Professional and Technical Writing

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WRITING

NSCC Edition

SUZIE BAKER

NSCC
Nova Scotia

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This textbook for professional and technical communication is a compilation of several Open Resource materials. The purpose in its design is to provide a wide variety of materials on subjects in professional and technical communication, and to offer several different perspectives and delivery modes of those materials.

The textbook Professional and Technical Writing is written by Suzie Baker and is licenced with a CC BY-NC-SA licence.
This Pressbooks hosted version is adapted for use at NSCC.

The original work can be viewed on the [OER Commons:](https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/54645-professional-and-technical-writing)
Baker, S. (2019, June 03). Professional and Technical Writing. OER Commons. Retrieved September 08, 2020, from https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/54645-professional-and-technical-writing.

1.1 Effective Business Communication

Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.
–Rollo May

I know that you believe that you understood what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.
–Robert J. McCloskey, former State Department spokesman

Introductory Exercises

1. Write five words that express what you want to do and where you want to be a year from now. Take those five words and write a paragraph that clearly articulates your responses to both "what" and "where."
2. Think of five words that express what you want to do and where you want to be five years from now. Share your five words with your classmates and listen to their responses. What patterns do you observe in the responses? Write a paragraph that addresses at least one observation.

Communication is an activity, skill, and art that incorporates lessons learned across a wide spectrum of human knowledge. Perhaps the most time-honored form of communication is storytelling. We've told each other stories for ages to help make sense of our world, anticipate the future, and certainly to entertain ourselves. The art of storytelling draws on your understanding of yourself, your message, and how you communicate it to an audience that is simultaneously communicating back to you. Your anticipation, reaction, and adaptation to the process will determine how successfully you are able to communicate. You were not born knowing how to write or even how to talk—but in the process of growing up, you have undoubtedly learned how to tell, and how not tell, a story out loud and in writing.

You didn't learn to text in a day and didn't learn all the codes—from LOL (laugh out loud) to BRB (be right back)—right away. In the same way, learning to communicate well requires you to read and study how others have expressed themselves, then adapt what you have learned to your present task—whether it is texting a brief message to a friend, presenting your qualifications in a job interview, or writing a business report. You come to this text with skills and an understanding that will provide a valuable foundation as we explore the communication process.

Effective communication takes preparation, practice, and persistence. There are many ways to learn communication skills; the school of experience, or "hard knocks," is one of them. But in the business environment, a "knock" (or lesson learned) may come at the expense of your credibility through a blown presentation to a client. The classroom environment, with a compilation of information and resources such as a text, can offer you a trial run where you get to try out new ideas and skills before you have to use them to communicate effectively to make a sale or form a new partnership. Listening to yourself, or perhaps the comments of others, may help you reflect on new ways to present, or perceive, thoughts, ideas and concepts. The net result is your growth; ultimately your ability to communicate in business will improve, opening more doors than you might anticipate.

As you learn the material in this text, each part will contribute to the whole. The degree to which you attend to each part will ultimately help give you the skills, confidence, and preparation to use communication in furthering your career.

1.2 Why Is It Important to Communicate Well?

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize the importance of communication in gaining a better understanding of yourself and others.
2. Explain how communication skills help you solve problems, learn new things, and build your career.

Communication is key to your success—in relationships, in the workplace, as a citizen of your country, and across your lifetime. Your ability to communicate comes from experience, and experience can be an effective teacher, but this text and the related business communication course will offer you a wealth of experiences gathered from professional speakers across their lifetimes. You can learn from the lessons they've learned and be a more effective communicator right out of the gate.

Business communication can be thought of as a problem solving activity in which individuals may address the following questions:

- What is the situation?
- What are some possible communication strategies?
- What is the best course of action?
- What is the best way to design the chosen message?
- What is the best way to deliver the message?

In this book, we will examine this problem solving process and help you learn to apply it in the kinds of situations you are likely to encounter over the course of your career.

Communication Influences Your Thinking about Yourself and Others

We all share a fundamental drive to communicate. Communication can be defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). You share meaning in what you say and how you say it, both in oral and written forms. If you could not communicate, what would life be like? A series of never-ending frustrations? Not being able to ask for what you need or even to understand the needs of others?

Being unable to communicate might even mean losing a part of yourself, for you communicate your self-concept—your sense of self and awareness of who you are—in many ways. Do you like to write? Do you find it easy to make a phone call to a stranger or to speak to a room full of people? Perhaps someone told you that you don't speak clearly or your grammar needs improvement. Does that make you more or less likely to want to communicate? For some, it may be a positive challenge, while for others it may be discouraging. But in all cases, your ability to communicate is central to your self-concept.

Take a look at your clothes. What are the brands you are wearing? What do you think they say about you? Do you feel that certain styles of shoes, jewelry, tattoos, music, or even automobiles express who you are? Part of your self-concept may be that you express yourself through texting, or through writing longer documents like essays and research papers, or through the way you speak.

On the other side of the coin, your communications skills help you to understand others—not just their words, but also their tone of voice, their nonverbal gestures, or the format of their written documents provide you with clues about who they are and what their values and priorities may be. Active listening and reading are also part of being a successful communicator.

Communication Influences How You Learn

When you were an infant, you learned to talk over a period of many months. When you got older, you didn't learn to ride a bike, drive a car, or even text a message on your cell phone in one brief moment. You need to begin the process of improving your speaking and writing with the frame of mind that it will require effort, persistence, and self-correction.

You learn to speak in public by first having conversations, then by answering questions and expressing your opinions in class, and finally by preparing and delivering a "stand-up" speech. Similarly, you learn to write by first learning to read, then by writing and learning to think critically. Your speaking and writing are reflections of your thoughts, experience, and education. Part of that combination is your level of experience listening to other speakers, reading documents and styles of writing, and studying formats similar to what you aim to produce.

As you study business communication, you may receive suggestions for improvement and clarification from speakers and writers more experienced than yourself. Take their suggestions as challenges to improve; don't give up when your first speech or first draft does not communicate the message you intend. Stick with it until you get it right. Your success in communicating is a skill that applies to almost every field of work, and it makes a difference in your relationships with others.

Remember, luck is simply a combination of preparation and timing. You want to be prepared to communicate well when given the opportunity. Each time you do a good job, your success will bring more success.

Communication Represents You and Your Employer

You want to make a good first impression on your friends and family, instructors, and employer. They all want you to convey a positive image, as it reflects on them. In your career, you will represent your business or company in spoken and written form. Your professionalism and attention to detail will reflect positively on you and set you up for success.

In both oral and written situations, you will benefit from having the ability to communicate clearly. These are skills you will use for the rest of your life. Positive improvements in these skills will have a positive impact on your relationships, your prospects for employment, and your ability to make a difference in the world.

Communication Skills Are Desired by Business and Industry

Oral and written communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer surveys year after year. In fact, high-powered business executives sometimes hire consultants to coach them in sharpening their communication skills. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the following are the top five personal qualities or skills potential employers seek:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Strong work ethic
3. Teamwork skills (works well with others, group communication)
4. Initiative
5. Analytical skills

Knowing this, you can see that one way for you to be successful and increase your promotion potential is to increase your abilities to speak and write effectively.

Maryland GovPics – Baltimore Jewish Council Meeting – CC BY 2.0.

Effective communication skills are assets that will get you there.

In September 2004, the National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges published a study on 120 human resource directors titled *Writing: A Ticket to Work…Or a Ticket Out, A Survey of Business Leaders*. The study found that "writing is both a 'marker' of high-skill, high-wage, professional work and a 'gatekeeper' with clear equity implications," said Bob Kerrey, president of New School University in New York and chair of the commission. "People unable to express themselves clearly in writing limit their opportunities for professional, salaried employment." (The College Board, 2004)

On the other end of the spectrum, it is estimated that over forty million Americans are illiterate, or unable to functionally read or write. If you are reading this book, you may not be part of an at-risk group in need of basic skill development, but you still may need additional training and practice as you raise your skill level.

An individual with excellent communication skills is an asset to every organization. No matter what career you plan to pursue, learning to express yourself professionally in speech and in writing will help you get there.

Key Takeaways

Communication forms a part of your self-concept, and it helps you understand yourself and others, solve problems and learn new things, and build your career.

Exercises

1. Imagine that you have been hired to make "cold calls" to ask people whether they are familiar with a new restaurant that has just opened in your neighborhood. Write a script for the phone call. Ask a classmate to copresent as you deliver the script orally in class, as if you were making a phone call to the classmate. Discuss your experience with the rest of the class.
2. Imagine you have been assigned the task of creating a job description. Identify a job, locate at least two sample job descriptions, and create one. Please present the job description to the class and note to what degree communication skills play a role in the tasks or duties you have included.

1.3 YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A COMMUNICATOR

Learning Objective

- Discuss and provide several examples of each of the two main responsibilities of a business communicator.

Whenever you speak or write in a business environment, you have certain responsibilities to your audience, your employer, and your profession. Your audience comes to you with an inherent set of expectations that you will fulfill these responsibilities. The specific expectations may change given the context or environment, but two central ideas will remain: be prepared, and be ethical.

THE COMMUNICATOR IS PREPARED

As the business communicator's first responsibility, preparation includes several facets which we will examine: organization, clarity, and being concise and punctual.

Being prepared means that you have selected a topic appropriate to your audience, gathered enough information to cover the topic well, put your information into a logical sequence, and considered how best to present it. If your communication is a written one, you have written an outline and at least one rough draft, read it over to improve your writing and correct errors, and sought feedback where appropriate. If your communication is oral, you have practiced several times before your actual performance.

THE PREPARED COMMUNICATOR IS ORGANIZED

Part of being prepared is being organized. Aristotle called this *logos*, or logic, and it involves the steps or points that lead your communication to a conclusion. Once you've invested time in researching your topic, you will want to narrow your focus to a few key points and consider how you'll present them. On any given topic there is a wealth of information; your job is to narrow that content down to a manageable level, serving the role of gatekeeper by selecting some information and "de-selecting," or choosing to not include other points or ideas.

You also need to consider how to link your main points together for your audience. Use transitions to provide signposts or cues for your audience to follow along. "Now that we've examined X, let's consider Y" is a transitional statement that provides a cue that you are moving from topic to topic. Your listeners or readers will appreciate your being well organized so that they can follow your message from point to point.

THE PREPARED COMMUNICATOR IS CLEAR

You have probably had the unhappy experience of reading or listening to a communication that was vague and wandering. Part of being prepared is being clear. If your message is unclear, the audience will lose interest and tune you out, bringing an end to effective communication.

Interestingly, clarity begins with intrapersonal communication: you need to have a clear idea in your mind of what you want to say before you can say it clearly to someone else. At the interpersonal level, clarity involves considering your audience, as you will want to choose words and phrases they understand and avoid jargon or slang that may be unfamiliar to them.

Clarity also involves presentation. A brilliant message scrawled in illegible handwriting, or in pale gray type on gray paper, will not be clear. When it comes to oral communication, if you mumble your words, speak too quickly or use a monotonous tone of voice, or stumble over certain words or phrases, the clarity of your presentation will suffer.

Technology also plays a part; if you are using a microphone or conducting a teleconference, clarity will depend on this equipment functioning properly—which brings us back to the importance of preparation. In this case, in addition to preparing your speech, you need to prepare by testing the equipment ahead of time.

THE PREPARED COMMUNICATOR IS CONCISE AND PUNCTUAL

Concise means brief and to the point. In most business communications you are expected to "get down to business" right away. Being prepared includes being able to state your points clearly and support them with clear evidence in a relatively straightforward, linear way.

It may be tempting to show how much you know by incorporating additional information into your document or speech, but in so doing you run the risk of boring, confusing, or overloading your audience. Talking in circles or indulging in tangents, where you get off topic or go too deep, can hinder an audience's ability to grasp your message. Be to the point and concise in your choice of words, organization, and even visual aids.

Being concise also involves being sensitive to time constraints. How many times have you listened to a speaker say "in conclusion" only to continue speaking for what seems like forever? How many meetings and conference calls have you attended that got started late or ran beyond the planned ending time? The solution, of course, is to be prepared to be punctual. If you are asked to give a five-minute presentation at a meeting, your coworkers will not appreciate your taking fifteen minutes, any more than your supervisor would appreciate your submitting a fifteen-page report when you were asked to write five pages. For oral presentations, time yourself when you rehearse and make sure you can deliver your message within the allotted number of minutes.

Good business communication does not waste words or time.

There is one possible exception to this principle. Many non-Western cultures prefer a less direct approach, where business communication often begins with social or general comments that a U.S. audience might consider unnecessary. Some cultures also have a less strict interpretation of time schedules and punctuality. While it is important to recognize that different cultures have different expectations, the general rule holds true that good business communication does not waste words or time.

THE COMMUNICATOR IS ETHICAL

The business communicator's second fundamental responsibility is to be ethical. Ethics refers to a set of principles or rules for correct conduct. It echoes what Aristotle called *ethos*, the communicator's good character and reputation for doing what is right. Communicating ethically involves being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy—overall, practicing the "golden rule" of treating your audience the way you would want to be treated.

Communication can move communities, influence cultures, and change history. It can motivate people to take stand, consider an argument, or purchase a product. The degree to which you consider both the common good and fundamental principles you hold to be true when crafting your message directly relates to how your message will affect others.

THE ETHICAL COMMUNICATOR IS EGALITARIAN

The word "egalitarian" comes from the root "equal." To be egalitarian is to believe in basic equality: that all people should share equally in the benefits and burdens of a society. It means that everyone is entitled to the same respect, expectations, access to information, and rewards of participation in a group.

To communicate in an egalitarian manner, speak and write in a way that is comprehensible and relevant to all your listeners or readers, not just those who are "like you" in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity, or other characteristics.

In business, you will often communicate to people with certain professional qualifications. For example, you may draft a memo addressed to all the nurses in a certain hospital, or give a speech to all the adjusters in a certain branch of an insurance company. Being egalitarian does not mean you have to avoid professional terminology that is understood by nurses or insurance adjusters. But it does mean that your hospital letter should be worded for all the hospital's nurses—not just female nurses, not just nurses working directly with patients, not just nurses under age fifty-five. An egalitarian communicator seeks to unify the audience by using ideas and language that are appropriate for all the message's readers or listeners.

THE ETHICAL COMMUNICATOR IS RESPECTFUL

People are influenced by emotions as well as logic. Aristotle named *pathos*, or passion, enthusiasm and energy, as the third of his three important parts of communicating after *logos* and *ethos*.

Most of us have probably seen an audience manipulated by a "cult of personality," believing whatever the speaker said simply because of how dramatically he or she delivered a speech; by being manipulative, the speaker fails to respect the audience. We may have also seen people hurt by sarcasm, insults, and other disrespectful forms of communication.

This does not mean that passion and enthusiasm are out of place in business communication. Indeed, they are very important. You can hardly expect your audience to care about your message if you don't show that you care about it yourself. If your topic is worth writing or speaking about, make an effort to show your audience why it is worthwhile by speaking enthusiastically or using a dynamic writing style. Doing so, in fact, shows respect for their time and their intelligence.

However, the ethical communicator will be passionate and enthusiastic without being disrespectful. Losing one's temper and being abusive are generally regarded as showing a lack of professionalism (and could even involve legal consequences for you or your employer). When you disagree strongly with a coworker, feel deeply annoyed with a difficult customer, or find serious fault with a competitor's product, it is important to express such sentiments respectfully. For example, instead of telling a customer, "I've had it with your complaints!" a respectful business communicator might say, "I'm having trouble seeing how I can fix this situation. Would you explain to me what you want to see happen?"

THE ETHICAL COMMUNICATOR IS TRUSTWORTHY

Trust is a key component in communication, and this is especially true in business. As a consumer, would you choose to buy merchandise from a company you did not trust? If you were an employer, would you hire someone you did not trust?

Your goal as a communicator is to build a healthy relationship with your audience, and to do that you must show them why they can trust you and why the information you are about to give them is believable. One way to do this is to begin your message by providing some information about your qualifications and background, your interest in the topic, or your reasons for communicating at this particular time.

Your audience will expect that what you say is the truth as you understand it. This means that you have not intentionally omitted, deleted, or taken information out of context simply to prove your points. They will listen to what you say and how you say it, but also to what you don't say or do. You may consider more than one perspective on your topic, and then select the perspective you perceive to be correct, giving concrete reasons why you came to this conclusion. People in the audience may have considered or believe in some of the perspectives you consider, and your attention to them will indicate you have done your homework.

Being worthy of trust is something you earn with an audience. Many wise people have observed that trust is hard to build but easy to lose. A communicator may not know something and still be trustworthy, but it's a violation of trust to pretend you know something when you don't. Communicate what you know, and if you don't know something, research it before you speak or write. If you are asked a question to which you don't know the answer, say "I don't know the answer but I will research it and get back to you" (and then make sure you follow through later). This will go over much better with the audience than trying to cover by stumbling through an answer or portraying yourself as knowledgeable on an issue that you are not.

THE "GOLDEN RULE"

When in doubt, remember the "golden rule," which says to treat others the way you would like to be treated. In all its many forms, the golden rule incorporates human kindness, cooperation, and reciprocity across cultures, languages, backgrounds and interests. Regardless of where you travel, who you communicate with, or what your audience is like, remember how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of your communication, and act accordingly.

Key Takeaways

As a communicator, you are responsible for being prepared and being ethical. Being prepared includes being organized, clear, concise, and punctual. Being ethical includes being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy and overall, practicing the "golden rule."

Exercises

1. Recall one time you felt offended or insulted in a conversation. What contributed to your perception? Please share your comments with classmates.

2. When someone lost your trust, were they able earn it back? Please share your comments with classmates.

3. Does the communicator have a responsibility to the audience? Does the audience have a responsibility to the speaker? Why or why not? Please share your comments with classmates.

1.4 Effective Business Writing

However great…natural talent may be, the art of writing cannot be learned all at once. –Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Read, read, read…Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. –William Faulkner

You only learn to be a better writer by actually writing.–Doris Lessing

Getting Started

Introductory Exercises

1. Take a moment to write three words that describe your success in writing.
2. Make a list of words that you associate with writing. Compare your list with those of your classmates.
3. Briefly describe your experience writing and include one link to something you like to read in your post.

Something we often hear in business is, "Get it in writing." This advice is meant to prevent misunderstandings based on what one person thought the other person said. But does written communication—getting it in writing—always prevent misunderstandings?

According to a Washington Post news story, a written agreement would have been helpful to an airline customer named Mike. A victim of an airport mishap, Mike was given vouchers for $7,500 worth of free travel. However, in accordance with the airline's standard policy, the vouchers were due to expire in twelve months. When Mike saw that he and his wife would not be able to do enough flying to use the entire amount before the expiration date, he called the airline and asked for an extension. He was told the airline would extend the deadline, but later discovered they were willing to do so at only 50 percent of the vouchers' value. An airline spokesman told the newspaper, "If [Mike] can produce a letter stating that we would give the full value of the vouchers, he should produce it." [1]

Yet, as we will see in this chapter, putting something in writing is not always a foolproof way to ensure accuracy and understanding. A written communication is only as accurate as the writer's knowledge of the subject and audience, and understanding depends on how well the writer captures the reader's attention.

This chapter addresses the written word in a business context. We will also briefly consider the symbols, design, font, timing, and related nonverbal expressions you make when composing a page or document. Our discussions will focus on effective communication of your thoughts and ideas through writing that is clear, concise, and efficient.1.5 Good Business Writing

Learning Objectives

1. Identify six basic qualities that characterize good business writing.
2. Identify and explain the rhetorical elements and cognate strategies that contribute to good writing.

