: Writer's name. Title, if any, listed directly below name.

Re: or Subject: Subject line may be emphasized by underlining, bold font or all capital letters.

2. Opening Section

Begin your memo by stating briefly the subject matter of the memo. Perhaps a shipment has not arrived, a scheduled meeting has been canceled, or a new employee is starting tomorrow. After stating the subject, indicate the purpose clearly: Are you announcing a meeting, welcoming a new employee, or asking for input on adopting a new policy about lunch hour length?

3. Discussion Section

In this section, details are presented regarding the solution or actions that will be taken or instituted regarding the subject of the memo. Don't ramble on, but do give enough information for decision makers to take action as needed. Describe the task or assignment with details that support the issue stated in the opening paragraph (subject).

4. Closing Section

After the reader has absorbed all of your information, close with a courteous ending that states what action the reader is to take.

To further clarify your meaning, keep these formatting ideas in mind:

Numbered and bulleted lists make information easy to scan. Font sizes, underlining, bolding, and italicizing make headings and important information stand out. Some companies may have very strict format for business memos that each employee is supposed to follow. Some even have it stated in their internal manuals.

BUSINESS MEMO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/25/08
TO: All Staff
FROM: Ginger Spencer, Supervisor of Operations
RE: Memo Writing Format

In order to make interoffice communications easier, please adhere to the following guidelines for writing effective memos:

- Clearly state the purpose of the memo in the subject line and in the first paragraph.
- Keep language simple and polite.
- Use bullets if a lot of information is presented.
- Proofread before sending.
- Address the memo to the person(s) who will take action on the subject.

Please put this format into practice immediately. We appreciate your assistance in developing clear communications. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL WRITING TIPS



TITLES FOR ADDRESSING SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PERSONS

President of the United States

Address: First name and surname, President of the United States
Salutation: Dear Mr./Madam President:
Closing: Yours sincerely,

Ambassador

Address: His/Her Excellency (First name and surname), Ambassador of (Country)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador:
Closing: Yours sincerely,

U.S. Senator

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), United States Senator
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Senator (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

U.S. Congressman

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), United States Congressman
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Representative (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

Governor

Address: The Honorable Governor of (State)
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Governor (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

State Senator

Address: (Name of State) House Senator, The Honorable (First name and surname)
Salutation: Dear Senator (Surname):
Closing: Yours sincerely,

Mayor - United States

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), Mayor of (City)
Salutation: Dear Mayor (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

COMPETENCY
WRITING A BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

Savings 4 All, Inc.
2397 Double Street
Seattle, WA 23458
978-761-0009

December 10, 2007

Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.
2020 Doubleday Circle
Doubleton, FL 25983

Subject: Purchase Order # 518093-10
Twelve-Foot Curtain Rods – Model # AB-1789345

Dear Customer Service Department:

The order you sent me was incorrect. I ordered ten, twelve-foot curtain rods and you sent me twelve, ten-foot curtain rods. This is the second time you have made this same mistake.

I have been purchasing products from your company for the last five years. My average annual purchases are about \$50,000 for this year. I would hope by now that I would have a designated service representative that I can deal with on a regular basis rather than dealing with a new one every time I have a problem. Having my own service representative should eliminate these errors.

Further, I need you to send me immediately the curtain rods I ordered. I have customers waiting for delivery of their twelve-foot curtain rods and I will expect them by the end of the week. Please respond to my request promptly with a confirmation of the delivery date and the name of my assigned service representative.

Sincerely,

Joseph Mason

Joseph Mason,
Vice President

COMPETENCY

WRITING A BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

When researching this account, you determine that an incorrectly filled out order form by the client caused the problems. However, Savings 4 All, Inc., order twelve-foot curtain rods twice a week and has never ordered ten-foot curtain rods.