One common concern is to simply address the question, what is good writing? As we progress through our study of written business communication we'll try to answer it. But recognize that while the question may be simple, the answer is complex. Edward P. Bailey[2] offers several key points to remember.

Good business writing

- follows the rules,
- is easy to read, and
- attracts the reader.

Let's examine these qualities in more depth.

Bailey's first point is one that generates a fair amount of debate. What are the rules? Do "the rules" depend on audience expectations or industry standards, what your English teacher taught you, or are they reflected in the amazing writing of authors you might point to as positive examples? The answer is "all of the above," with a point of clarification. You may find it necessary

1. Oldenburg, D. (2005, April 12). Old adage holds: Get it in writing. Washington Post, p. C10. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45309-2005Apr11.html
2. Bailey, E. (2008). Writing and speaking. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

to balance audience expectations with industry standards for a document, and may need to find a balance or compromise. Bailey[3] points to common sense as one basic criterion of good writing, but common sense is a product of experience. When searching for balance, reader understanding is the deciding factor. The correct use of a semicolon may not be what is needed to make a sentence work. Your reading audience should carry extra attention in everything you write because, without them, you won't have many more writing assignments.

When we say that good writing follows the rules, we don't mean that a writer cannot be creative. Just as an art student needs to know how to draw a scene in correct perspective before he can "break the rules" by "bending" perspective, so a writer needs to know the rules of language. Being well versed in how to use words correctly, form sentences with proper grammar, and build logical paragraphs are skills the writer can use no matter what the assignment. Even though some business settings may call for conservative writing, there are other areas where creativity is not only allowed but mandated. Imagine working for an advertising agency or a software development firm; in such situations success comes from expressing new, untried ideas. By following the rules of language and correct writing, a writer can express those creative ideas in a form that comes through clearly and promotes understanding.

Similarly, writing that is easy to read is not the same as "dumbed down" or simplistic writing. What is easy to read? For a young audience, you may need to use straightforward, simple terms, but to ignore their use of the language is to create an artificial and unnecessary barrier. An example referring to Miley Cyrus may work with one reading audience and fall flat with another. Profession-specific terms can serve a valuable purpose as we write about precise concepts. Not everyone will understand all the terms in a profession, but if your audience is largely literate in the terms of the field, using industry terms will help you establish a relationship with your readers.

The truly excellent writer is one who can explain complex ideas in a way that the reader can understand. Sometimes ease of reading can come from the writer's choice of a brilliant illustrative example to get a point across. In other situations, it can be the writer's incorporation of definitions into the text so that the meaning of unfamiliar words is clear. It may also be a matter of choosing dynamic, specific verbs that make it clear what is happening and who is carrying out the action.

Bailey's third point concerns the interest of the reader. Will they want to read it? This question should guide much of what you write. We increasingly gain information from our environment through visual, auditory, and multimedia channels, from YouTube to streaming audio, and to watching the news online. Some argue that this has led to a decreased attention span for reading, meaning that writers need to appeal to readers with short, punchy sentences and catchy phrases. However, there are still plenty of people who love to immerse themselves in reading an interesting article, proposal, or marketing piece.

Perhaps the most universally useful strategy in capturing your reader's attention is to state how your writing can meet the reader's needs. If your document provides information to answer a question, solve a problem, or explain how to increase profits or cut costs, you may want to state this in the beginning. By opening with a "what's in it for me" strategy, you give your audience a reason to be interested in what you've written.

More Qualities of Good Writing

To the above list from Bailey, let's add some additional qualities that define good writing. Good writing

- meets the reader's expectations,
- is clear and concise,
- is efficient and effective.

To meet the reader's expectations, the writer needs to understand who the intended reader is. In some business situations, you are

3. Bailey, E. (2008). Writing and speaking. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

writing just to one person: your boss, a coworker in another department, or an individual customer or vendor. If you know the person well, it may be as easy for you to write to him or her as it is to write a note to your parent or roommate. If you don't know the person, you can at least make some reasonable assumptions about his or her expectations, based on the position he or she holds and its relation to your job.

In other situations, you may be writing a document to be read by a group or team, an entire department, or even a large number of total strangers. How can you anticipate their expectations and tailor your writing accordingly? Naturally you want to learn as much as you can about your likely audience. How much you can learn and what kinds of information will vary with the situation. If you are writing Web site content, for example, you may never meet the people who will visit the site, but you can predict why they would be drawn to the site and what they would expect to read there. Beyond learning about your audience, your clear understanding of the writing assignment and its purpose will help you to meet reader expectations.

Our addition of the fifth point concerning clear and concise writing reflects the increasing tendency in business writing to eliminate error. Errors can include those associated with production, from writing to editing, and reader response. Your twin goals of clear and concise writing point to a central goal across communication: fidelity. This concept involves our goal of accurately communicating all the intended information with a minimum of signal or message breakdown or misinterpretation. Designing your documents, including writing and presentation, to reduce message breakdown is an important part of effective business communication.

This leads our discussion to efficiency. There are only twenty-four hours in a day and we are increasingly asked to do more with less, with shorter deadlines almost guaranteed. As a writer, how do you meet ever-increasing expectations? Each writing assignment requires a clear understanding of the goals and desired results, and when either of these two aspects is unclear, the efficiency of your writing can be compromised. Rewrites require time that you may not have, but will have to make if the assignment was not done correctly the first time.

As we have discussed previously, making a habit of reading similar documents prior to beginning your process of writing can help establish a mental template of your desired product. If you can see in your mind's eye what you want to write, and have the perspective of similar documents combined with audience's needs, you can write more efficiently. Your written documents are products and will be required on a schedule that impacts your coworkers and business. Your ability to produce effective documents efficiently is a skill set that will contribute to your success.

Our sixth point reinforces this idea with an emphasis on effectiveness. What is effective writing? It is writing that succeeds in accomplishing its purpose. Understanding the purpose, goals, and desired results of your writing assignment will help you achieve this success. Your employer may want an introductory sales letter to result in an increase in sales leads, or potential contacts for follow-up leading to sales. Your audience may not see the document from that perspective, but will instead read with the mindset of, "How does this help me solve X problem?" If you meet both goals, your writing is approaching effectiveness. Here, effectiveness is qualified with the word "approaching" to point out that writing is both a process and a product, and your writing will continually require effort and attention to revision and improvement.

Rhetorical Elements and Cognate Strategies

Another approach to defining good writing is to look at how it fulfills the goals of two well-known systems in communication. One of these systems comprises the three classical elements of rhetoric, or the art of presenting an argument. These elements are logos (logic), ethos (ethics and credibility), and pathos (emotional appeal), first proposed by the ancient Greek teacher Aristotle. Although rhetoric is often applied to oral communication, especially public speaking, it is also fundamental to good writing.

A second set of goals involves what are called cognate strategies, or ways of promoting understanding,[4]developed in recent decades by Charles Kostelnick and David Rogers. Like rhetorical elements, cognate strategies can be applied to public speaking, but they are also useful in developing good writing. Table 4.2 "Rhetorical Elements and Cognate Strategies" describes these goals, their purposes, and examples of how they may be carried out in business writing.

Table 4.2 Rhetorical Elements and Cognate Strategies

Aristotle's Rhetorical Elements	**Cognate Strategies**	**Focus**	**Example in Business Writing**
Logos	Clarity	Clear understanding	An announcement will be made to the company later in the week, but I wanted to tell you personally that as of the first of next month, I will be leaving my position to accept a three-year assignment in our Singapore office. As soon as further details about the management of your account are available, I will share them with you.
	Conciseness	Key points	In tomorrow's conference call Sean wants to introduce the new team members, outline the schedule and budget for the project, and clarify each person's responsibilities in meeting our goals.
	Arrangement	Order, hierarchy, placement	Our department has matrix structure. We have three product development groups, one for each category of product. We also have a manufacturing group, a finance group, and a sales group; different group members are assigned to each of the three product categories. Within the matrix, our structure is flat, meaning that we have no group leaders. Everyone reports to Beth, the department manager.
Ethos	Credibility	Character, trust	Having known and worked with Jesse for more than five years, I can highly recommend him to take my place as your advisor. In addition to having superb qualifications, Jesse is known for his dedication, honesty, and caring attitude. He will always go the extra mile for his clients.
	Expectation	Norms and anticipated outcomes	As is typical in our industry, we ship all merchandise FOB our warehouse. Prices are exclusive of any federal, state, or local taxes. Payment terms are net 30 days from date of invoice.
	Reference	Sources and frames of reference	According to an article in Business Week dated October 15, 2009, Doosan is one of the largest business conglomerates in South Korea.
Pathos	Tone	Expression	I really don't have words to express how grateful I am for all the support you've extended to me and my family in this hour of need. You guys are the best.
	Emphasis	Relevance	It was unconscionable for a member of our organization to shout an interruption while the president was speaking. What needs to happen now—and let me be clear about this—is an immediate apology.
	Engagement	Relationship	Faithful soldiers pledge never to leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield.

Key Takeaways

4. Kostelnick, C., & Roberts, D. (1998). Designing visual language: Strategies for professional communicators (p. 14). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Good writing is characterized by correctness, ease of reading, and attractiveness; it also meets reader expectations and is clear, concise, efficient, and effective. Rhetorical elements (logos, ethos, and pathos) and cognate strategies (clarity, conciseness, arrangement, credibility, expectation, reference, tone, emphasis, and engagement) are goals that are achieved in good business writing.

Exercises

1. Choose a piece of business writing that attracts your interest. What made you want to read it? Share your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Choose a piece of business writing and evaluate it according to the qualities of good writing presented in this section. Do you think the writing qualifies as "good"? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with your classmates.
3. Identify the ethos, pathos, and logos in a document. Share and compare with classmates.

1.6 "GET IT IN WRITING": New Survey Reveals Paradoxes About Workplace Writers

- https://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-good-writing-skills-workplace-10931.html
- https://www.nbcnews.com/business/careers/why-johnny-cant-write-why-employers-are-mad-f2D11577444

Additionally, a recent survey of more than 250 working professionals provides valuable insights into how they view their own writing. By suggesting pragmatic ways to improve the writing of emails, memos, and reports, the article also helps students strengthen their job skills as they prepare for their own careers.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Exactly what did the survey reveal? While you can see all questions and replies in the accompanying tables, the following responses provoked the most curiosity:

- Around 68 percent of workplace writers have confidence in their ability to write but only 42 percent of them get started easily—leaving a notable fifty-eight percent of workplace writers still struggling to get started easily–leaving a notable fifty-eight percent of workplace writers still struggling to get started.
- Almost 80 percent say they revise their writing, but only 37 percent believe they ultimately write what they need to in the fewest words possible.
- Approximately 34 percent feel they know what content to include and leave out, but only 36 percent indicate they ever seek feedback from others about their drafts.
- While 66 percent of workplace writers feel their writing works and 64 percent believe their readers are satisfied with their writing, only 52 percent of workplace writers are *themselves* satisfied with their writing.

- Workplace writers indicate that 90 percent of the writing done in the workplace consists of emails, 47 percent reports, and 33 percent PowerPoint presentations, but only 5 percent of writing consists of proposals.
- Almost 90 percent of workplace writers generate their business correspondence on the computer, but only 4 percent avail themselves of the technology accessible, literally, at their fingertips on the computer, iPad, and smart phone to dictate a draft that is converted into editable text immediately.

So what might all this mean? If you, like many of the students in our classes, want to know how to make yourself stand out as a writer, there's much here to inform your chances and to reverse the dismaying and well-documented decline of writing skills in the workplace.

How can you as a future workplace writer increase your confidence and satisfaction with your writing?

Work on better evaluating your own work by analyzing your potential audiences, understanding your core messages, and drafting without being hampered too early by the critic or censor in your heads. Workplace writers' high anxiety has been correlated with poor writing performance for years but not much attention has been paid to reducing that anxiety. Simply giving yourself permission to say it the wrong way in a first draft before you say it the right way in a final draft can ease the angst of writing.

How can a writer move quickly from a wordy, awkward draft to a concise, finished document?

Demystify your revision process. Workplace writers who write well have learned how to replace the writer's hat with the editor's so they can create messages for readers rather than for themselves. You can gain this understanding through such simple techniques as reading your drafts aloud, hearing an audio recording of a draft to spot weakness, asking a class mate to review your draft, and learning to use verbs, not nouns, to do the heavy lifting in your sentences. Use additional editors' tips for finding and removing the classic symptoms of clutter from sentences and for replacing the almost-right word with the just-right one.(You can find an amusing how-to chapter on removing clutter in *Business Writing: What Works, What Won't.)*

How can you distinguish between "nice-to-have" and "must-have" content?

The key here lies with solid audience analysis: anticipating what your workplace readers already know and need to know in order to make your hoped-for decision. How have the readers responded in the past? More experienced colleagues can lend a hand not only in explaining to youthe readers' needs but also in choosing the hot-button words and phrases that will get the desired attention to a message.

Why do only slightly more than half of the survey respondents feel their writing "works"? And how would you answer that question about the present state of your writing?

In the workplace, or in a college class, a business, technical, or student writer can ask these questions:Has a manager or professor's feedback been negative and discouraging? Does the writer have to follow up with additional messages because the first one didn't get the job done? If this survey response reflects a similar feeling that you have "always been weak at writing," take heart. This is a common attitude that can often be traced to low grades on writing in school, or to being reluctant or embarrassed to ask another person to review and advise. And it's entirely understandable because asking for help from another has often been viewed as cheating.

What role is played by the format of written documents?

The survey confirms that email has become the common communications medium for business professionals, and yet many users struggle to make their messages effective. While much faster and more convenient than documents transmitted on paper, email still requires a thoughtful understanding of your own message and of your reader's expectations. Keep your reader's expectations in mind when you enter the workforce.

Another frequently used medium is PowerPoint, a presentation tool that generates widespread criticism and yet has become indispensable to millions of business professionals. As with other media, a PowerPoint message is only as effective as the clarity and conciseness of its content and its focus on listeners' needs, but very few companies provide even brief guidance in how to avoid rendering one's audience comatose with boredom from too many slides that miss the mark. Learning to master this medium will also give you a competitive edge.

A surprising finding was the relatively low number of respondents who write proposals on the job. While the production of these documents is often led by a sales or marketing specialist, almost every student and employee can benefit from understanding the basics of how to structure, draft, and present a successful proposal. In fact, if new employees had such direction, they might feel freer to pursue proposals and new business initiatives. Here's another form of writing to master to stand above the crowd.

Why do so many workplace writers immediately go to the keyboard but rarely to the "record" button?

With 30 to 40 percent of workers' days spent writing, it is curious that they have not embraced the dictation of their messages more enthusiastically. The technology abounds: commercial dictation software on computers, iPads, and smart phones, along with free and inexpensive apps, is easily available. Even the iPhone's Virtual Assistant Siri is a willing transcriber — she'll take dictation and transcribe it for your editing in a flash.

So why the reluctance to adopt this technique? Do only doctors and lawyers dictate their reports today? Why not try dictated text as a way to "talk your writing," and imagine yourself more effectively addressing your absent audience, getting started more easily, and having a draft ready for massaging in less time than ever? After all, what is writing if not visible, literate speech? The best writing is not merely talk, but perfected talk. Our earliest language was oral—and there's something to be said for getting back to it.

On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell used cutting-edge technology, his "electrical speech machine," to say, "Mr. Watson, come here—I want you." And the world changed as a result of his invention. It did so again with the advent of the computer.

We believe that "talking writing" has infinite possibilities for students of business and technical writing as well as for those already in the workplace. While it is not a panacea for the writing woes that stem from muddled thinking, incomplete knowledge of readers, and weak grammar, such a method of generating business messages may indeed help you get better and faster at imagining your audiences, at writing with the natural rhythms of conversation, and at finding writing a less onerous task.

Many managers complain frequently about the writing that comes across their desks, but few studies have asked workplace writers themselves to rate the efficacy of their writing and to share their perceptions. This survey attempted to elicit those perceptions and to infer what these comments suggest about how to improve your writing and your attitude toward it.

Can Technology lead the way to Improvement?

While our survey does not claim to provide an exhaustive view of the challenges faced by today's workplace writers, it does offer useful suggestions that can make written communications faster, more concise, and more targeted to actual readers' needs. The proliferation of computers and smart phones, with the ability to text and tweet has resulted in more people writing than ever before—but it has not resulted in better writers. Perhaps it's time to revisit how people generate their messages. Dictating can be easily mastered and we encourage it as student and workplace writers strive to "get it in writing

Survey Demographics

The 25-question survey was completed by a random mix of professionals fitting this profile:

- males and females
- ages 22 to 60+
- employed by their company from several weeks to more than 30 years
- all college graduates (holders of bachelor, master, or doctorate degrees)
- in middle to senior levels of management
- all employed at global companies that range in annual revenues from 2 to 40 billion dollars, and fromsuch industries as consumer products, custom chemical products, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications
- from almost every business function, including accounting, engineering,communications, sales, marketing, finance, human resources, training, research and development labs, and information technology

Table 1. All Survey Responses

All Respondents (N = 257)	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	NR	Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	0	% O/A
I get started writing easily	2%	13%	42%	37%	6%		3.31
	5	34	109	94	15	0	42%
I have confidence in my ability	0%	7%	25%	57%	11%		3.72
	0	18	64	146	29	0	68%
I spend time planning what I write.	1%	7%	38%	46%	8%		3.54
	2	18	97	119	20	1	54%
I tell my readers why I am writing	2%	16%	29%	39%	13%		3.43
	6	42	75	101	32	1	52%
I adapt my writing style to my reader	2%	11%	29%	47%	11%		3.54
	5	28	74	121	27	2	58%
As I write, I think about what my reader may already know.	1%	8%	28%	50%	13%		3.66
	2	21	71	128	32	3	63%
I am sure of what to keep and what to leave out when I write.	2%	12%	52%	31%	3%		3.21
	4	32	134	79	8	0	34%
As I write, I determine a logical sequence for my information.	0%	3%	18%	54%	24%		4.00
	0	8	47	139	62	1	79%
I think my writing moves smoothly from one paragraph to another	1%	7%	38%	46%	8%		3.53
	2	18	97	119	20	1	54%
I write well.	1%	8%	38%	47%	5%		3.47
	3	21	97	120	13	3	52%
I think my writing sounds natural, rather than stiff or formal.	0%	5%	38%	49%	7%	3.58	
	1	14	96	126	19	1	57%
I can say what I mean in few words.	1%	15%	48%	30%	6%		3.27
	2	37	122	77	16	3	37%
I revise my writing.	0%	5%	18%	40%	38%		4.11

	0	12	45	103	97	0	78%
I think I make appropriate decisions about usage in my writing.	0%	4%	33%	55%	8%		3.68
	0	9	85	139	21	3	63%
I think I make appropriate decisions about punctuation in my writing.	2%	9%	27%	47%	16%		3.68
	4	22	69	120	42	0	63%
I use the standard spelling of words.	0%	1%	11%	48%	40%		4.26
	1	3	27	123	103	0	88%
I seek feedback/help from others about my writing.	5%	18%	41%	24%	12%		3.21
	12	47	105	61	32	0	36%
I feel satisfied with my writing.	2%	8%	33%	52%	5%		3.49
	6	20	86	133	12	0	56%
Readers seem satisfied with my writing.	0%	3%	32%	61%	3%		3.63
	1	8	82	155	8	3	64%
I think my writing works.	0%	2%	24%	67%	6%		3.76
	1	6	62	170	16	2	73%
I compose by hand.	27%	38%	21%	12%	2%		2.24
	69	95	53	29	6	5	14%
I compose by dictating.	66%	20%	10%	3%	1%		1.53
	167	52	25	8	2	3	4%
I compose by computer.	0%	1%	10%	52%	36%		4.23
	1	2	26	134	93	1	89%

Table 2. Majority of Workplace Writing by Percentage of Respondents

Workplace Writing Type	% of Respondents
Email	98%
Reports	47%
PowerPoint Presentations	33%
Proposals	5%

Note: Survey analysis conducted by Laura Hoffman, M.Ed., University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee.