Your supervisor decides to take the following steps to solve this problem and wants you to write the customer a letter indicating the below:

1. Assigns you as the service representative for Savings 4 All, Inc.
2. Informs you that one of your duties will be to review Savings 4 All, Inc. order forms and call them if you believe they contain errors.
3. Asks you to ship the ten, twelve-foot curtain rods overnight at Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.'s expense.
4. Allow Savings 4 All, Inc., to keep the twelve, ten-foot curtain rods at no charge.
5. Requests that you write a business letter to Mr. Joseph Mason of Savings 4 All, Inc., informing of the solution to his problem and introducing yourself as his new customer service representative. Do not blame the customer for the error and be sure to thank him for conducting business with Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.

COMPETENCY

WRITING A BUSINESS MEMORANDUM

As a Training Instructor at the Red Leaf Career Center, you are constantly improving courses offered to your clients. You have just reviewed the book, *Job Savvy (5th Edition)* by LaVerne L. Ludden, Ed. D. In telling your supervisor about the book and its potential to improve staff employability skills, he asks that you submit your findings in a memorandum so that he can forward your proposal to his supervisor for review.

He is also requesting that you choose the three chapters in the book that you determine to be most useful, and describe the information contained in those chapters including specific page references.

Use the business memo style guide to write this assignment. The memo should be written to Edward Williams, Director of Training and Development. Red Leaf Career Center.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN OVERVIEW LESSON 2

This lesson plan is for three hours. Take two 10-minute breaks at appropriate times.

TOPIC	TIME	COPIES REQUIRED as HANDOUTS
How Well Do You Communicate?	10-15 minutes	How Well Do You Communicate? Handout- page BC47 Communication Analysis- page BC48
The Art of Communication	10 -15 minutes	The Art of Communication Handout- page BC48
Communication 101: Body Language Managing Body Language	30-40 minutes	Communication 101: Body Language- page BC49 Guide to Reading Body Language- page BC50 Managing Body Language- page BC51
Learning To Listen	30 - 35 minutes	Learning To Listen – page BC52
Communicating Using the Phone Best Phone Practices	34-45 minutes	Communicating Using the Phone Handout- page BC53 Best Phone Practices Handout- page BC54
Communication Technologies	10-15 minutes	Communication Technologies Handout- page BC55
Your 15 Seconds of Fame- The Elevator Speech- <i>Competency</i>	30-45 minutes	Your 15 Seconds of Fame-The Elevator Speech Handout- page BC56
Business Communications Module Online Quiz- <i>Competency</i>	35-45 minutes	Business Communications Module Online Quiz

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN LESSON 2

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
How Well Do You Communicate?	How Well Do You Communicate Communication Analysis- page BC47	Communication Analysis- page BC48	Evaluation of basic communication techniques. Where do you stand as far as your ability to communicate verbally? Outcome indicates that all participants can benefit from stronger and more effective communication techniques and improved skills.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
The Art of Communication	The Art of Communication Handout- page BC48	N/A	Simple expression of how effective communication is a two-way process in making sure that your verbal skills are clear, appropriate, and effective in conveying a message or participating in a conversation.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 2

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Communication 101 Guide to Reading Body Language Managing Body Language	Communication 101; Body Language Handout- page BC49 Guide to Reading Body Language Handout- page BC50 Managing Your Body Language- page BC51	N/A	Actions speak louder than words! In communication, how we present our body and facial expressions speak to our feelings and emotions more than our words. Handouts for guide to reading body language are interesting to have on hand when in interviews or speaking with co-workers and your supervisor...what are they really thinking?

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Learning to Listen Use These Three Steps To Successful Communication	Learning To Listen/ Use These Three Steps To Successful Communication Handout- page BC52	N/A	Listening is a crucial step in learning to effectively communicate. Listening is a skill we all need to improve upon, especially in the workplace. Listening can provide revealing elements of the topic discussed, the purpose, and what outcome, if necessary, is pending.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Communication Using the Phone Best Phone Practices	Communication Using the Phone Handout- page BC53 Best Phone Practices Handout- page BC54	N/A	The phone and how effective it can be in communication requires clear speech and proper etiquette when acquiring information or resolving a complaint. Using basic phone practices will promote better phone voice and skills.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS TEACHING PLAN

LESSON 2

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Communication Technologies	Communication Technologies Handout- page BC55	N/A	The increase in technology has both improved communication and in some cases eliminated the face-to-face and verbal conversation. Although it is increasingly popular to use social networking to communicate, these are additional formats that should not replace written, face-to-face or telephone conversations.. Be aware of etiquette and guidelines for using e-mail (recall Business Technology lesson in e-mail).