1.7 Overcoming Barriers to Effective Written Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Describe some common barriers to written communication and how to overcome them.

In almost any career or area of business, written communication is a key to success. Effective writing can prevent wasted time, wasted effort, aggravation, and frustration. The way we communicate with others both inside of our business and on the outside goes a long way toward shaping the organization's image. If people feel they are listened to and able to get answers from the firm and its representatives, their opinion will be favorable. Skillful writing and an understanding of how people respond to words are central to accomplishing this goal.

How do we display skillful writing and a good understanding of how people respond to words? Following are some suggestions.

Do Sweat the Small Stuff

Let us begin with a college student's e-mail to a professor:

"i am confused as to why they are not due intil 11/10 i mean the calender said that they was due then so thats i did them do i still get credit for them or do i need to due them over on one tape? please let me know thanks. also when are you grading the stuff that we have done?"

What's wrong with this e-mail? What do you observe that may act as a barrier to communication? Let's start with the lack of formality, including the fact that the student neglected to tell the professor his or her name, or which specific class the question referred to. Then there is the lack of adherence to basic vocabulary and syntax rules. And how about the lower case "i's" and the misspellings?

One significant barrier to effective written communication is failure to sweat the small stuff. Spelling errors and incorrect grammar may be considered details, but they reflect poorly on you and, in a business context, on your company. They imply either that you are not educated enough to know you've made mistakes or that you are too careless to bother correcting them. Making errors is human, but making a habit of producing error-filled written documents makes negative consequences far more likely to occur. When you write, you have a responsibility to self-edit and pay attention to detail. In the long run, correcting your mistakes before others see them will take less time and effort than trying to make up for mistakes after the fact.

Get the Target Meaning

How would you interpret this message?

"You must not let inventory build up. You must monitor carrying costs and keep them under control. Ship any job lots of more than 25 to us at once."

Bypassing involves the misunderstanding that occurs when the receiver completely misses the source's intended meaning. Words mean different things to different people in different contexts. All that difference allows for both source and receiver to completely miss one another's intended goal.

Did you understand the message in the example? Let's find out. Jerry Sullivan, in his article Bypassing in Managerial

Communication, [1] relates the story of Mr. Sato, a manager from Japan who is new to the United States. The message came from his superiors at Kumitomo America, a firm involved with printing machinery for the publishing business in Japan. Mr. Sato delegated the instructions (in English as shown above) to Ms. Brady, who quickly identified there were three lots in excess of twenty-five and arranged for prompt shipment.

Six weeks later Mr. Sato received a second message:

"Why didn't you do what we told you? Your quarterly inventory report indicates you are carrying 40 lots which you were supposed to ship to Japan. You must not violate our instructions."

What's the problem? As Sullivan relates, it is an example of one word, or set of words, having more than one meaning. [2] According to Sullivan, in Japanese "more than x" includes the reference number twenty-five. In other words, Kumitomo wanted all lots with twenty-five or more to be shipped to Japan. Forty lots fit that description. Ms. Brady interpreted the words as written, but the cultural context had a direct impact on the meaning and outcome.

You might want to defend Ms. Brady and understand the interpretation, but the lesson remains clear. Moreover, cultural expectations differ not only internationally, but also on many different dimensions from regional to interpersonal.

Someone raised in a rural environment in the Pacific Northwest may have a very different interpretation of meaning from someone from New York City. Take, for example, the word "downtown." To the rural resident, downtown refers to the center or urban area of any big city. To a New Yorker, however, downtown may be a direction, not a place. One can go uptown or downtown, but when asked, "Where are you from?" the answer may refer to a borough ("I grew up in Manhattan") or a neighborhood ("I'm from the East Village").

This example involves two individuals who differ by geography, but we can further subdivide between people raised in the same state from two regions, two people of the opposite sex, or two people from different generations. The combinations are endless, as are the possibilities for bypassing. While you might think you understand, requesting feedback and asking for confirmation and clarification can help ensure that you get the target meaning.

Sullivan also notes that in stressful situations we often think in terms of either/or relationships, failing to recognize the stress itself. This kind of thinking can contribute to source/receiver error. In business, he notes that managers often incorrectly assume communication is easier than it is, and fail to anticipate miscommunication. [3]

As writers, we need to keep in mind that words are simply a means of communication, and that meanings are in people, not the words themselves. Knowing which words your audience understands and anticipating how they will interpret them will help you prevent bypassing.

Consider the Nonverbal Aspects of Your Message

Let's return to the example at the beginning of this section of an e-mail from a student to an instructor. As we noted, the student neglected to identify himself or herself and tell the instructor which class the question referred to. Format is important, including headers, contact information, and an informative subject line.

This is just one example of how the nonverbal aspects of a message can get in the way of understanding. Other nonverbal expressions in your writing may include symbols, design, font, and the timing of delivering your message.

Suppose your supervisor has asked you to write to a group of clients announcing a new service or product that directly relates to a service or product that these clients have used over the years. What kind of communication will your document be? Will it be sent as an e-mail or will it be a formal letter printed on quality paper and sent by postal mail? Or will it be a tweet, or a targeted online ad that pops up when these particular clients access your company's Web site? Each of these choices involves an aspect of written communication that is nonverbal. While the words may communicate a formal tone, the font may not. The paper chosen to represent your company influences the perception of it. An e-mail may indicate that it is less than formal and be easily deleted.

As another example, suppose you are a small business owner and have hired a new worker named Bryan. You need to provide written documentation of asking Bryan to fill out a set of forms that are required by law. Should you send an e-mail to Bryan's home the night before he starts work, welcoming him aboard and attaching links to IRS form W-4 and Homeland Security form I-9? Or should you wait until he has been at work for a couple of hours, then bring him the forms in hard copy along with a printed memo stating that he needs to fill them out? There are no right or wrong answers, but you will use your judgment, being aware that these nonverbal expressions are part of the message that gets communicated along with your words.

Review, Reflect, and Revise

Do you review what you write? Do you reflect on whether it serves its purpose? Where does it miss the mark? If you can recognize it, then you have the opportunity to revise.

Writers are often under deadlines, and that can mean a rush job where not every last detail is reviewed. This means more mistakes, and there is always time to do it right the second time. Rather than go through the experience of seeing all the mistakes in your "final" product and rushing off to the next job, you may need to focus more on the task at hand and get it done correctly the first time. Go over each step in detail as you review.

A mental review of the task and your performance is often called reflection. Reflection is not procrastination. It involves looking at the available information and, as you review the key points in your mind, making sure each detail is present and perfect. Reflection also allows for another opportunity to consider the key elements and their relationship to each other.

When you revise your document, you change one word for another, make subtle changes, and improve it. Don't revise simply to change the good work you've completed, but instead look at it from the perspective of the reader—for example, how could this be clearer to them? What would make it visually attractive while continuing to communicate the message? If you are limited to words only, then does each word serve the article or letter? No extras, but just about right.

Key Takeaways

To overcome barriers to communication, pay attention to details; strive to understand the target meaning; consider your nonverbal expressions; and review, reflect, and revise.

Exercises

1. Review the example of a student's e-mail to a professor in this section, and rewrite it to communicate the message more clearly.
2. Write a paragraph of 150–200 words on a subject of your choice. Experiment with different formats and fonts to display it and, if you wish, print it. Compare your results with those of your classmates.
3. How does the purpose of a document define its format and content? Think of a specific kind of document with a specific purpose and audience. Then create a format or template suitable to that document, purpose, and

audience. Show your template to the class or post it on a class bulletin board.

4. Write one message of at least three sentences with at least three descriptive terms and present it to at least three people. Record notes about how they understand the message, and to what degree their interpretations are the same of different. Share and compare with classmates.

1.8 HOW IS WRITING LEARNED?

Learning Objectives

Explain how reading, writing, and critical thinking contribute to becoming a good writer.

You may think that some people are simply born better writers than others, but in fact writing is a reflection of experience and effort. If you think about your successes as a writer, you may come up with a couple of favorite books, authors, or teachers that inspired you to express yourself. You may also recall a sense of frustration with your previous writing experiences. It is normal and natural to experience a sense of frustration at the *perceived* inability to express oneself. The emphasis here is on your perception of yourself as a writer as one aspect of how you communicate. Most people use oral communication for much of their self-expression, from daily interactions to formal business meetings. You have a lifetime of experience in that arena that you can leverage to your benefit in your writing. Reading out loud what you have written is a positive technique we'll address later in more depth.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement, "Violence is the language of the unheard" emphasizes the importance of finding one's voice, of being able to express one's ideas. Violence comes in many forms, but is often associated with frustration born of the lack of opportunity to communicate. You may read King's words and think of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, or perhaps of the violence of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, or of wars happening in the world today. Public demonstrations and fighting are expressions of voice, from individual to collective. Finding your voice, and learning to listen to others, is part of learning to communicate.

You are your own best ally when it comes to your writing. Keeping a positive frame of mind about your journey as a writer is not a cliché or simple, hollow advice. Your attitude toward writing can and does influence your written products. Even if writing has been a challenge for you, the fact that you are reading this sentence means you perceive the importance of this essential skill. This text and our discussions will help you improve your writing, and your positive attitude is part of your success strategy.

There is no underestimating the power of effort when combined with inspiration and motivation. The catch then is to get inspired and motivated. That's not all it takes, but it is a great place to start. You were not born with a key pad in front of you, but when you want to share something with friends and text them, the words (or abbreviations) come almost naturally. So you recognize you have the skills necessary to begin the process of improving and harnessing your writing abilities for business success. It will take time and effort, and the proverbial journey starts with a single step, but don't lose sight of the fact that your skillful ability to craft words will make a significant difference in your career.

READING

Reading is one step many writers point to as an integral step in learning to write effectively. You may like Harry Potter books or be a Twilight fan, but if you want to write effectively in business, you need to read business-related documents. These can include letters, reports, business proposals, and business plans. You may find these where you work or in your school's writing center, business department, or library; there are also many Web sites that provide sample business documents of all kinds. Your reading should also include publications in the industry where you work or plan to work, such as *Aviation Week*, *InfoWorld*, *Journal of Hospitality*, *International Real Estate Digest*, or *Women's Wear Daily*, to name just a few. You can also gain an advantage by reading publications in fields other than your chosen one; often reading outside your niche can enhance your versatility and help you learn how other people express similar concepts. Finally, don't neglect general media like the business section of your local newspaper, and national publications like the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, and the *Harvard Business Review*. Reading is one of the most useful lifelong habits you can practice to boost your business communication skills.

In the "real world" when you are under a deadline and production is paramount, you'll be rushed and may lack the time to do adequate background reading for a particular assignment. For now, take advantage of your business communication course by exploring common business documents you may be called on to write, contribute to, or play a role in drafting. Some documents have a degree of formula to them, and your familiarity with them will reduce your preparation and production time while increasing your effectiveness. As you read similar documents, take notes on what you observe. As you read several sales letters, you may observe several patterns that can serve you well later on when it's your turn. These patterns are often called conventions, or conventional language patterns for a specific genre.

WRITING

Never lose sight of one key measure of the effectiveness of your writing: the degree to which it fulfills readers' expectations. If you are in a law office, you know the purpose of a court brief is to convince the judge that certain points of law apply to the given case. If you are at a newspaper, you know that an editorial opinion article is supposed to convince readers of the merits of a certain viewpoint, whereas a news article is supposed to report facts without bias. If you are writing ad copy, the goal is to motivate consumers to make a purchase decision. In each case, you are writing to a specific purpose, and a great place to start when considering what to write is to answer the following question: what are the readers' expectations?

When you are a junior member of the team, you may be given clerical tasks like filling in forms, populating a database, or coordinating appointments. Or you may be assigned to do research that involves reading, interviewing, and note taking. Don't underestimate these facets of the writing process; instead, embrace the fact that writing for business often involves tasks that a novelist might not even recognize as "writing." Your contribution is quite important and in itself is an on-the-job learning opportunity that shouldn't be taken for granted.

When given a writing assignment, it is important to make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. You may read the directions and try to put them in your own words to make sense of the assignment. Be careful, however, not to lose sight of what the directions say versus what you think they say. Just as an audience's expectations should be part of your consideration of how, what, and why to write, the instructions given by your instructor, or in a work situation by your supervisor, establish expectations. Just as you might ask a mentor more about a business writing assignment at work, you need to use the resources available to you to maximize your learning opportunity. Ask the professor to clarify any points you find confusing, or perceive more than one way to interpret, in order to better meet the expectations.

Before you write an opening paragraph, or even the first sentence, it is important to consider the overall goal of the assignment. The word *assignment* can apply equally to a written product for class or for your employer. You might make a list of the main points and see how those points may become the topic sentences in a series of paragraphs. You may also give considerable thought to whether your word choice, your tone, your language, and what you want to say is in line with your understanding of your audience. We briefly introduced the writing process previously, and will visit it in depth later in our discussion, but for now writing should about exploring your options. Authors rarely have a finished product in mind when they start, but once you know what your goal is and how to reach it, you writing process will become easier and more effective.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND TARGETED PRACTICE

Mentors can also be important in your growth as a writer. Your instructor can serve as a mentor, offering constructive criticism, insights on what he or she has written, and life lessons about writing for a purpose. Never underestimate the mentors that surround you in the workplace, even if you are currently working in a position unrelated to your desired career. They can read your rough draft and spot errors, as well as provide useful insights. Friends and family can also be helpful mentors—if your document's meaning is clear to someone not working in your business, it will likely also be clear to your audience.

The key is to be open to criticism, keeping in mind that no one ever improved by repeating bad habits over and over. Only when you know what your errors are—errors of grammar or sentence structure, logic, format, and so on—can you correct your document and do a better job next time. Writing can be a solitary activity, but more often in business settings it is a collective, group, or team effort. Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to seek outside assistance before you finalize your document.

Learning to be a successful business writer comes with practice. Targeted practice, which involves identifying your weak areas and specifically working to improve them, is especially valuable. In addition to reading, make it a habit to write, even if it is not a specific assignment. The more you practice writing the kinds of materials that are used in your line of work, the more writing will come naturally and become an easier task—even on occasions when you need to work under pressure.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking means becoming aware of your thinking process. It's a human trait that allows us to step outside what we read or write and ask ourselves, "Does this really make sense?" "Are there other, perhaps better, ways to explain this idea?" Sometimes our thinking is very abstract and becomes clear only through the process of getting thoughts down in words. As a character in E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* said, "How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?" (1976, p. 99). Did you really write what you meant to, and will it be easily understood by the reader? Successful writing forms a relationship with the audience, reaching the reader on a deep level that can be dynamic and motivating. In contrast, when writing fails to meet the audience's expectations, you already know the consequences: they'll move on.

Learning to write effectively involves reading, writing, critical thinking, and hard work. You may have seen *The Wizard of Oz* and recall the scene when Dorothy discovers what is behind the curtain. Up until that moment, she believed the Wizard's powers were needed to change her situation, but now she discovers that the power is her own. Like Dorothy, you can discover that the power to write successfully rests in your hands. Excellent business writing can be inspiring, and it is important to not lose that sense of inspiration as we deconstruct the process of writing to its elemental components.

You may be amazed by the performance of Tony Hawk on a skateboard ramp, Mia Hamm on the soccer field, or Michael Phelps in the water. Those who demonstrate excellence often make it look easy, but nothing could be further from the truth. Effort, targeted practice, and persistence will win the day every time. When it comes to writing, you need to learn to recognize clear and concise writing while looking behind the curtain at how it is created. This is not to say we are going to lose the magic associated with the best writers in the field. Instead, we'll appreciate what we are reading as we examine how it was written and how the writer achieved success.

UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

2.1 Audience Analysis: Primary, Secondary, and Hidden Audiences

Learning Objectives

- Develop professional/technical documents with a clear awareness of ethics.
- Recognize and discuss important elements of how culture affects communication in collaborative workplaces.
- Illustrate and analyze audience while creating various professional/technical documents with a sophisticated awareness of audience as a reader and a writer.
- Demonstrate audience and rhetorical awareness in visual design while creating professional/technical documents to visually appeal to appropriate audiences.

A crucial part of achieving a purpose when writing technical documents is to consider the needs and level of knowledge or expertise of your audience. Inaccurately making assumptions regarding audience creates failure in Technical Writing, not only in design, but for ethically and culturally aware content. For simple, routine messages, it is not necessary to analyze your audience in depth. However, for complex or highly technical messages, taking the time to analyze the needs and knowledge base of your audience will increase the likelihood of a successful transmission.

Analyzing Your Audience's Needs

Here are some key questions to ask when determining the readers' needs during your preparation:

1. **Who** specifically is your reader? Are there multiple readers?
2. **What** do your readers already know about the subject?
3. Do you need to modify your message for international readers? Are there cultural issues that you need to address or avoid?

As a writer, your most important responsibility is determining who makes up your audience. You should continue to analyze your audience throughout the composing process. You can build a legitimately accurate representation of your audience by asking yourself key questions before and while you write.

Once you identify your audience, decide how to get the best results from your communication by determining your audience's knowledge, ability, and interests. See course specific suggestions and Figure 1 to see how a specific audience compares to a more generalized one.

Tech Writing for the Health Sciences

While it might be acceptable for a physician to refer his patient to a specialist for their exanthema, that patient is more likely to understand the term "skin rash". As a writer in the medical field, the importance of writing appropriately for your audience could be lifesaving and it will be far less stressful on patience to not keep a medical dictionary on-hand just to decipher what ails them.

Communications for Engineers

As an engineer, you will likely need to communicate with several different audiences and possibly all in one document. For example, should you draft a technical report on your latest project, the company president will be more interested in the executive summary and the financial reporting whereas fellow experts will be more interested in the technical details of the project and you can easily communicate with them using charts, mathematical expressions, and technical terms. Both audiences will read the entire document, but focusing those areas to each group will allow you to communicate your purpose more efficiently and effectively.

Professional Writing

At some point, you have probably received instructions on how to complete a task or put something together and have been left wondering what exactly you are supposed to do. You know it's in English, but it just doesn't make sense. Professional Writers can adapt instructions written by technical experts to be comprehended by a general audience. Many products purchased today require some sort of assembly. You can easily identify which companies have invested money in hiring skilled professional writers by how effortless the instructions are to follow.

Are your readers knowledgeable or have the same background and familiarity with the subject as you, or are they layperson, unfamiliar with technology or process you are writing about? The less your audience knows about the subject, the less technical your document should be and all terms should be clearly defined. If your audience is a group of people with diverse knowledge, or you don't know your immediate audience, you may need to make an educated guess on needs and interests. In this case, you should err on the side of caution by clearly defining all process and terms that could be confusing.

Primary, Secondary, and Hidden Audience

Primary audiences are those who receive the communication directly and are also known as the target audience. The person is also usually the decision maker. Secondary audiences are those readers who are not the primary addressee, but are still included as viewer. Figure 2 shows an example of both a primary and secondary audience. This typical business memo is being directly sent to Stan Jobs, who is the main, or primary, audience. Linda Smith, the sender, has also decided to send George Jones a copy of this message, as shown on the CC line of the memo.

A hidden audience are all those who fall outside of the primary and secondary assignment. This could be someone who shares a common interest with either the primary or secondary or is just an indirect recipient of your document. Looking at that same memo, let's say that it is standard practice at the Green Bean Company to post all new policies in a common area. All employees and those who see the posted memo would be considered a hidden audience. They aren't specifically mentioned in the memo heading, but knowing that the document will be posted, Linda would be sure to use language that would be understood by that hidden audience as well.

Using Bias-Free Language

Technology has not only made our lives easier but it has bridged our World closer together making it accessible to conduct business on global level. When adapting a message to your audience, be sure to use language that is both unbiased and sensitive. Use caution with expressions could be biased in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability. Avoid use of idioms and phrases as they are often confusing or offensive in other cultures.

Examples – To learn more about Audience Analysis, check out these online resources.

Language Portal of Canada: Non-Sexist Guidelines
https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/bien-well/fra-eng/style/nonsexistguidelines-eng.html

Audience Analysis – Just Who Are These Guys?

Online textbook
https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/aud.html

Helpful planner for determining your audience
https://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/itcm/planners/aud_plan.html

Brief Presentation on Audience Analysis
https://markbiz.files.wordpress.com/2008/02/6-audience-analysis.pdf

Bias-Free Language Guide
https://www.unh.edu/inclusive/bias-free-language-guide

2.2 Practising Intercultural Communication

Hello!

Knowing basic greetings in a foreign language are a great way to be polite when communicating interculturally, however, to fully communicate across cultures you need to be aware of the differences between each culture represented. Culture is much more than simply art or music; it is a deeply held set of beliefs, values, and expectations within a group that differentiates it from other groups (Hofstede, 1991). Culture impacts many of the tasks we undertake every day, and many actions that we do out of habit in the United States are conducted differently elsewhere. For example, in an American business meeting it is considered efficient and polite to get right to business. Taking ten minutes to see how everyone is doing may be seen as a waste of time. Meanwhile, in Pakistan it is considered impolite to begin this way, and meetings are opened with brief conversations asking about people's family, friends, etc.

Intercultural Communication (IC) is concerned with the ways individuals, organizations, and groups interact across cultural differences. We work in a world where corporate and non-profit organizations are moving toward transnational status at an ever-increasing pace. IC is a sub-field of technical communication and focuses on how we can communicate between culturally varied groups while still adhering to each one's social nuances and expectations. As technical communicators, our responsibility includes acknowledging easy-to-see cultural differences (e.g., do I bow or shake hands?) as well as those that are more subtle (e.g., how do I work on an intercultural team in a way that doesn't offend someone's values?).

Since so many of the decisions made in IC emphasize cultural values writers dealing with IC often encounter matters of ethics. Two very important pitfalls that writers need to overcome are ethnocentrism and xenophobia. Ethnocentrism occurs when we consider our own culture to be of the highest importance and, in turn, judge all other groups in relation to our own standards (Dong, Day, and Collaco, 2008). Comparing all other cultural norms to our own devalues the other culture instead of appreciating it. Xenophobia takes this a step further, as a person is actually fearful of a new or unknown culture. Such reactions to cultures can lead to stereotyping and alienation. When working on a cross-cultural team or with an international client, it's important that all involved acknowledge each other's cultural differences and work respectfully within those parameters. Being ethnocentric or xenophobic in our communication makes us unable to build strong relationships or work cohesively within a cross-cultural group.

What does unethical IC look like?

Unethical or ineffective IC can ruin a professional relationship. In 2013, a group of native English speakers in Japan were hired as communication consultants for a Tokyo-based human resources company. The company wanted its English-speaking presentation materials to be clear and the Japanese presenters to improve their English speaking skills. The company clarified with the consulting team that it was not concerned with the Japanese presenters' ability to function in an American, Australian, or British boardroom—just to be easily understood.

One of the American consultants took an ethnocentric approach to these consultations and repeatedly corrected the presenters on matters of culture (e.g., telling presenters to add humor to a presentation) and not following the agreed-upon strategy. Furthermore, the consultant routinely skipped over the company's established hierarchy and emailed supervisors with questions and concerns instead of addressing these issues with the team's appointed liaison. As a result of this ethnocentrism, the company did not receive the results it wanted from the consulting sessions, and the supervisors and liaison were insulted. Consequently, the consultant was fired.

In this situation, the consultant was convinced that the presenters needed to work within an American cultural frame, and therefore ignored the needs of the Japanese company. In order to meet the goals of the consultations, the consultant needed to first be aware of the Japanese presentation style and how this differed from American style. Additionally, since professional hierarchy is very important in Japanese business, the consultant was expected to operate within that framework.

Should I be concerned with the role of my own culture?

The short answer is yes. While it is important for a technical communicator to acknowledge and respect the variances of culture in the workplace, his or her own culture should be respected as well.

For example, in the United States and many other Western countries, it is important to recognize authorship when conducting research. We do this through a variety of citation styles and consider intellectual property important enough to be written into law. Copyright law and the elements associated with it (plagiarism, piracy, etc.), however, do not translate into all cultures.

In giftcultures, common in Asian and African societies, the role of copyright differs from that of the West. Some Asian cultures have traditionally viewed plagiarism in a much different light, and in China, for example, it's not uncommon for published work to be considered free to use at will (Wan, 2008). While not adhering to Western cultural norms like citation can cause an ethical problem, it can also lead the Western-based technical communicator into legal issues.

How do we practice ethical IC?

While it can be difficult to prepare for all IC circumstances, discussing specific strategies can help prepare you as an Intercultural Technical Communicator. Consider the following scenarios and come up with ethical ways to manage these situations:

- You're working on an international team to develop a feasibility report on water distribution. The report is due in one week, but half of the team will be celebrating a religious holiday for three of those days. How do you ensure the report meets the deadline?
- You receive an email from a client regarding a project you've been assigned. The email is very abrupt and difficult to understand due to errors in English. You're not sure what the client is asking. How do you respond?
- Halfway through a project, you realize that the task would require you to infringe upon the intellectual property laws of your country, but not of the client's country. How do you proceed?.

2.3 Self-Understanding Is Fundamental to Communication

Learning Objectives

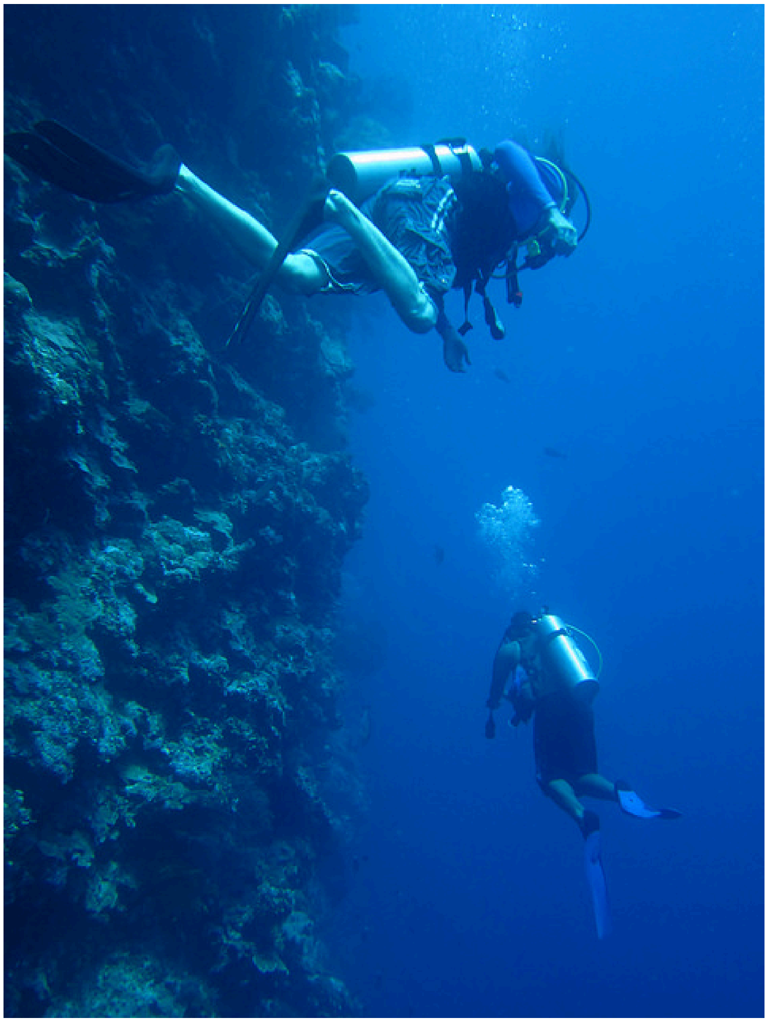
Describe the factors that contribute to self-concept.

Describe how the self-fulfilling prophecy works.

In the first of the Note 3.1 "Introductory Exercises" for this chapter, you listed terms to describe yourself. This exercise focuses on your knowledge, skills, experience, interests, and relationships. Your sense of self comes through in your oral and written presentations. Public communication starts with intrapersonal communication, or communication with yourself. You need to know what you want to say before you can say it to an audience.

Understanding your perspective can lend insight to your awareness, the ability to be conscious of events and stimuli. Awareness determines what you pay attention to, how you carry out your intentions, and what you remember of your activities and experiences each day. Awareness is a complicated and fascinating area of study. The way we take in information, give it order, and assign it meaning has long interested researchers from disciplines including sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

Your perspective is a major factor in this dynamic process. Whether you are aware of it or not, you bring to the act of reading this sentence a frame of mind formed from experiences and education across your lifetime. Imagine that you see a presentation about snorkeling in beautiful Hawaii as part of a travel campaign. If you have never been snorkeling but love to swim, how will your perspective lead you to pay attention to the presentation? If, however, you had a traumatic experience as a child in a pool and are now afraid of being under water, how will your perspective influence your reaction?



sandwich – bryan and jason, diving a wall – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Peaceful or dangerous? Your perception influences your response.

Learning to recognize how your perspective influences your thoughts is a key step in understanding yourself and preparing to communicate with others.

The communication process itself is the foundation for oral and written communication. Whether we express ourselves in terms of a live, face-to-face conversation or across a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) chat via audio and visual channels, emoticons (:)), and abbreviations (IMHO [In My Humble Opinion]), the communication process remains the same. Imagine that you are at work and your Skype program makes the familiar noise indicating that someone wants to talk. Your caller ID tells you that it is a friend. You also know that you have the report right in front of you to get done before 5:00 p.m. Your friend is quite a talker, and for him everything tends to have a "gotta talk about it right now" sense of urgency. You know a little bit about your potential audience or conversational partner. Do you take the call? Perhaps you chat back "Busy, after 5," only to have him call again. You interpret the ring as his insistent need for attention, but you have priorities. You can choose to close the Skype program, stop the ringing, and get on with your report, but do you? Communication occurs on many levels in several ways.

Self-Concept

When we communicate, we are full of expectations, doubts, fears, and hopes. Where we place emphasis, what we focus on, and how we view our potential has a direct impact on our communication interactions. You gather a sense of self as you grow, age, and experience others and the world. At various times in your life, you have probably been praised for some of your abilities and talents, and criticized for doing some things poorly. These compliments and criticisms probably had a deep impact on you. Much of what we know about ourselves we've learned through interaction with others. Not everyone has had positive influences in their lives, and not every critic knows what they are talking about, but criticism and praise still influence how and what we expect from ourselves.

Carol Dweck, a psychology researcher at Stanford University, states that "something that seems like a small intervention can have cascading effects on things we think of as stable or fixed, including extroversion, openness to new experience, and resilience." (Begley, 2008) Your personality and expressions of it, like oral and written communication, were long thought to have a genetic component. But, says Dweck, "More and more research is suggesting that, far from being simply encoded in the genes, much of personality is a flexible and dynamic thing that changes over the life span and is shaped by experience." (Begley, 2008) If you were told by someone that you were not a good speaker, know this: You can change. You can shape your performance through experience, and a business communication course, a mentor at work, or even reading effective business communication authors can result in positive change.

Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

When you consider what makes you *you*, the answers multiply as do the questions. As a baby, you learned to recognize that the face in the mirror was your face. But as an adult, you begin to wonder what and who you are. While we could discuss the concept of self endlessly and philosophers have wrestled and will continue to wrestle with it, for our purposes, let's focus on self, which is defined as one's own sense of individuality, motivations, and personal characteristics (McLean, 2003). We also must keep in mind that this concept is not fixed or absolute; instead it changes as we grow and change across our lifetimes.

One point of discussion useful for our study about ourselves as communicators is to examine our attitudes, beliefs, and values. These are all interrelated, and researchers have varying theories as to which comes first and which springs from another. We learn our values, beliefs, and attitudes through interaction with others. Table 3.1 "Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values" defines these terms and provides an example of each.

Table 3.1 Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

	Definition	**Changeable?**	**Example**
Attitudes	Learned predispositions to a concept or object	Subject to change	I enjoyed the writing exercise in class today.
Beliefs	Convictions or expressions of confidence	Can change over time	This course is important because I may use the communication skills I am learning in my career.
Values	Ideals that guide our behavior	Generally long lasting	Effective communication is important.

An attitude is your immediate disposition toward a concept or an object. Attitudes can change easily and frequently. You may prefer vanilla while someone else prefers peppermint, but if someone tries to persuade you of how delicious peppermint is, you may be willing to try it and find that you like it better than vanilla.

Beliefs are ideas based on our previous experiences and convictions and may not necessarily be based on logic or fact. You no doubt have beliefs on political, economic, and religious issues. These beliefs may not have been formed through rigorous study, but you nevertheless hold them as important aspects of self. Beliefs often serve as a frame of reference through which we interpret our world. Although they can be changed, it often takes time or strong evidence to persuade someone to change a belief.

Values are core concepts and ideas of what we consider good or bad, right or wrong, or what is worth the sacrifice. Our values are central to our self-image, what makes us who we are. Like beliefs, our values may not be based on empirical research or rational thinking, but they are even more resistant to change than are beliefs. To undergo a change in values, a person may need to undergo a transformative life experience.

For example, suppose you highly value the freedom to make personal decisions, including the freedom to choose whether or not to wear a helmet while driving a motorcycle. This value of individual choice is central to your way of thinking and you are unlikely to change this value. However, if your brother was driving a motorcycle without a helmet and suffered an accident that fractured his skull and left him with permanent brain damage, you might reconsider this value. While you might still value freedom of choice in many areas of life, you might become an advocate for helmet laws—and perhaps also for other forms of highway safety, such as stiffer penalties for cell-phone talking and texting while driving.

Self-Image and Self-Esteem

Your self-concept is composed of two main elements: self-image and self-esteem.

Your self-image is how you see yourself, how you would describe yourself to others. It includes your physical characteristics—your eye color, hair length, height, and so forth. It also includes your knowledge, experience, interests, and relationships. If these sound familiar, go back and look at the first of the Note 3.1 "Introductory Exercises" for this chapter. In creating the personal inventory in this exercise, you identified many characteristics that contribute to your self-image. In addition, image involves not just how you look but also your expectations of yourself—what you can be.

What is your image of yourself as a communicator? How do you feel about your ability to communicate? While the two responses may be similar, they indicate different things. Your self-esteem is how you feel about yourself; your feelings of self-worth, self-acceptance, and self-respect. Healthy self-esteem can be particularly important when you experience a setback or a failure. Instead of blaming yourself or thinking, "I'm just no good," high self-esteem will enable you to persevere and give yourself positive messages like "If I prepare well and try harder, I can do better next time."

Putting your self-image and self-esteem together yields your self-concept: your central identity and set of beliefs about who you are and what you are capable of accomplishing. When it comes to communicating, your self-concept can play an important part. You may find that communicating is a struggle, or the thought of communicating may make you feel talented and successful. Either way, if you view yourself as someone capable of learning new skills and improving as you go, you will have an easier time learning to be an effective communicator. Whether positive or negative, your self-concept influences your performance and the expression of that essential ability: communication.

Looking-Glass Self

In addition to how we view ourselves and feel about ourselves, of course, we often take into consideration the opinions and behavior of others. Charles Cooley's looking-glass selfreinforces how we look to others and how they view us, treat us, and interact with us to gain insight of our identity. We place an extra emphasis on parents, supervisors, and on those who have some degree of control over us when we look at others. Developing a sense of self as a communicator involves balance between constructive feedback from others and constructive self-affirmation. You judge yourself, as others do, and both views count.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Now, suppose that you are treated in an especially encouraging manner in one of your classes. Imagine that you have an instructor who continually "catches you doing something right" and praises you for your efforts and achievements. Would you be likely to do well in this class and perhaps go on to take more advanced courses in this subject?

In a psychology experiment that has become famous through repeated trials, several public school teachers were told that specific students in their classes were expected to do quite well because of their intelligence (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). These students were identified as having special potential that had not yet "bloomed." What the teachers didn't know was that these "special potential" students were randomly selected. That's right: as a group, they had no more special potential than any other students.

Can you anticipate the outcome? As you may guess, the students lived up to their teachers' level of expectation. Even though the teachers were supposed to give appropriate attention and encouragement to all students, in fact they unconsciously communicated special encouragement verbally and nonverbally to the special potential students. And these students, who were actually no more gifted than their peers, showed significant improvement by the end of the school year. This phenomenon came to be called the "Pygmalion effect" after the myth of a Greek sculptor named Pygmalion, who carved a marble statue of a woman so lifelike that he fell in love with her—and in response to his love she did in fact come to life and marry him (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Insel & Jacobson, 1975).

In more recent studies, researchers have observed that the opposite effect can also happen: when students are seen as lacking potential, teachers tend to discourage them or, at a minimum, fail to give them adequate encouragement. As a result, the students do poorly (Schugurensky, 2009; Anyon, 1980; Oakes, 1985; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

When people encourage you, it affects the way you see yourself and your potential. Seek encouragement for your writing and speaking. Actively choose positive reinforcement as you develop your communication skills. You will make mistakes, but the important thing is to learn from them. Keep in mind that criticism should be constructive, with specific points you can address, correct, and improve.

The concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which someone's behavior comes to match and mirror others' expectations, is not new. Robert Rosenthal, a professor of social psychology at Harvard, has observed four principles while studying this interaction between expectations and performance:

1. We form certain expectations of people or events.
2. We communicate those expectations with various cues, verbal and nonverbal.
3. People tend to respond to these cues by adjusting their behavior to match the expectations.
4. The outcome is that the original expectation becomes true.

Key Takeaways

You can become a more effective communicator by understanding yourself and how others view you: your attitudes, beliefs, and values; your self-concept; and how the self-fulfilling prophecy may influence your decisions.

Exercises

1. How would you describe yourself as a public speaker? Now, five, and ten years ago? Is your description the same or does it change across time? This business communication text and course can make a difference in what you might write for the category "one year from today."
2. How does your self-concept influence your writing? Write a one- to two-page essay on this topic and discuss it with a classmate.

3. Make a list of at least three of your strongly held beliefs. What are those beliefs based on? List some facts, respected authorities, or other evidence that support them. Share your results with your class.
4. What are some of the values held by people you know? Identify a target sample size (twenty is a good number) and ask members of your family, friends, and peers about their values. Compare your results with those of your classmates.
5. Make a list of traits you share with your family members. Interview them and see if anyone else in your family has shared them. Share and compare with your classmates.
6. What does the field of psychology offer concerning the self-fulfilling prophecy? Investigate the topic and share your findings.

2.4 Listening and Reading for Understanding

Learning Objectives

Explain the importance of becoming an active listener and reader.

As the popular author and Hollywood entrepreneur Wilson Mizner said, “A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.” Learning to listen to your conversational partner, customer, supplier, or supervisor is an important part of business communication. Too often, instead of listening we mentally rehearse what we want to say. Similarly, when we read, we are often trying to multitask and therefore cannot read with full attention. Inattentive listening or reading can cause us to miss much of what the speaker is sharing with us.