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

Review this introductory information and ensure that during this topic you offer the opportunity to have the participants meet their requirement for answering a minimum of 4 questions correctly during classroom discussions.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Your 15 Seconds of Fame-The Elevator Speech- <u>Competency</u>	Your 15 Seconds of Fame-The Elevator Speech Handout- page BC56	N/A	Inform students that they will be required to make their speech in front of the class. This assists in overcoming the challenge of public speaking and prepares students for the opportunity to present themselves to a prospective employer or network opportunity.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

This is a competency requirement that all participants must perform correctly.

TOPIC	TOOL	ANSWER KEY	LECTURE FLOW
Business Communications Online Module Quiz- <u>Competency</u>	Business Communications Module Online Quiz	Online scoring Paper/Pen Quiz- See Chapter 3	Distribute the Member Program Evaluation Form (see Chapter 2) just prior to handing out this quiz and be sure to fill out your Instructor Program Critique Form (see Chapter 2). Members must score 80% or higher on this online quiz to be eligible for certification. LMS Database/Program Website- www.workcertified.org

INSTRUCTOR NOTES:

This is a competency requirement that all participants must perform correctly.

HOW WELL DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

Evaluate your communication skills by responding to the following statements. On a blank sheet of paper, number from 1 to 12 on the left side. Using the options box below, select your best response to each statement:

OPTIONS

1 = Never

2 = Occasionally

3 = Frequently

4 = Always



1. *I communicate the right information to the right person at the right time.*
2. *I think very carefully about the details of the information before I decide how to communicate it.*
3. *I am self-confident in speech and appearance.*
4. *I welcome feedback about how I communicate.*
5. *I listen carefully and make sure that I have understood before I reply.*
6. *I try to exclude personal opinions of all kinds when judging others.*
7. *I am efficient and civil when I meet others.*
8. *I question people to find out what they think and what they need.*
9. *I take time to give people the information they need and want.*
10. *I use professional phone techniques to improve my communication.*
11. *I communicate with all available electronic media.*
12. *I prepare speeches carefully and rehearse them well.*

HOW WELL DO YOU COMMUNICATE? COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

Add up your score from the skill evaluation and determine your communication status:

- 12-30 You are not communicating effectively! Listen to feedback and learn from mistakes!
- 31-61 Your communication is inconsistent! Be ready to learn more!
- 62- 120 Your communication skills are very good! Remember, you can always improve skills and techniques!

Source: Heller, Robert. Communicate Clearly, 2004.

THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

Good communication skills are the foundation of a successful and strong employee-employer relationship. Whether through speaking, writing, or listening, you must be able to convey information to others for best business practices and relationships.



Communication is a two-way street! It is necessary to ensure things are accomplished timely, accurately, and effectively!

TOPIC E: COMMUNICATION 101: BODY LANGUAGE

Does your body language reflect the same message as what you are verbally communicating? How we look to others can actually speak LOUDER than what our voice is conveying in our speech.

Body language can be more powerful than the spoken word!

Did you know that in communication, the following represents the impact of the message:

Body Language	55%
Verbal Speech	38%
Tone of Voice	7%

Body language is more difficult to control and to read, it can create an impression. But is it truly accurate?



These co-workers above appear comfortable, at ease, and are smiling.....is that what you see?

Body language, which includes stance, posture, hand and arm placement, facial expression (including the eyes) and head placement, can often be tough to control. How you manage yourself will either strengthen or damage your position in the conversation. Body language can deliver a more powerful message in silence than a well-planned, practiced speech!