Communication involves the sharing and understanding of meaning. To fully share and understand, practice active listening and reading so that you are fully attentive, fully present in the moment of interaction. Pay attention to both the actual words and for other clues to meaning, such as tone of voice or writing style. Look for opportunities for clarification and feedback when the time comes for you to respond, not before.

Active Listening and Reading

You’ve probably experienced the odd sensation of driving somewhere and, having arrived, have realized you don’t remember driving. Your mind may have been filled with other issues and you drove on autopilot. It’s dangerous when you drive like that, and it is dangerous in communication. Choosing to listen or read attentively takes effort. People communicate with words, expressions, and even in silence, and your attention to them will make you a better communicator. From discussions on improving customer service to retaining customers in challenging economic times, the importance of listening comes up frequently as a success strategy.

Here are some tips to facilitate active listening and reading:

- Maintain eye contact with the speaker; if reading, keep your eyes on the page.
- Don't interrupt; if reading, don't multitask.
- Focus your attention on the message, not your internal monologue.
- Restate the message in your own words and ask if you understood correctly.
- Ask clarifying questions to communicate interest and gain insight.

When the Going Gets Tough

Our previous tips will serve you well in daily interactions, but suppose you have an especially difficult subject to discuss, or you receive a written document delivering bad news. In a difficult situation like this, it is worth taking extra effort to create an environment and context that will facilitate positive communication.

Here are some tips that may be helpful:

- Set aside a special time. To have a difficult conversation or read bad news, set aside a special time when you will not be disturbed. Close the door and turn off the TV, music player, and instant messaging client.
- Don't interrupt. Keep silent while you let the other person "speak his piece." If you are reading, make an effort to understand and digest the news without mental interruptions.
- Be nonjudgmental. Receive the message without judgment or criticism. Set aside your opinions, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Be accepting. Be open to the message being communicated, realizing that acceptance does not necessarily mean you agree with what is being said.
- Take turns. Wait until it is your turn to respond, and then measure your response in proportion to the message that was delivered to you. Reciprocal turn-taking allows each person have his say.
- Acknowledge. Let the other person know that you have listened to the message or read it attentively.
- Understand. Be certain that you understand what your partner is saying. If you don't understand, ask for clarification. Restate the message in your own words.
- Keep your cool. Speak your truth without blaming. A calm tone will help prevent the conflict from escalating. Use "I" statements (e.g., "I felt concerned when I learned that my department is going to have a layoff") rather than "you" statements (e.g., "you want to get rid of some of our best people").

Finally, recognize that mutual respect and understanding are built one conversation at a time. Trust is difficult to gain and easy to lose. Be patient and keep the channels of communication open, as a solution may develop slowly over the course of many small interactions. Recognize that it is more valuable to maintain the relationship over the long term than to "win" in an individual transaction.

Key Takeaways

Part of being an effective communicator is learning to receive messages from others through active listening and reading.

Exercises

1. Pair up with a classmate and do a role-play exercise in which one person tries to deliver a message while the other person multitasks and interrupts. Then try it again while the listener practices active listening. How do the two communication experiences compare? Discuss your findings.
2. Select a news article and practice active reading by reading the article and summarizing each of its main points in your own words. Write a letter to the editor commenting on the article—you don't have to send it, but you may if you wish.
3. In a half-hour period of time, see if you can count how many times you are interrupted. Share and compare with your classmates.
4.

UNIT 3 DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE

3.1 Style in Written Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Describe and identify three styles of writing.
2. Demonstrate the appropriate use of colloquial, casual, and formal writing in at least one document of each style.

One way to examine written communication is from a structural perspective. Words are a series of symbols that communicate meaning, strung together in specific patterns that are combined to communicate complex and compound meanings. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and articles are the building blocks you will use when composing written documents. Misspellings of individual words or grammatical errors involving misplacement or incorrect word choices in a sentence, can create confusion, lose meaning, and have a negative impact on the reception of your document. Errors themselves are not inherently bad, but failure to recognize and fix them will reflect on you, your company, and limit your success. Self-correction is part of the writing process.

Another way to examine written communication is from a goals perspective, where specific documents address stated (or unstated) goals and have rules, customs, and formats that are anticipated and expected. Violations of these rules, customs, or formats—whether intentional or unintentional—can also have a negative impact on the way your document is received.

Colloquial, casual, and formal writing are three common styles that carry their own particular sets of expectations. Which style you use will depend on your audience, and often whether your communication is going to be read only by those in your company (internal communications) or by those outside the organization, such as vendors, customers or clients (external communications). As a general rule, external communications tend to be more formal, just as corporate letterhead and business cards—designed for presentation to the "outside world"—are more formal than the e-mail and text messages that are used for everyday writing within the organization.

Style also depends on the purpose of the document and its audience. If your writing assignment is for Web page content, clear and concise use of the written word is essential. If your writing assignment is a feature interest article for an online magazine, you may have the luxury of additional space and word count combined with graphics, pictures, embedded video or audio clips, and links to related topics. If your writing assignment involves an introductory letter represented on a printed page delivered in an envelope to a potential customer, you won't have the interactivity to enhance your writing, placing an additional burden on your writing and how you represent it.

Colloquial

Colloquial language is an informal, conversational style of writing. It differs from standard business English in that it often makes use of colorful expressions, slang, and regional phrases. As a result, it can be difficult to understand for an English learner or a person from a different region of the country. Sometimes colloquialism takes the form of a word difference; for example, the difference between a "Coke," a "tonic," a "pop, and a "soda pop" primarily depends on where you live. It can also take the form of a saying, as Roy Wilder

Jr. discusses in his book You All Spoken Here: Southern Talk at Its Down-Home Best.[1] Colloquial sayings like "He could mess up a rainstorm" or "He couldn't hit the ground if he fell" communicate the person is inept in a colorful, but not universal way. In the Pacific Northwest someone might "mosey," or walk slowly, over to the "café," or bakery, to pick up a "maple bar"—a confection known as a "Long John doughnut" to people in other parts of the United States.

Colloquial language can be reflected in texting:

"ok fwiw i did my part n put it in where you asked but my ? is if the group does not participate do i still get credit for my part of what i did n also how much do we all have to do i mean i put in my opinion of the items in order do i also have to reply to the other team members or what? Thxs"

We may be able to grasp the meaning of the message, and understand some of the abbreviations and codes, but when it comes to business, this style of colloquial text writing is generally suitable only for one-on-one internal communications between coworkers who know each other well (and those who do not judge each other on spelling or grammar). For external communications, and even for group communications within the organization, it is not normally suitable, as some of the codes are not standard, and may even be unfamiliar to the larger audience.

Colloquial writing may be permissible, and even preferable, in some business contexts. For example, a marketing letter describing a folksy product such as a wood stove or an old-fashioned popcorn popper might use a colloquial style to create a feeling of relaxing at home with loved ones. Still, it is important to consider how colloquial language will appear to the audience. Will the meaning of your chosen words be clear to a reader who is from a different part of the country? Will a folksy tone sound like you are "talking down" to your audience, assuming that they are not intelligent or educated enough to appreciate standard English? A final point to remember is that colloquial style is not an excuse for using expressions that are sexist, racist, profane, or otherwise offensive.

Casual

Casual language involves everyday words and expressions in a familiar group context, such as conversations with family or close friends. The emphasis is on the communication interaction itself, and less about the hierarchy, power, control, or social rank of the individuals communicating. When you are at home, at times you probably dress in casual clothing that you wouldn't wear in public—pajamas or underwear, for example. Casual communication is the written equivalent of this kind of casual attire. Have you ever had a family member say something to you that a stranger or coworker would never say? Or have you said something to a family member that you would never say in front of your boss? In both cases, casual language is being used. When you write for business, a casual style is usually out of place. Instead, a respectful, professional tone represents you well in your absence.

Formal

In business writing, the appropriate style will have a degree of formality. Formal language is communication that focuses on professional expression with attention to roles, protocol, and appearance. It is characterized by its vocabulary and syntax, or the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence. That is, writers using a formal style tend to use a more sophisticated vocabulary—a greater variety of words, and more words with multiple syllables—not for the purpose of throwing big words around, but to enhance the formal mood of the document. They also tend to use more complex syntax, resulting in sentences that are longer and contain more subordinate clauses.

The appropriate style for a particular business document may be very formal, or less so. If your supervisor writes you an e-mail and you reply, the exchange may be informal in that it is fluid and relaxed, without much forethought or fanfare, but it will still reflect the formality of the business environment. Chances are you will be careful to use an informative subject line, a salutation ("Hi [supervisor's name]" is typical in e-mails), a word of thanks for whatever information or suggestion she provided you, and an

1. Wilde, J., Jr. (2003). You all spoken here: Southern talk at its down-home best. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

indication that you stand ready to help further if need be. You will probably also check your grammar and spelling before you click "send."

A formal document such as a proposal or an annual report will involve a great deal of planning and preparation, and its style may not be fluid or relaxed. Instead, it may use distinct language to emphasize the prestige and professionalism of your company. Let's say you are going to write a marketing letter that will be printed on company letterhead and mailed to a hundred sales prospects. Naturally you want to represent your company in a positive light. In a letter of this nature you might write a sentence like "The Widget 300 is our premium offering in the line; we have designed it for ease of movement and efficiency of use, with your success foremost in our mind." But in an e-mail or a tweet, you might use an informal sentence instead, reading "W300—good stapler."

Writing for business often involves choosing the appropriate level of formality for the company and industry, the particular document and situation, and the audience.

Key Takeaway

The best style for a document may be colloquial, casual, informal, or formal, depending on the audience and the situation.

Exercises

1. Refer back to the e-mail or text message example in this section. Would you send that message to your professor? Why or why not? What normative expectations concerning professor-student communication are there and where did you learn them? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Select a business document and describe its style. Is it formal, informal, or colloquial? Can you rewrite it in a different style? Share your results with a classmate.
3. List three words or phrases that you would say to your friends. List three words or phrases that communicate similar meanings that you would say to an authority figure. Share and compare with classmates.
4. When is it appropriate to write in a casual tone? In a formal tone? Write a one- to two-page essay on this topic and discuss it with a classmate.
5. How does the intended audience influence the choice of words and use of language in a document? Think of a specific topic and two specific kinds of audiences. Then write a short example (250–500 words) of how this topic might be presented to each of the two audiences.

3.2 Diplomacy, Tone, and Emphasis in Business Writing

Learning Objectives

Understand the purpose and importance of diplomacy, emphasis, and tone in business communication

Gain the ability to write difficult professional emails without offending, frustrating, or confusing your reader

Learn to use strategies in written communication to make your own work clearer to get the response you need

Name that Tone

Consider the following lines from business emails. How would you describe the tone of each entry? What words, phrases, or other elements suggest that tone?
here)

- *"Maybe if the project leader had set a reasonable schedule from the beginning, we wouldn't be in this mess now."*
- *"Whatever they're paying you, it isn't enough. Thanks for working so hard on this."*
- *"I'm not sure what else is on your plate right now, but I need these numbers by this afternoon—actually in the next two hours."*
- *"I cant remember when u said this was due."*
- *"While I appreciate that your team is being pulled in a number of different directions right now, this project is my department's main priority for the semester. What can we do from our end to set your group up to complete this by June?*

Whether in a workplace or in our personal lives, most of us have received emails that we've found off-putting, inappropriate, or, at a minimum, curt. Striking the right tone and being diplomatic, particularly in business communication, can mean the difference between offending your reader and building important professional relationships. And more immediately, it can mean the difference between getting what you want and being ignored.

As with any piece of writing, considering audience, purpose, and type of information is key to constructing business communication. Truly finessing your writing so that it works *for* you, rather than against you, is key to forming strong professional relationships and being effective in your own position.

The following tactics and examples outline the small revisions in your writing that can go a long way in building diplomacy and not only keeping your tone appropriate, but also using it to your advantage.

First, prior to writing, consider the following questions:

- *Who is my audience? What does the audience need to know, and what do they already know?*
- *Why does this email feel tricky or difficult in terms of getting the tone just right?*
- *Why am I writing? Am I informing my audience? Asking for help? Delivering bad news?*
- *Do I have strong feelings about the subject or situation that might get in the way of writing effectively and appropriately?*
- *Are there specific elements (anything from highlighting big problems to reminding the reader about an important due date) that I want to emphasize?*

Once you have answered these questions, consider the strategies below as you begin to compose your communication. Certain tactics will likely be more relevant than others, depending on the type of communication, but each of these tips can help you get into the habit of more diplomatic writing as you move through college and into your career.

Services like this "ToneCheck" software, which bills itself as "Emotional Spellcheck for Email" are one option. But, really, can a computer program consider the intricate dynamics of workplace relationships more effectively than you?

Strategies for Getting Diplomacy, Emphasis, and Tone Right

1. **Remind Your Reader What's in it for Them, Especially when Asking for Help**

Rather than:
I'm bringing in a new analyst to work with you on this because the rest of the group is swamped. You'll have to take the extra time to fill her in.

Write:
You'll have a new analyst to work with on this, and, luckily, you will be able to train her on the way you'd like things to be done.

2. Acknowledge the Work of Others as Often as You Can

Rather than:
I need this by 5pm tomorrow.

Write:
I imagine you're just as swamped as we are, but in order to move forward, we really need this by 5pm tomorrow.

3. Ask (when you can afford to hear no) and Thank Your Reader

Rather than:
You need to stay until the meeting ends, which will likely be around 7:00 p.m.

Write:
Would it be possible for you to stick around until this meeting ends, which will likely be around 7:00 p.m.? I'd really appreciate it.

4. Avoid Passive Aggressiveness at all Times

Rather than:
It seems that reading the document I sent that outlined the instructions wasn't a priority amidst all of the other very important work you had to do, so please let me explain it here, for the second time: The steps include…

Write:
The steps include…

5. Use Passive vs. Active Voice to Your Advantage

Active voice is a sentence in which the subject of the sentence performs the action. (John washes the car.) Passive voice is a sentence in which the subject of the sentence has an action performed upon it, him, or her. (The car is washed by John.)

Want to emphasize accomplishments or work completed? Use active voice.

My department completed the project on time.
George, who works on my team, developed an incredible system to track users.

Want to deemphasize the person or the team? Use passive voice.

The project was not completed on time.
A system to track users was not developed, unfortunately.

6. If You're Pointing out Mistakes of Flaws, Be Sure to Explain Why Behaviors, Actions, or other Issues are Problematic—It's Often More Effective (and having it in writing might be valuable down the line)

Rather than:
You've arrived late to our one-on-one meetings the past three weeks, which is unacceptable.

Write:
You've arrived late to our one-on-one meetings the past three weeks, which is unacceptable.As you know, I often have meetings scheduled throughout the day, and so this throws my schedule off. Further, while I'm sure you don't intend this, arriving late shows a lack of professionalism, which will undoubtedly hurt your career in the long run.

7. Talk to those Who Frustrate You by Using "I" Statements

Rather than:
Your inability to show any enthusiasm about these projects is driving me crazy.

Write:
It's difficult for me to maintain momentum and rally support here for projects when others show a blatant lack of interest.

8. Depending on Your Audience, and How Much Information They Need, Cut Extranous Information and Use Short Sentences for Emphasis

Rather than:
Considering the breadth and depth of this project, as well as our desire to complete it in a way that is most useful for you and practical for our own schedules, we've decided that extending the deadline would be an important next step.

Write:
We need more time to do this well.

Note: It's crucial to consider your audience when deciding how much background information they will need.

9. Directly State What's Important

*One additional, **minor** consideration is…*

*Another **primary** concern is…*

10. STOP YELLING AT ME (Avoid Caps Lock)

Rather than:
It's very important that you COME PREPARED TO THE MEETING.

Write:
It's very important that you come prepared to the meeting.

But do consider **other ways** to *emphasize* importance.

Use these strategies as you work to develop more effective, appropriate business communication, and, eventually, they will become second nature in your writing. In the meantime, this printable checklist can be tacked up by your desk as a guide and a reminder of these strategies. Any time you're unsure of your tone, compare your draft to this list!

Your emails should make people feel like this:

email 1 ?

Not like this:

email 22 ?

Exercises

Considering the tactics above, write one-paragraph emails in response to the following scenarios.

1. Your colleague Tina promised to send you a spreadsheet full of data that is central to a report you're writing. She said she'd have it to you by Thursday, and today is Friday. Your own report is due Monday. Write Tina a brief email about this situation.
2. You are interested in taking a week-long training class that you believe will help you perform your job more effectively. There is a small training budget within your company, but the only class being offered is on the other side of the country and would require flight and hotel costs in addition to the substantial tuition. Make the case for the money to your boss in an email.
3. You were the hiring manager for a new position that opened up at your organization. After sifting through nearly fifty resumes, you chose to interview one outside candidate and one internal candidate named Joe. Both had similar experience and educational backgrounds, but you ultimately made a job offer to the external candidate due to the fact that she seemed to have more creative ideas about how the department could handle current issues, whereas Joe seemed to have little to offer. Email Joe explaining that he did not get the job, and offer him constructive criticism.

Each interaction in the business world is unique and nuanced. While the strategies above are not a one-size-fits-all solution, learning to ask questions about audience, purpose, and the emotions attached to a particular communication is key to diplomacy and striking the right tone over email. From there, the tips and strategies above will help you craft careful, effective communications as you increase your writing skills—and your credibility in the workplace.

3.3 VIDEO: TONE IN PROFESSIONAL WRITING

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=25

Tutorial on Style in Professional Writing: Tone

3.4 ORGANIZING YOUR WRITING

Learning Objectives

- Understand how and why organizational techniques help writers and readers stay focused.
- Assess how and when to use chronological order to organize an essay.
- Recognize how and when to use order of importance to organize an essay.
- Determine how and when to use spatial order to organize an essay.

The method of organization you choose for your essay is just as important as its content. Without a clear organizational pattern, your reader could become confused and lose interest. The way you structure your essay helps your readers draw connections between the body and the thesis, and the structure also keeps you focused as you plan and write the essay. Choosing your organizational pattern before you outline ensures that each body paragraph works to support and develop your thesis.

This section covers three ways to organize body paragraphs:

1. Chronological order
2. Order of importance
3. Spatial order

When you begin to draft your essay, your ideas may seem to flow from your mind in a seemingly random manner. Your readers, who bring to the table different backgrounds, viewpoints, and ideas, need you to clearly organize these ideas in order to help process and accept them.

A solid organizational pattern gives your ideas a path that you can follow as you develop your draft. Knowing how you will organize your paragraphs allows you to better express and analyze your thoughts. Planning the structure of your essay before you choose supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and targeted research.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

In "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", you learned that chronological arrangement has the following purposes:

- To explain the history of an event or a topic
- To tell a story or relate an experience
- To explain how to do or to make something
- To explain the steps in a process

Chronological order is mostly used in expository writing, which is a form of writing that narrates, describes, informs, or explains a process. When using chronological order, arrange the events in the order that they actually happened, or will happen if you are giving instructions. This method requires you to use words such as *first*, *second*, *then*, *after that*, *later*, and *finally*. These transition words guide you and your reader through the paper as you expand your thesis.

For example, if you are writing an essay about the history of the airline industry, you would begin with its conception and detail the essential timeline events up until present day. You would follow the chain of events using words such as *first*, *then*, *next*, and so on.

WRITING AT WORK

At some point in your career you may have to file a complaint with your human resources department. Using chronological order is a useful tool in describing the events that led up to your filing the grievance. You would logically lay out the events in the order that they occurred using the key transition words. The more logical your complaint, the more likely you will be well received and helped.