When we are in situations we find to be difficult or uncomfortable, we tend to express our inside feelings and emotions outwardly. What can you do to better yourself and be alert to the other people with whom you are communicating?

GUIDE TO READING BODY LANGUAGE

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR	INTERPRETATION
Brisk, erect walk	Confidence
Standing with hands on hips	Readiness, aggression
Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly	Boredom
Sitting, legs apart	Open, relaxed
Arms crossed on chest	Defensiveness
Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched	Dejection
Hand to cheek	Evaluation, thinking
Touching, slightly rubbing nose	Rejection, doubt, lying
Rubbing the eye	Doubt, disbelief
Hands clasped behind back	Anger, frustration, apprehension
Locked ankles	Apprehension
Head resting in hand, eyes downcast	Boredom
Rubbing hands	Anticipation
Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed	Confidence, superiority
Open palm	Sincerity, openness, innocence
Pinching bridge of nose, eyes closed	Negative evaluation
Tapping or drumming fingers	Impatience
Steepling (connecting fingers prayer-like)	Authoritative
Patting/fondling hair	Lack of self-confidence; insecurity
Tilted head	Interest
Stroking chin	Trying to make a decision
Looking down, face turned away	Disbelief
Biting nails	Insecurity, nervousness
Pulling or tugging at ear	Indecision

MANAGING YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

Improving your body language can make a big difference in succeeding in all areas of your life and business relationships, overall people skills, attractiveness and general mood. You will use your body language differently when talking to your boss compared to other situations or conversations. It is essentially a skill and an art in communication. Initially, to change your body language, practice awareness of how you sit, stand, and use your hands and legs while talking with another person.



To get started, practice in front of a mirror. This will give you immediate feedback on how you look to other people and give you an opportunity to modify your appearance. Practice until you feel more confident and at ease! Soon it will become more natural and you will be more aware of yourself in your conversations.

Remember....

1. **Don't cross your arms or legs** – You have probably already heard you shouldn't cross your arms as it might make you seem defensive or guarded. This goes for your legs too. Keep your arms and legs open.
2. **Have eye contact, but don't stare** – If there are several people you are talking to, give them all some eye contact to create a better connection and see if they are listening. Keeping too much eye contact might make some people feel uncomfortable and no eye contact will make you seem insecure.
3. **Relax your shoulders** – The shoulders are often where tension is evident. Relaxing your shoulders may help you relax overall.
4. **Acknowledge their words by a nod when they are talking** – Nod once in a while to signal that you are listening.
5. **Don't slouch** – Sit up straight but do so in a relaxed manner. Try not to appear stiff.
6. **Lean, but not too much** – If you want to show that you are interested in what someone is saying, lean toward the person talking. If you want to show that you're confident in yourself and relaxed, lean back a bit.
7. **Smile and laugh** – Lighten up, don't take yourself too seriously. Relax a bit, smile and laugh when someone says something funny. People will be a lot more inclined to listen to you if you seem to be a positive person. But don't be the first to laugh at your own jokes, it makes you seem nervous and needy. Smile when you are introduced to someone but don't keep a smile plastered on your face or you will seem insincere.
8. **Keep your head up** – Don't keep your eyes on the ground which will make you seem insecure and a bit lost. Keep your head up straight and your eyes towards the horizon.
9. **Don't fidget** – Relax, slow down and focus your movements.
10. **Don't stand too close** – Many people become uncomfortable if people get too close to them. Let people have their personal space and don't invade it.

Keep a **good attitude** and remain **positive**...this will come across clearly in your body language and tone of voice!

LEARNING TO LISTEN

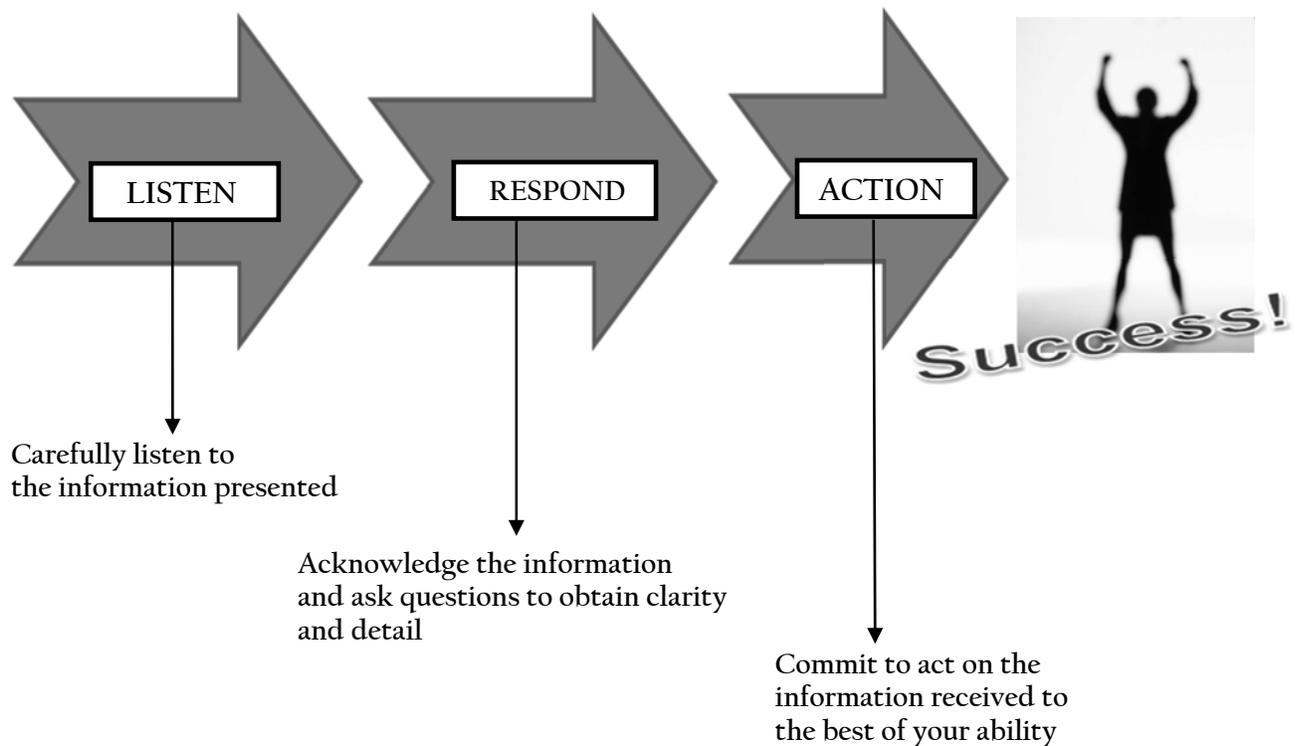
Communication is a two-way concept. Therefore, it is necessary that both sides understand each other.

How you listen will convey a message to the other person and will ensure the conversation is understood!

The ultimate respect you can give to someone is to listen...



USE THESE THREE STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION



COMMUNICATING USING THE PHONE



In business today, much communication is done over the phone or computer. Phone communications are extremely key in today's business because they encourage immediate accessibility between you and a customer, internal or external. It is important to have a confident speaking voice on the phone since you are not able to be face-to-face with the other person or persons in your conversation.

Make sure that you are prepared when having a phone conversation by writing down the name of the person to whom you are talking. Take notes and occasionally repeat back information to confirm your understanding.

The Conversation Tips:

- Concentrate on what is being said
- Visualize the speaker if on the phone
- Hold your tongue, don't interrupt
- Take notes
- Use summarizing statements
- Use conversation cues if the caller is getting long-winded
- Listen between the lines and remain open-minded

And last, but not least....**SMILE!** Wearing a smile makes you feel happier and will also brighten up the whole room. Smiling will also make you feel more positive and have a feeling of well-being.

Do you know the code?