TIP

When using chronological order, your introduction should indicate the information you will cover and in what order, and the introduction should also establish the relevance of the information. Your body paragraphs should then provide clear divisions or steps in chronology. You can divide your paragraphs by time (such as decades, wars, or other historical events) or by the same structure of the work you are examining (such as a line-by-line explication of a poem).

ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

Recall from "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?" that order of importance is best used for the following purposes:

- Persuading and convincing
- Ranking items by their importance, benefit, or significance
- Illustrating a situation, problem, or solution

Most essays move from the least to the most important point, and the paragraphs are arranged in an effort to build the essay's strength. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to begin with your most important supporting point, such as in an essay that contains a thesis that is highly debatable. When writing a persuasive essay, it is best to begin with the most important point because it immediately captivates your readers and compels them to continue reading.

For example, if you were supporting your thesis that homework is detrimental to the education of high school students, you would want to present your most convincing argument first, and then move on to the less important points for your case.

Some key transitional words you should use with this method of organization are *most importantly*, *almost as importantly*, *just as importantly*, and *finally*.

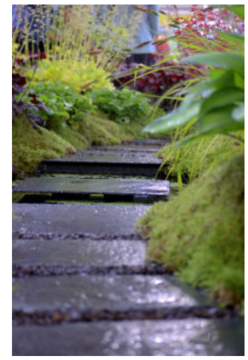
WRITING AT WORK

During your career, you may be required to work on a team that devises a strategy for a specific goal of your company, such as increasing profits. When planning your strategy you should organize your steps in order of importance. This demonstrates the ability to prioritize and plan. Using the order of importance technique also shows that you can create a resolution with logical steps for accomplishing a common goal.

SPATIAL ORDER

As stated in "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?", spatial order is best used for the following purposes:

- Helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it
- Evoking a scene using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)
- Writing a descriptive essay



Spatial order means that you explain or describe objects as they are arranged around you in your space, for example in a bedroom. As the writer, you create a picture for your reader, and their perspective is the viewpoint from which you describe what is around you.

The view must move in an orderly, logical progression, giving the reader clear directional signals to follow from place to place. The key to using this method is to choose a specific starting point and then guide the reader to follow your eye as it moves in an orderly trajectory from your starting point.

Pay attention to the following student's description of her bedroom and how she guides the reader through the viewing process, foot by foot.

Attached to my bedroom wall is a small wooden rack dangling with red and turquoise necklaces that shimmer as you enter. Just to the right of the rack is my window, framed by billowy white curtains. The peace of such an image is a stark contrast to my desk, which sits to the right of the window, layered in textbooks, crumpled papers, coffee cups, and an overflowing ashtray. Turning my head to the right, I see a set of two bare windows that frame the trees outside the glass like a 3D painting. Below the windows is an oak chest from which blankets and scarves are protruding. Against the wall opposite the billowy curtains is an antique dresser, on top of which sits a jewelry box and a few picture frames. A tall mirror attached to the dresser takes up most of the wall, which is the color of lavender.

The paragraph incorporates two objectives you have learned in this chapter: using an implied topic sentence and applying spatial order. Often in a descriptive essay, the two work together.

The following are possible transition words to include when using spatial order:

- Just to the left or just to the right
- Behind
- Between
- On the left or on the right
- Across from
- A little further down
- To the south, to the east, and so on
- A few yards away
- Turning left or turning right

Key Takeaways

- The way you organize your body paragraphs ensures you and your readers stay focused on and draw connections to, your thesis statement.

- A strong organizational pattern allows you to articulate, analyze, and clarify your thoughts.
- Planning the organizational structure for your essay before you begin to search for supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and directed research.
- Chronological order is most commonly used in expository writing. It is useful for explaining the history of your subject, for telling a story, or for explaining a process.
- Order of importance is most appropriate in a persuasion paper as well as for essays in which you rank things, people, or events by their significance.
- Spatial order describes things as they are arranged in space and is best for helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it; it creates a dominant impression.

Exercises

1. Choose an accomplishment you have achieved in your life. The important moment could be in sports, schooling, or extracurricular activities. On your own sheet of paper, list the steps you took to reach your goal. Try to be as specific as possible with the steps you took. Pay attention to using transition words to focus your writing.

Keep in mind that chronological order is most appropriate for the following purposes:

- Writing essays containing heavy research
- Writing essays with the aim of listing, explaining, or narrating
- Writing essays that analyze literary works such as poems, plays, or books

2. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that describes a process you are familiar with and can do well. Assume that your reader is unfamiliar with the procedure. Remember to use the chronological key words, such as *first*, *second*, *then*, and *finally*.

3. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that discusses a passion of yours. Your passion could be music, a particular sport, filmmaking, and so on. Your paragraph should be built upon the reasons why you feel so strongly. Briefly discuss your reasons in the order of least to greatest importance.

4. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph using spatial order that describes your commute to work, school, or another location you visit often. Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

3.5 PRINCIPLES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Learning Objectives

- Understand the rules that govern written language.
- Understand the legal implications of business writing.

You may not recall when or where you learned all about nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, articles, and phrases, but if you understand this sentence we'll take for granted that you have a firm grasp of the basics. But even professional writers and editors, who have spent a lifetime navigating the ins and outs of crafting correct sentences, have to use reference books to look up answers to questions of grammar and usage that arise in the course of their work. Let's examine how the simple collection of symbols called a word can be such a puzzle.

WORDS ARE INHERENTLY ABSTRACT

There is no universally accepted definition for love, there are many ways to describe desire, and there are countless ways to draw patience. Each of these terms is a noun, but it's an abstract noun, referring to an intangible concept.

While there are many ways to define a chair, describe a table, or draw a window, they each have a few common characteristics. A chair may be made from wood, crafted in a Mission style, or made from plastic resin in one solid piece in nondescript style, but each has four legs and serves a common function. A table and a window also have common characteristics that in themselves form a basis for understanding between source and receiver. The words "chair," "table," and "window" are concrete terms, as they describe something we can see and touch.

Concrete terms are often easier to agree on, understand, or at least define the common characteristics of. Abstract terms can easily become even more abstract with extended discussions, and the conversational partners may never agree on a common definition or even a range of understanding.

In business communication, where the goal is to be clear and concise, limiting the range of misinterpretation, which type of word do you think is preferred? Concrete terms serve to clarify your writing and more accurately communicate your intended meaning to the receiver. While all words are abstractions, some are more so than others. To promote effective communication, choose words that can be easily referenced and understood.

WORDS ARE GOVERNED BY RULES

Perhaps you like to think of yourself as a free spirit, but did you know that all your communication is governed by rules? You weren't born knowing how to talk, but learned to form words and sentences as you developed from infancy. As you learned language, you learned rules. You learned not only what a word means in a given context, and how to pronounce it; you also learned the social protocol of when to use it and when not to. When you write, your words represent you in your absence. The context may change from reader to reader, and your goal as an effective business communicator is to get your message across (and some feedback) regardless of the situation.

The better you know your audience and context, the better you can anticipate and incorporate the rules of how, what, and when to use specific words and terms. And here lies a paradox. You may think that, ideally, the best writing is writing that is universally appealing and understood. Yet the more you design a specific message to a specific audience or context, the less universal the message becomes. Actually, this is neither a good or bad thing in itself. In fact, if you didn't target your messages, they wouldn't be nearly as effective. By understanding this relationship of a universal or specific appeal to an audience or context, you can look beyond vocabulary and syntax and focus on the reader. When considering a communication assignment like a sales letter, knowing the intended audience gives you insight to the explicit and implicit rules.

All words are governed by rules, and the rules are vastly different from one language and culture to another. A famous example is the decision by Chevrolet to give the name "Nova" to one of its cars. In English, nova is recognized as coming from Latin meaning "new"; for those who have studied astronomy, it also refers to a type of star. When the Chevy Nova was introduced in Latin America, however, it was immediately ridiculed as the "car that doesn't go." Why? Because "*no va*" literally means "doesn't go" in Spanish.

By investigating sample names in a range of markets, you can quickly learn the rules surrounding words and their multiple meaning, much as you learned about subjects and objects, verbs and nouns, adjectives and adverbs when you were learning language. Long before you knew formal grammar terms, you observed how others communicate and learned by trial and error. In business, error equals inefficiency, loss of resources, and is to be avoided. For Chevrolet, a little market research in Latin America would have gone a long way.

WORDS SHAPE OUR REALITY

Aristotle is famous for many things, including his questioning of whether the table you can see, feel, or use is real (in McKeon, 1941). This may strike you as strange, but imagine that we are looking at a collection of antique hand tools. What are they? They are made of metal and wood, but what are they used for? The words we use help us to make sense of our reality, and we often use what we know to figure out what we don't know. Perhaps we have a hard time describing the color of the tool, or the table, as we walk around it. The light itself may influence our perception of its color. We may lack the vocabulary to accurately describe to the color, and instead say it is "like a" color, but not directly describe the color itself (Russell, 1962). The color, or use of the tool, or style of the table are all independent of the person perceiving them, but also a reflection of the person perceiving the object.

In business communication, our goal of clear and concise communication involves anticipation of this inability to label a color or describe the function of an antique tool by constructing meaning. Anticipating the language that the reader may reasonably be expected to know, as well as unfamiliar terms, enables the writer to communicate in a way that describes with common reference points while illustrating the new, interesting, or unusual. Promoting understanding and limiting misinterpretations are key goals of the effective business communicator.

Your letter introducing a new product or service relies, to an extent, on your preconceived notions of the intended audience and their preconceived notions of your organization and its products or services. By referencing common ground, you form a connection between the known and the unknown, the familiar and the new. People are more likely to be open to a new product or service if they can reasonably relate it to one they are familiar with, or with which they have had good experience in the past. Your initial measure of success is effective communication, and your long term success may be measured in the sale or new contract for services.

WORDS AND YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

Your writing in a business context means that you represent yourself and your company. What you write and how you write it can be part of your company's success, but can also expose it to unintended consequences and legal responsibility. When you write, keep in mind that your words will keep on existing long after you have moved on to other projects. They can become an issue if they exaggerate, state false claims, or defame a person or legal entity such as a competing company. Another issue is plagiarism, using someone else's writing without giving credit to the source. Whether the "cribbed" material is taken from a printed book, a Web site, or a blog, plagiarism is a violation of copyright law and may also violate your company policies. Industry standards often have legal aspects that must be respected and cannot be ignored. For the writer this can be a challenge, but it can be a fun challenge with rewarding results.

The rapid pace of technology means that the law cannot always stay current with the realities of business communication. Computers had been in use for more than twenty years before Congress passed the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, the first federal legislation to "move the nation's copyright law into the digital age" (United States Copyright Office, 1998). Think for a moment about the changes in computer use that have taken place since 1998, and you will realize how many new laws are needed to clarify what is fair and ethical, what should be prohibited, and who owns the rights to what.

For example, suppose your supervisor asks you to use your Facebook page or Twitter account to give an occasional "plug" to your company's products. Are you obligated to comply? If you later change jobs, who owns your posts or tweets—are they yours, or does your now-former employer have a right to them? And what about your network of "friends"? Can your employer use their contact information to send marketing messages? These and many other questions remain to be answered as technology, industry practices, and legislation evolve (Tahmincioglu, 2009).

"Our product is better than X company's product. Their product is dangerous and you would be a wise customer to choose us for your product solutions."

What's wrong with these two sentences? They may land you and your company in court. You made a generalized claim of one product being better than another, and you stated it as if it were a fact. The next sentence claims that your competitor's product is dangerous. Even if this is true, your ability to prove your claim beyond a reasonable doubt may be limited. Your claim is stated as fact again, and from the other company's perspective, your sentences may be considered libel or defamation.

Libel is the written form of defamation, or a false statement that damages a reputation. If a false statement of fact that concerns and harms the person defamed is published—including publication in a digital or online environment—the author of that statement may be sued for libel. If the person defamed is a public figure, they must prove malice or the intention to do harm, but if the victim is a private person, libel applies even if the offense cannot be proven to be malicious. Under the First Amendment you have a right to express your opinion, but the words you use and how you use them, including the context, are relevant to their interpretation as opinion versus fact. Always be careful to qualify what you write and to do no harm.

Key Takeaways

Words are governed by rules and shape our reality. Writers have a legal responsibility to avoid plagiarism and libel.

Exercises

1. Define the word "chair." Describe what a table is. Draw a window. Share, compare, and contrast results with classmates

2. Define love. Describe desire. Draw patience.

3. Identify a target audience and indicate at least three words that you perceive would be appropriate and effective for that audience. Identify a second audience (distinct from the first) and indicate three words that you perceive would be appropriate and effective. How are the audiences and their words similar or different? Compare your results with those of your classmates.

4. Create a sales letter for an audience that comes from a culture other than your own. Identify the culture and articulate how your message is tailored to your perception of your intended audience. Share and compare with classmates.

5. Do an online search on "online libel cases" and see what you find. Discuss your results with your classmates.

6. In other examples beyond the grammar rules that guide our use of words, consider the online environment. Conduct a search on the word "netiquette" and share your findings.

3.6 GOOD WRITING

Learning Objectives

- Identify six basic qualities that characterize good business writing.
- Identify and explain the rhetorical elements and cognate strategies that contribute to good writing.

One common concern is to simply address the question, what is good writing? As we progress through our study of written business communication we'll try to answer it. But recognize that while the question may be simple, the answer is complex. Edward P. Bailey (2008) offers several key points to remember.

Good business writing

- follows the rules,
- is easy to read, and
- attracts the reader.

Let's examine these qualities in more depth.

Bailey's first point is one that generates a fair amount of debate. What are the rules? Do "the rules" depend on audience expectations or industry standards, what your English teacher taught you, or are they reflected in the amazing writing of authors you might point to as positive examples? The answer is "all of the above," with a point of clarification. You may find it necessary to balance audience expectations with industry standards for a document, and may need to find a balance or compromise. Bailey (2008) points to common sense as one basic criterion of good writing, but common sense is a product of experience. When searching for balance, reader understanding is the deciding factor. The correct use of a semicolon may not be what is needed to make a sentence work. Your reading audience should carry extra attention in everything you write because, without them, you won't have many more writing assignments.

When we say that good writing follows the rules, we don't mean that a writer cannot be creative. Just as an art student needs to know how to draw a scene in correct perspective before he can "break the rules" by "bending" perspective, so a writer needs to know the rules of language. Being well versed in how to use words correctly, form sentences with proper grammar, and build logical paragraphs are skills the writer can use no matter what the assignment. Even though some business settings may call for conservative writing, there are other areas where creativity is not only allowed but mandated. Imagine working for an advertising agency or a software development firm; in such situations success comes from expressing new, untried ideas. By following the rules of language and correct writing, a writer can express those creative ideas in a form that comes through clearly and promotes understanding.

Similarly, writing that is easy to read is not the same as "dumbed down" or simplistic writing. What is easy to read? For a young audience, you may need to use straightforward, simple terms, but to ignore their use of the language is to create an artificial and unnecessary barrier. An example referring to Miley Cyrus may work with one reading audience and fall flat with another. Profession-specific terms can serve a valuable purpose as we write about precise concepts. Not everyone will understand all the terms in a profession, but if your audience is largely literate in the terms of the field, using industry terms will help you establish a relationship with your readers.

The truly excellent writer is one who can explain complex ideas in a way that the reader can understand. Sometimes ease of reading can come from the writer's choice of a brilliant illustrative example to get a point across. In other situations, it can be the writer's incorporation of definitions into the text so that the meaning of unfamiliar words is clear. It may also be a matter of choosing dynamic, specific verbs that make it clear what is happening and who is carrying out the action.

Bailey's third point concerns the interest of the reader. Will they want to read it? This question should guide much of what you write. We increasingly gain information from our environment through visual, auditory, and multimedia channels, from YouTube to streaming audio, and to watching the news online. Some argue that this has led to a decreased attention span for reading, meaning that writers need to appeal to readers with short, punchy sentences and catchy phrases. However, there are still plenty of people who love to immerse themselves in reading an interesting article, proposal, or marketing piece.

Perhaps the most universally useful strategy in capturing your reader's attention is to state how your writing can meet the reader's needs. If your document provides information to answer a question, solve a problem, or explain how to increase profits or cut costs, you may want to state this in the beginning. By opening with a "what's in it for me" strategy, you give your audience a reason to be interested in what you've written.

MORE QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

To the above list from Bailey, let's add some additional qualities that define good writing.

Good writing

- meets the reader's expectations,
- is clear and concise,

- is efficient and effective.

To meet the reader's expectations, the writer needs to understand who the intended reader is. In some business situations, you are writing just to one person: your boss, a coworker in another department, or an individual customer or vendor. If you know the person well, it may be as easy for you to write to him or her as it is to write a note to your parent or roommate. If you don't know the person, you can at least make some reasonable assumptions about his or her expectations, based on the position he or she holds and its relation to your job.

In other situations, you may be writing a document to be read by a group or team, an entire department, or even a large number of total strangers. How can you anticipate their expectations and tailor your writing accordingly? Naturally you want to learn as much as you can about your likely audience. How much you can learn and what kinds of information will vary with the situation. If you are writing Web site content, for example, you may never meet the people who will visit the site, but you can predict why they would be drawn to the site and what they would expect to read there. Beyond learning about your audience, your clear understanding of the writing assignment and its purpose will help you to meet reader expectations.

Our addition of the fifth point concerning clear and concise writing reflects the increasing tendency in business writing to eliminate error. Errors can include those associated with production, from writing to editing, and reader response. Your twin goals of clear and concise writing point to a central goal across communication: fidelity. This concept involves our goal of accurately communicating all the intended information with a minimum of signal or message breakdown or misinterpretation. Designing your documents, including writing and presentation, to reduce message breakdown is an important part of effective business communication.

This leads our discussion to efficiency. There are only twenty-four hours in a day and we are increasingly asked to do more with less, with shorter deadlines almost guaranteed. As a writer, how do you meet ever-increasing expectations? Each writing assignment requires a clear understanding of the goals and desired results, and when either of these two aspects is unclear, the efficiency of your writing can be compromised. Rewrites require time that you may not have, but will have to make if the assignment was not done correctly the first time.

As we have discussed previously, making a habit of reading similar documents prior to beginning your process of writing can help establish a mental template of your desired product. If you can see in your mind's eye what you want to write, and have the perspective of similar documents combined with audience's needs, you can write more efficiently. Your written documents are products and will be required on a schedule that impacts your coworkers and business. Your ability to produce effective documents efficiently is a skill set that will contribute to your success.

Our sixth point reinforces this idea with an emphasis on effectiveness. What is effective writing? It is writing that succeeds in accomplishing its purpose. Understanding the purpose, goals, and desired results of your writing assignment will help you achieve this success. Your employer may want an introductory sales letter to result in an increase in sales leads, or potential contacts for follow-up leading to sales. Your audience may not see the document from that perspective, but will instead read with the mindset of, "How does this help me solve X problem?" If you meet both goals, your writing is approaching effectiveness. Here, effectiveness is qualified with the word "approaching" to point out that writing is both a process and a product, and your writing will continually require effort and attention to revision and improvement.

RHETORICAL ELEMENTS AND COGNATE STRATEGIES

Another approach to defining good writing is to look at how it fulfills the goals of two well-known systems in communication. One of these systems comprises the three classical elements of rhetoric, or the art of presenting an argument. These elements are *logos* (logic), *ethos* (ethics and credibility), and *pathos* (emotional appeal), first proposed by the ancient Greek teacher Aristotle. Although rhetoric is often applied to oral communication, especially public speaking, it is also fundamental to good writing.