- S** Smile increases the receptiveness of those around you.
- M** Make the guest feel comfortable
- I** Information gathering
- L** Learn the other person's name
- E** Eye contact establishes credibility and confidence



BEST PHONE PRACTICES

Check your verbal presentation. Speak distinctly at a moderate pace, with enough volume to be heard clearly. Don't mumble, turn away from the phone, or rush through sentences.

Stay with your caller. Don't give important information when the caller doesn't appear to be listening. Instead, use an introductory phrase to get the caller's attention: "Sir?" "Ma'am?" "Excuse me..."

Use language for understanding. Avoid company jargon or acronyms. When you must use a term callers may not understand, explain it: "You will need to fill out an order correction form - that is the blue, two page form required for all order changes."

Repeat, or spell out, information. All names, addresses, numbers, and dates should be repeated or spelled out. And be specific. Instead of saying, "We'll be open again tomorrow," say "We'll be open from 8am-5pm tomorrow." For confusing numbers, say, "That's 30: three-zero" or "13: one-three."

Ask for feedback. You can "quiz" your callers on how well they're listening by asking them to repeat information. Say: "Do you mind repeating that number back, so I can be sure I gave it to you correctly?"

Encourage questions. This technique is especially useful for complex topics. Again, be careful that you don't talk down to the caller: "I know I've covered a lot. Is there anything you'd like me to review?" Or, "Before we hang up, is there anything I was not clear about?"



COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

The advancement of technology in communications has greatly increased choices as well as the skills required for success!

Three Keys of E-Mail Communications:

1. Send only essential messages and information
2. Keep message or memo short and precise
3. Avoid delays in replying to messages and e-mails

Practicing these keys in using e-mail will ensure that your communications are professional, accurate, and reliable.



E-Mail in the office:

- Don't e-mail or forward jokes indiscriminately to business colleagues or to clients.
- Don't use email to communicate sensitive or potentially embarrassing subjects. First, you have no control over how the e-mail gets distributed or forwarded. An e-mail with confidential or potentially embarrassing information can easily end up in the wrong hands.
- E-mail is not a completely dynamic communication format, like face-to-face or phone discussions.

DON'T TYPE YOUR E-MAILS IN CAPITAL LETTERS. THIS IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING AND MAY BE CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE!

We are challenged by the increase of technological advancements in communications, and, as a result, learning to use them effectively assures a strengthened and capable workforce.

Employers look for and need employees with good communication skills. A valued employee will listen, learn and apply sensible communication techniques and practices.

COMPETENCY

YOUR 15 SECONDS OF FAME~THE ELEVATOR SPEECH

You have a chance...you were introduced to a management staff member at a company you are interested in working for and they have asked you to tell them a little bit about yourself...you have 15 seconds to dazzle them...ready?

Your elevator speech is that 15-30 second sound bite that sufficiently introduces yourself, your career aspirations/goals, and your unique qualifications. Your speech should consist of your name, field of interest or desired position, and something special about yourself: talents, experience or approach. Your goal is to stand out from the crowd, so be memorable. You will be required to give your speech to your class.

The key- **ENERGY** – energy in your voice and in your body language. Elevator speeches have become over-processed and passive.

Step 1: Write a short personal commercial that includes the following:

- Who you are
- How you help people

Step 2:

- Get a timer and practice your introduction, maybe in front of a mirror – Practice it until it feels natural.

REMEMBER:

Pronounce your name clearly. Be upbeat. Smile. Offer a business card as you are shaking hands or another easy way to remember you/your name.

Leave the industry jargon out. You may deal with widgets and their special terminology all day, but most people won't know what you're talking about.

Be brief, and then be quiet.

Listen to others' introductions.

Write your presentation of yourself in a few short sentences which convey the essence of who you are, why you're calling or speaking with the person, and what you want. You will need to take some time to compose this speech. Feel free to memorize as much of it as you can, but don't simply repeat it to the person as if it were a "canned" speech. Try to make it sound spontaneous and fresh.