A second set of goals involves what are called cognate strategies, or ways of promoting understanding, developed in recent decades by Charles Kostelnick and David Rogers (1998). Like rhetorical elements, cognate strategies can be applied to public speaking, but they are also useful in developing good writing. Table 9.2 "Rhetorical Elements and Cognate Strategies" describes these goals, their purposes, and examples of how they may be carried out in business writing.

Table Rhetorical Elements and Cognate Strategies

Aristotle's Rhetorical Elements	**Cognate Strategies**	**Focus**	**Example in Business Writing**
Logos	Clarity	Clear understanding	An announcement will be made to the company later in the week, but I wanted to tell you personally that as of the first of next month, I will be leaving my position to accept a three-year assignment in our Singapore office. As soon as further details about the management of your account are available, I will share them with you.
	Conciseness	Key points	In tomorrow's conference call Sean wants to introduce the new team members, outline the schedule and budget for the project, and clarify each person's responsibilities in meeting our goals.
	Arrangement	Order, hierarchy, placement	Our department has matrix structure. We have three product development groups, one for each category of product. We also have a manufacturing group, a finance group, and a sales group; different group members are assigned to each of the three product categories. Within the matrix, our structure is flat, meaning that we have no group leaders. Everyone reports to Beth, the department manager.
Ethos	Credibility	Character, trust	Having known and worked with Jesse for more than five years, I can highly recommend him to take my place as your advisor. In addition to having superb qualifications, Jesse is known for his dedication, honesty, and caring attitude. He will always go the extra mile for his clients.
	Expectation	Norms and anticipated outcomes	As is typical in our industry, we ship all merchandise FOB our warehouse. Prices are exclusive of any federal, state, or local taxes. Payment terms are net 30 days from date of invoice.
	Reference	Sources and frames of reference	According to an article in *Business Week* dated October 15, 2009, Doosan is one of the largest business conglomerates in South Korea.
Pathos	Tone	Expression	I really don't have words to express how grateful I am for all the support you've extended to me and my family in this hour of need. You guys are the best.
	Emphasis	Relevance	It was unconscionable for a member of our organization to shout an interruption while the president was speaking. What needs to happen now—and let me be clear about this—is an immediate apology.
	Engagement	Relationship	Faithful soldiers pledge never to leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield.

Key Takeaways

Good writing is characterized by correctness, ease of reading, and attractiveness; it also meets reader expectations and is clear, concise, efficient, and effective. Rhetorical elements (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*) and cognate strategies (clarity, conciseness, arrangement, credibility, expectation, reference, tone, emphasis, and engagement) are goals that are achieved in good business writing.

Exercises

1. Choose a piece of business writing that attracts your interest. What made you want to read it? Share your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Choose a piece of business writing and evaluate it according to the qualities of good writing presented in this section. Do you think the writing qualifies as "good"? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with your classmates.
3. Identify the ethos, pathos, and logos in a document. Share and compare with classmates.

UNIT 4 THE WRITING PROCESS

4.1 APPLY PREWRITING MODELS

Learning Objectives

- Use prewriting strategies to choose a topic and narrow the focus.

If you think that a blank sheet of paper or a blinking cursor on the computer screen is a scary sight, you are not alone. Many writers, students, and employees find that beginning to write can be intimidating. When faced with a blank page, however, experienced writers remind themselves that writing, like other everyday activities, is a process. Every process, from writing to cooking, bike riding, and learning to use a new cell phone, will get significantly easier with practice.

Just as you need a recipe, ingredients, and proper tools to cook a delicious meal, you also need a plan, resources, and adequate time to create a good written composition. In other words, writing is a process that requires following steps and using strategies to accomplish your goals.

These are the five steps in the writing process:

1. Prewriting
2. Outlining the structure of ideas
3. Writing a rough draft
4. Revising
5. Editing

Effective writing can be simply described as good ideas that are expressed well and arranged in the proper order. This chapter will give you the chance to work on all these important aspects of writing. Although many more prewriting strategies exist, this chapter covers six: using experience and observations, freewriting, asking questions, brainstorming, mapping, and searching the Internet. Using the strategies in this chapter can help you overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process.

PREWRITING

Prewriting is the stage of the writing process during which you transfer your abstract thoughts into more concrete ideas in ink on paper (or in type on a computer screen). Although prewriting techniques can be helpful in all stages of the writing process, the following four strategies are best used when initially deciding on a topic:

1. Using experience and observations
2. Reading
3. Freewriting
4. Asking questions

At this stage in the writing process, it is OK if you choose a general topic. Later you will learn more prewriting strategies that will narrow the focus of the topic.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

In addition to understanding that writing is a process, writers also understand that choosing a good general topic for an assignment is an essential step. Sometimes your instructor will give you an idea to begin an assignment, and other times your instructor will ask you to come up with a topic on your own. A good topic not only covers what an assignment will be about but also fits the assignment's purpose and its audience.

In this chapter, you will follow a writer named Mariah as she prepares a piece of writing. You will also be planning one of your own. The first important step is for you to tell yourself why you are writing (to inform, to explain, or some other purpose) and for whom you are writing. Write your purpose and your audience on your own sheet of paper, and keep the paper close by as you read and complete exercises in this chapter.

My purpose: ____

My audience: ____

USING EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS

When selecting a topic, you may also want to consider something that interests you or something based on your own life and personal experiences. Even everyday observations can lead to interesting topics. After writers think about their experiences and observations, they often take notes on paper to better develop their thoughts. These notes help writers discover what they have to say about their topic.

TIP

Have you seen an attention-grabbing story on your local news channel? Many current issues appear on television, in magazines, and on the Internet. These can all provide inspiration for your writing.

READING

Reading plays a vital role in all the stages of the writing process, but it first figures in the development of ideas and topics. Different kinds of documents can help you choose a topic and also develop that topic. For example, a magazine advertising the latest research on the threat of global warming may catch your eye in the supermarket. This cover may interest you, and you may consider global warming as a topic. Or maybe a novel's courtroom drama sparks your curiosity of a particular lawsuit or legal controversy.

After you choose a topic, critical reading is essential to the development of a topic. While reading almost any document, you evaluate the author's point of view by thinking about his main idea and his support. When you judge the author's argument, you discover more about not only the author's opinion but also your own. If this step already seems daunting, remember that even the best writers need to use prewriting strategies to generate ideas.

TIP

The steps in the writing process may seem time consuming at first, but following these steps will save you time in the future. The more you plan in the beginning by reading and using prewriting strategies, the less time you may spend writing and editing later because your ideas will develop more swiftly.

Prewriting strategies depend on your critical reading skills. Reading prewriting exercises (and outlines and drafts later in the writing process) will further develop your topic and ideas. As you continue to follow the writing process, you will see how Mariah uses critical reading skills to assess her own prewriting exercises.

FREEWRITING

Freewriting is an exercise in which you write freely about any topic for a set amount of time (usually three to five minutes). During the time limit, you may jot down any thoughts that come to your mind. Try not to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Instead, write as quickly as you can without stopping. If you get stuck, just copy the same word or phrase over and over until you come up with a new thought.

Writing often comes easier when you have a personal connection with the topic you have chosen. Remember, to generate ideas in your freewriting, you may also think about readings that you have enjoyed or that have challenged your thinking. Doing this may lead your thoughts in interesting directions.

Quickly recording your thoughts on paper will help you discover what you have to say about a topic. When writing quickly, try not to doubt or question your ideas. Allow yourself to write freely and unselfconsciously. Once you start writing with few limitations, you may find you have more to say than you first realized. Your flow of thoughts can lead you to discover even more ideas about the topic. Freewriting may even lead you to discover another topic that excites you even more.

Look at Mariah's example. The instructor allowed the members of the class to choose their own topics, and Mariah thought about her experiences as a communications major. She used this freewriting exercise to help her generate more concrete ideas from her own experience.

TIP

Some prewriting strategies can be used together. For example, you could use experience and observations to come up with a topic related to your course studies. Then you could use freewriting to describe your topic in more detail and figure out what you have to say about it.

Last semester my favorite class was about mass media. We got to study radio and television. People say we watch too much television, and even though I try not to, I end up watching a few reality shows just to relax. Everyone has to relax! It's too hard to relax when something like the news (my husband watches all the time) is on because it's too scary now. Too much bad news, not enough good news. News. Newspaper I don't read as much anymore. I can get the headlines on my homepage when I check my email. Email could be considered mass media too these days. I used to go to the video store a few times a week before I started school, but now the only way I know what movies are current is to listen for the Oscar nominations. We have cable but we can't afford the movie channels, so I sometimes look at older movies late at night. UGH. A few of them get played again and again until you're sick of them. My husband thinks I'm crazy, but sometimes there are old black-and-white. I like the home decorating shows and love how people use color on their walls. Makes rooms look so bright. When we buy a home, if we ever can, I'll use lots of color. Some of those shows even show you how to do major renovations by yourself. Knock down walls and everything. Not for me—or my husband. I'm handier than he is. I wonder if they could make a reality show about us!

ASKING QUESTIONS

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? In everyday situations, you pose these kinds of questions to get more information. Who will be my partner for the project? When is the next meeting? Why is my car making that odd noise? Even the title of this chapter begins with the question "How do I begin?"

You seek the answers to these questions to gain knowledge, to better understand your daily experiences, and to plan for the future. Asking these types of questions will also help you with the writing process. As you choose your topic, answering these questions can help you revisit the ideas you already have and generate new ways to think about your topic. You may also discover aspects of the topic that are unfamiliar to you and that you would like to learn more about. All these idea-gathering techniques will help you plan for future work on your assignment.

When Mariah reread her freewriting notes, she found she had rambled and her thoughts were disjointed. She realized that the topic that interested her most was the one she started with, the media. She then decided to explore that topic by asking herself questions about it. Her purpose was to refine media into a topic she felt comfortable writing about. To see how asking questions can help you choose a topic, take a look at the following chart that Mariah completed to record her questions and answers. She asked herself the questions that reporters and journalists use to gather information for their stories. The questions are often called the 5WH questions, after their initial letters.

Figure 4.1 Asking Questions

Questions	Answers
Who?	I use media. Students, teachers, parents, employers, and employees—almost everyone uses media.
What?	The media can be a lot of things. Television, radio, email (I think), newspapers, magazines, books.
Where?	The media is almost everywhere now. It's in homes, at work, in cars, even on cell phones!
When?	Media has been around for a long time, but seems a lot more important now.
Why?	Hmm. This is a good question. I don't know why there is mass media. Maybe we have it because we have the technology now. Or people live far away from their families and they have to stay in touch.
How?	Well, media is possible because of the technology inventions, but I don't know how they all work!

TIP

Prewriting is very purpose driven; it does not follow a set of hard-and-fast rules. The purpose of prewriting is to find and explore ideas so that you will be prepared to write. A prewriting technique like asking questions can help you both find a topic and explore it. The key to effective prewriting is to use the techniques that work best for your thinking process. Freewriting may not seem to fit your thinking process, but keep an open mind. It may work better than you think. Perhaps brainstorming a list of topics might better fit your personal style. Mariah found freewriting and asking questions to be fruitful strategies to use. In your own prewriting, use the 5WH questions in any way that benefits your planning.

After completing some of the prewriting exercises, you may feel less anxious about starting a paper from scratch. With some ideas down on paper (or saved on a computer), writers are often more comfortable continuing the writing process. After identifying a good general topic, you, too, are ready to continue the process.

TIP

You may find that you need to adjust your topic as you move through the writing stages (and as you complete the exercises in this chapter). If the topic you have chosen is not working, you can repeat the prewriting activities until you find a better one.

MORE PREWRITING TECHNIQUES

The prewriting techniques of freewriting and asking questions helped Mariah think more about her topic, but the following prewriting strategies can help her (and you) narrow the focus of the topic:

- Brainstorming
- Idea mapping
- Searching the Internet

NARROWING THE FOCUS

Narrowing the focus means breaking up the topic into subtopics, or more specific points. Generating lots of subtopics will help you eventually select the ones that fit the assignment and appeal to you and your audience.

After rereading her syllabus, Mariah realized her general topic, mass media, is too broad for her class's short paper requirement. Three pages are not enough to cover all the concerns in mass media today. Mariah also realized that although her readers are other communications majors who are interested in the topic, they may want to read a paper about a particular issue in mass media.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is similar to list making. You can make a list on your own or in a group with your classmates. Start with a blank sheet of paper (or a blank computer document) and write your general topic across the top. Underneath your topic, make a list of more specific ideas. Think of your general topic as a broad category and the list items as things that fit in that category. Often you will find that one item can lead to the next, creating a flow of ideas that can help you narrow your focus to a more specific paper topic.

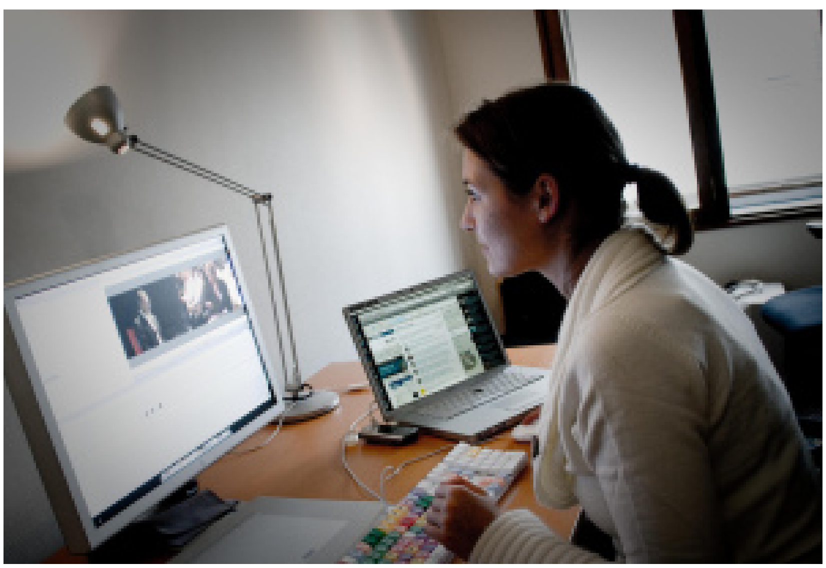
The following is Mariah's brainstorming list:

Mass Media

- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Broadcasting
- Radio
- Television
- DVD
- Gaming / video games
- Internet
- Cell phones
- Smartphones
- Text messages
- Tiny cameras
- GPS

From this list, Mariah could narrow her focus to a particular technology under the broad category of mass media.

WRITING AT WORK



Imagine you have to write an e-mail to your current boss explaining your prior work experience, but you do not know where to start. Before you begin the e-mail, you can use the brainstorming technique to generate a list of employers, duties, and responsibilities that fall under the general topic "work experience."

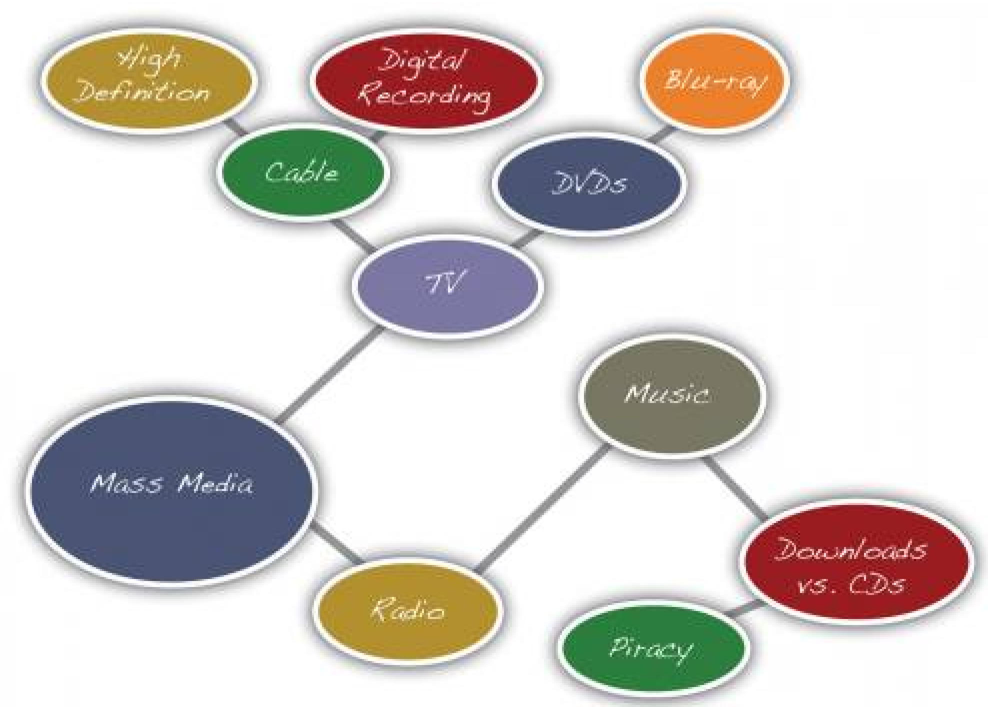
IDEA MAPPING

Idea mapping allows you to visualize your ideas on paper using circles, lines, and arrows. This technique is also known as clustering because ideas are broken down and clustered, or grouped together. Many writers like this method because the shapes show how the ideas relate or connect, and writers can find a focused topic from the connections mapped. Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.

To create an idea map, start with your general topic in a circle in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Then write specific ideas around it and use lines or arrows to connect them together. Add and cluster as many ideas as you can think of.

In addition to brainstorming, Mariah tried idea mapping. Review the following idea map that Mariah created:

Figure 4.2 Idea Map



Notice Mariah's largest circle contains her general topic, mass media. Then, the general topic branches into two subtopics written in two smaller circles: television and radio. The subtopic television branches into even more specific topics: cable and DVDs. From there, Mariah drew more circles and wrote more specific ideas: high definition and digital recording from cable and Blu-ray from DVDs. The radio topic led Mariah to draw connections between music, downloads versus CDs, and, finally, piracy.

From this idea map, Mariah saw she could consider narrowing the focus of her mass media topic to the more specific topic of music piracy.

SEARCHING THE INTERNET

Using search engines on the Internet is a good way to see what kinds of websites are available on your topic. Writers use search engines not only to understand more about the topic's specific issues but also to get better acquainted with their audience.

TIP

Look back at the chart suggested in Prewriting. Did you guess at any of the answers? Searching the Internet may help you find answers to your questions and confirm your guesses. Be choosy about the websites you use. Make sure they are reliable sources for the kind of information you seek.

When you search the Internet, type some key words from your broad topic or words from your narrowed focus into your browser's search engine (many good general and specialized search engines are available for you to try). Then look over the results for relevant and interesting articles.

Results from an Internet search show writers the following information:

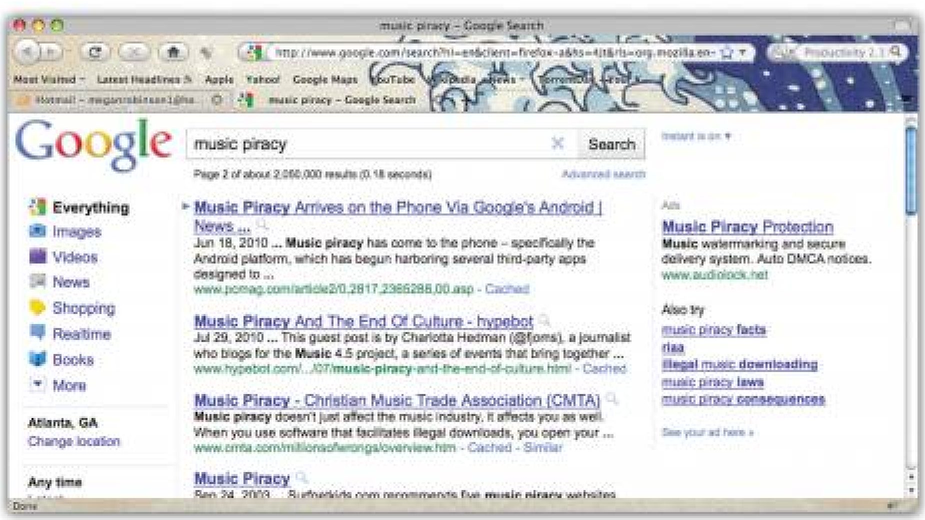
- Who is talking about the topic
- How the topic is being discussed
- What specific points are currently being discussed about the topic

TIP

If the search engine results are not what you are looking for, revise your key words and search again. Some search engines also offer suggestions for related searches that may give you better results.

Mariah typed the words *music piracy* from her idea map into the search engine Google.

Figure 4.3 Useful Search Engine Results



Retrieved from http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&client=firefox-a&hs=4Jt&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official &q=music+piracy&start=10&sa=N!>

Not all the results online search engines return will be useful or reliable. Give careful consideration to the reliability of an online source before selecting a topic based on it. Remember that factual information can be verified in other sources, both online and in print. If you have doubts about any information you find, either do not use it or identify it as potentially unreliable.

The results from Mariah's search included websites from university publications, personal blogs, online news sources, and lots of legal cases sponsored by the recording industry. Reading legal jargon made Mariah uncomfortable with the results, so she decided to look further. Reviewing her map, she realized that she was more interested in consumer aspects of mass media, so she refocused her search to media technology and the sometimes confusing array of expensive products that fill electronics stores. Now, Mariah considers a paper topic on the products that have fed the mass media boom in everyday lives.

Prewriting strategies are a vital first step in the writing process. First, they help you first choose a broad topic and then they help you narrow the focus of the topic to a more specific idea. An effective topic ensures that you are ready for the next step.

TOPIC CHECKLIST

Developing a Good Topic

The following checklist can help you decide if your narrowed topic is a good topic for your assignment.

- Am I interested in this topic?
- Would my audience be interested?
- Do I have prior knowledge or experience with this topic? If so, would I be comfortable exploring this topic and sharing my experiences?
- Do I want to learn more about this topic?
- Is this topic specific?
- Does it fit the length of the assignment?

With your narrowed focus in mind, answer the bulleted questions in the checklist for developing a good topic. If you can answer "yes" to all the questions, write your topic on the line. If you answer "no" to any of the questions, think about another topic or adjust the one you have and try the prewriting strategies again.

My narrowed topic: ____

Key Takeaways

- All writers rely on steps and strategies to begin the writing process.
- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, outlining, writing a rough draft, revising, and editing.
- Prewriting is the transfer of ideas from abstract thoughts into words, phrases, and sentences on paper.
- A good topic interests the writer, appeals to the audience, and fits the purpose of the assignment.
- Writers often choose a general topic first and then narrow the focus to a more specific topic.

Exercises

1. Freewrite about one event you have recently experienced. With this event in mind, write without stopping for five minutes. After you finish, read over what you wrote. Does anything stand out to you as a good general topic to write about?

2. Choose a general topic idea from the prewriting you completed in Note 4.9 “Exercise 1”. Then read each question and use your own paper to answer the 5WH questions. As with Mariah when she explored her writing topic for more detail, it is OK if you do not know all the answers. If you do not know an answer, use your own opinion to speculate, or guess. You may also use factual information from books or articles you previously read on your topic. Later in the chapter, you will read about additional ways (like searching the Internet) to answer your questions and explore your guesses.

5WH Questions

1. Who?____
2. What?____
3. Where?____
4. When?____
5. Why?____
6. How?____

3. Write your general topic on your own sheet of paper, under where you recorded your purpose and audience. Choose it from among the topics you listed or explored during the prewriting you have done so far. Make sure it is one you feel comfortable with and feel capable of writing about.

My general topic: ____

4. In #2, you chose a possible topic and explored it by answering questions about it using the 5WH questions. However, this topic may still be too broad. Here, choose and complete one of the prewriting strategies to narrow the focus. Use either brainstorming, idea mapping, or searching the Internet. Please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Share what you found and what interests you about the possible topic(s).

4.2 OUTLINING

Learning Objectives

- Identify the steps in constructing an outline.
- Construct a topic outline and a sentence outline.

Your prewriting activities and readings have helped you gather information for your assignment. The more you sort through the pieces of information you found, the more you will begin to see the connections between them. Patterns and gaps may begin to stand out. But only when you start to organize your ideas will you be able to translate your raw insights into a form that will communicate meaning to your audience.

TIP

Longer papers require more reading and planning than shorter papers do. Most writers discover that the more they know about a topic, the more they can write about it with intelligence and interest.

ORGANIZING IDEAS

When you write, you need to organize your ideas in an order that makes sense. The writing you complete in all your courses exposes how analytically and critically your mind works. In some courses, the only direct contact you may have with your instructor is through the assignments you write for the course. You can make a good impression by spending time ordering your ideas.

Order refers to your choice of what to present first, second, third, and so on in your writing. The order you pick closely relates to your purpose for writing that particular assignment. For example, when telling a story, it may be important to first describe the background for the action. Or you may need to first describe a 3-D movie projector or a television studio to help readers visualize the setting and scene. You may want to group your support effectively to convince readers that your point of view on an issue is well reasoned and worthy of belief.

In longer pieces of writing, you may organize different parts in different ways so that your purpose stands out clearly and all parts of the paper work together to consistently develop your main point.

METHODS OF ORGANIZING WRITING

The three common methods of organizing writing are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance. You will learn more about these in Chapter 8 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish"; however, you need to keep these methods of organization in mind as you plan how to arrange the information you have gathered in an outline. An outline is a written plan that serves as a skeleton for the paragraphs you write. Later, when you draft paragraphs in the next stage of the writing process, you will add support to create "flesh" and "muscle" for your assignment.

When you write, your goal is not only to complete an assignment but also to write for a specific purpose—perhaps to inform, to explain, to persuade, or for a combination of these purposes. Your purpose for writing should always be in the back of your mind, because it will help you decide which pieces of information belong together and how you will order them. In other words, choose the order that will most effectively fit your purpose and support your main point.

Table 4.1 "Order versus Purpose" shows the connection between order and purpose.

Table 4.1 Order versus Purpose

Order	Purpose
Chronological Order	To explain the history of an event or a topic To tell a story or relate an experience To explain how to do or make something To explain the steps in a process
Spatial Order	To help readers visualize something as you want them to see it To create a main impression using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)
Order of Importance	To persuade or convince To rank items by their importance, benefit, or significance

WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

One legitimate question readers always ask about a piece of writing is "What is the big idea?" (You may even ask this question when you are the reader, critically reading an assignment or another document.) Every nonfiction writing task—from the short essay to the ten-page term paper to the lengthy senior thesis—needs a big idea, or a controlling idea, as the spine for the work. The controlling idea is the main idea that you want to present and develop.

TIP

For a longer piece of writing, the main idea should be broader than the main idea for a shorter piece of writing. Be sure to frame a main idea that is appropriate for the length of the assignment. Ask yourself, "How many pages will it take for me to explain and explore this main idea in detail?" Be reasonable with your estimate. Then expand or trim it to fit the required length.

The big idea, or controlling idea, you want to present in an essay is expressed in a thesis statement. A thesis statement is often one sentence long, and it states your point of view. The thesis statement is not the topic of the piece of writing but rather what you have to say about that topic and what is important to tell readers.

Table 4.2 "Topics and Thesis Statements" compares topics and thesis statements.

Table 4.2 Topics and Thesis Statements

Topic	Thesis Statement
Music piracy	The recording industry fears that so-called music piracy will diminish profits and destroy markets, but it cannot be more wrong.
The number of consumer choices available in media gear	Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are extensive, and the specifications are often confusing.
E-books and online newspapers increasing their share of the market	E-books and online newspapers will bring an end to print media as we know it.
Online education and the new media	Someday, students and teachers will send avatars to their online classrooms.

The first thesis statement you write will be a preliminary thesis statement, or a working thesis statement. You will need it when you begin to outline your assignment as a way to organize it. As you continue to develop the arrangement, you can limit your working thesis statement if it is too broad or expand it if it proves too narrow for what you want to say.

TIP

You will make several attempts before you devise a working thesis statement that you think is effective. Each draft of the thesis statement will bring you closer to the wording that expresses your meaning exactly.

WRITING AN OUTLINE

For an essay question on a test or a brief oral presentation in class, all you may need to prepare is a short, informal outline in which you jot down key ideas in the order you will present them. This kind of outline reminds you to stay focused in a stressful situation and to include all the good ideas that help you explain or prove your point.

For a longer assignment, like an essay or a research paper, many college instructors require students to submit a formal outline before writing a major paper as a way to be sure you are on the right track and are working in an organized manner. A formal outline is a detailed guide that shows how all your supporting ideas relate to each other. It helps you distinguish between ideas that are of equal importance and ones that are of lesser importance. You build your paper based on the framework created by the outline.

TIP

Instructors may also require you to submit an outline with your final draft to check the direction of the assignment and the logic of your final draft. If you are required to submit an outline with the final draft of a paper, remember to revise the outline to reflect any changes you made while writing the paper.

There are two types of formal outlines: the topic outline and the sentence outline. You format both types of formal outlines in the same way.

- Place your introduction and thesis statement at the beginning, under roman numeral I.
- Use roman numerals (II, III, IV, V, etc.) to identify main points that develop the thesis statement.
- Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, etc.) to divide your main points into parts.
- Use arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) if you need to subdivide any As, Bs, or Cs into smaller parts.
- End with the final roman numeral expressing your idea for your conclusion.

Here is what the skeleton of a traditional formal outline looks like. The indention helps clarify how the ideas are related.

I. Introduction: Thesis statement

II. Main point 1 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 1*

A. Supporting detail → *becomes a support sentence of body paragraph 1*

 1. Subpoint

 2. Subpoint

B. Supporting detail

 1. Subpoint

 2. Subpoint

C. Supporting detail

 1. Subpoint

 2. Subpoint

 3. Subpoint

III. Main point 2 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 2*

 A. Supporting detail

 B. Supporting detail

 C. Supporting detail

IV. Main point 3 → *becomes the topic sentence of body paragraph 3*

 A. Supporting detail

 B. Supporting detail

 C. Supporting detail

V. Conclusion

TIP

In an outline, any supporting detail can be developed with subpoints. For simplicity, the model shows them only under the first main point.

TIP

Formal outlines are often quite rigid in their organization. As many instructors will specify, you cannot subdivide one point if it is only one part. For example, for every roman numeral I, there must be a For every A, there must be a B. For every arabic numeral 1, there must be a 2. See for yourself on the sample outlines that follow.

CONSTRUCTING TOPIC OUTLINES

A topic outline is the same as a sentence outline except you use words or phrases instead of complete sentences. Words and phrases keep the outline short and easier to comprehend. All the headings, however, must be written in parallel structure. (For more information on parallel structure, see "Refining Your Writing: How Do I Improve My Writing Technique?".)

Here is the topic outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing. Her purpose is to inform, and her audience is a general audience of her fellow college students. Notice how Mariah begins with her thesis statement. She then arranges her main points and supporting details in outline form using short phrases in parallel grammatical structure.

I. Introduction

Thesis statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

II. Ebook readers and the way that people read

A. Books easy to access and carry around

- Electronic downloads
- Storage in memory for hundreds of books

B. An expanding market

- Ebook readers from booksellers
- Ebook readers from electronics and computer companies

C. Limitations of current ebook readers

- Incompatible features from one brand to the next
- Borrowing and sharing ebooks

III. Film cameras replaced by digital cameras.

A. Three types of digital cameras

- 1. Compact digital cameras
- 2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs

  - Cameras that combine the best features of both

  B. The confusing "megapixel wars"

  C. The zoom lens battle

IV. The confusing choice among televisions

  A. 1080p vs. 768p

  B. Plasma screens vs. LCDs

  C. Home media centers

V. Conclusion

  - How to be a wise consumer

CHECKLIST

Writing an Effective Topic Outline

This checklist can help you write an effective topic outline for your assignment. It will also help you discover where you may need to do additional reading or prewriting.

- Do I have a controlling idea that guides the development of the entire piece of writing?
- Do I have three or more main points that I want to make in this piece of writing? Does each main point connect to my controlling idea?
- Is my outline in the best order—chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance—for me to present my main points? Will this order help me get my main point across?
- Do I have supporting details that will help me inform, explain, or prove my main points?
- Do I need to add more support? If so, where?
- Do I need to make any adjustments in my working thesis statement before I consider it the final version?

WRITING AT WORK

Word processing programs generally have an automatic numbering feature that can be used to prepare outlines. This feature automatically sets indents and lets you use the tab key to arrange information just as you would in an outline. Although in business this style might be acceptable, in college your instructor might have different requirements. Teach yourself how to customize the levels of outline numbering in your word-processing program to fit your instructor's preferences.

CONSTRUCTING SENTENCE OUTLINES

A sentence outline is the same as a topic outline except you use complete sentences instead of words or phrases. Complete sentences create clarity and can advance you one step closer to a draft in the writing process.

Here is the sentence outline that Mariah constructed for the essay she is developing.

I. Introduction

- Thesis statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

II. Ebook readers are changing the way people read.
A. Ebook readers make books easy to access and to carry.
1. Books can be downloaded electronically.
2. Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.
B. The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.
1. Booksellers sell their own ebook readers.
2. Electronics and computer companies also sell ebook readers.
C. Current ebook readers have significant limitations.
1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.
2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries.
III. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras.
A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.
1. Compact digital cameras are light but have fewer megapixels.
2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be longer and heavy buy can be used for many functions.
3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts and SLRs.
B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars."
C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy.
IV. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.
A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?
B. In the screen-size wars, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer?
C. Does every home really need a media center?
V. Conclusion

- The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.

TIP

The information compiled under each roman numeral will become a paragraph in your final paper. In the previous example, the outline follows the standard five-paragraph essay arrangement, but longer essays will require more paragraphs and thus more roman numerals. If you think that a paragraph might become too long or stringy, add an additional paragraph to your outline, renumbering the main points appropriately.

WRITING AT WORK

PowerPoint presentations, used both in schools and in the workplace, are organized in a way very similar to formal outlines. PowerPoint presentations often contain information in the form of talking points that the presenter develops with more details and examples than are contained on the PowerPoint slide.

Key Takeaways

- Writers must put their ideas in order so the assignment makes sense. The most common orders are chronological order, spatial order, and order of importance.
- After gathering and evaluating the information you found for your essay, the next step is to write a working, or preliminary, thesis statement.
- The working thesis statement expresses the main idea that you want to develop in the entire piece of writing. It can be modified as you continue the writing process.
- Effective writers prepare a formal outline to organize their main ideas and supporting details in the order they will be presented.
- A topic outline uses words and phrases to express the ideas.
- A sentence outline uses complete sentences to express the ideas.
- The writer's thesis statement begins the outline, and the outline ends with suggestions for the concluding paragraph.

Exercises

1. Using the topic you selected in "Apply Prewriting Models," develop a working thesis statement that states your controlling idea for the piece of writing you are doing. On a sheet of paper, write your working thesis statement.

2. Using the working thesis statement you wrote in #1 and the reading you did in "Apply Prewriting Models," construct a topic outline for your essay. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentions and the use of Roman and arabic numerals and capital letters. Please share with a classmate and compare your outline. Point out areas of interest from their outline and what you would like to learn more about.

3. Expand the topic outline you prepared #2 to make it a sentence outline. In this outline, be sure to include multiple supporting points for your main topic even if your topic outline does not contain them. Be sure to observe correct outline form, including correct indentions and the use of Roman and arabic numerals and capital letters.

4.3 DRAFTING

Learning Objectives

- Identify drafting strategies that improve writing.
- Use drafting strategies to prepare the first draft of an essay.

Drafting is the stage of the writing process in which you develop a complete first version of a piece of writing.

Even professional writers admit that an empty page scares them because they feel they need to come up with something fresh and original every time they open a blank document on their computers. Because you have completed the first two steps in the writing process, you have already recovered from empty page syndrome. You have hours of prewriting and planning already done. You know what will go on that blank page: what you wrote in your outline.

GETTING STARTED: STRATEGIES FOR DRAFTING

Your objective for this portion of the chapter is to draft the body paragraphs of a standard five-paragraph essay. A five-paragraph essay contains an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. If you are more comfortable starting on paper than on the computer, you can start on paper and then type it before you revise. You can also use a voice recorder to get yourself started, dictating a paragraph or two to get you thinking. In this lesson, Mariah does all her work on the computer, but you may use pen and paper or the computer to write a rough draft.

MAKING THE WRITING PROCESS WORK FOR YOU

What makes the writing process so beneficial to writers is that it encourages alternatives to standard practices while motivating you to develop your best ideas. For instance, the following approaches, done alone or in combination with others, may improve your writing and help you move forward in the writing process:

- **Begin writing with the part you know the most about.** You can start with the third paragraph in your outline if ideas come easily to mind. You can start with the second paragraph or the first paragraph, too. Although paragraphs may vary in length, keep in mind that short paragraphs may contain insufficient support. Readers may also think the writing is abrupt. Long paragraphs may be wordy and may lose your reader's interest. As a guideline, try to write paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than the length of an entire double-spaced page.
- **Write one paragraph at a time and then stop.** As long as you complete the assignment on time, you may choose how many paragraphs you complete in one sitting. Pace yourself. On the other hand, try not to procrastinate. Writers should always meet their deadlines.
- **Take short breaks to refresh your mind.** This tip might be most useful if you are writing a multipage report or essay. Still, if you are antsy or cannot concentrate, take a break to let your mind rest. But do not let breaks extend too long. If you spend too much time away from your essay, you may have trouble starting again. You may forget key points or lose momentum. Try setting an alarm to limit your break, and when the time is up, return to your desk to write.
- **Be reasonable with your goals.** If you decide to take ten-minute breaks, try to stick to that goal. If you told yourself that you need more facts, then commit to finding them. Holding yourself to your own goals will create successful writing assignments.
- **Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write.** These aspects of writing are just as important when you are writing a single paragraph for your essay as when you are considering the direction of the entire essay.

Of all of these considerations, keeping your purpose and your audience at the front of your mind is the most important key to writing success. If your purpose is to persuade, for example, you will present your facts and details in the most logical and convincing way you can.

Your purpose will guide your mind as you compose your sentences. Your audience will guide word choice. Are you writing for experts, for a general audience, for other college students, or for people who know very little about your topic? Keep asking yourself what your readers, with their background and experience, need to be told in order to understand your ideas. How can you best express your ideas so they are totally clear and your communication is effective?

TIP

You may want to identify your purpose and audience on an index card that you clip to your paper (or keep next to your computer). On that card, you may want to write notes to yourself—perhaps about what that audience might not know or what it needs to know—so that you will be sure to address those issues when you write. It may be a good idea to also state exactly what you want to explain to that audience, or to inform them of, or to persuade them about.

WRITING AT WORK

Many of the documents you produce at work target a particular audience for a particular purpose. You may find that it is highly advantageous to know as much as you can about your target audience and to prepare your message to reach that audience, even if the audience is a coworker or your boss. Menu language is a common example. Descriptions like "organic romaine" and "free-range chicken" are intended to appeal to a certain type of customer though perhaps not to the same customer who craves a thick steak. Similarly, mail-order companies research the demographics of the people who buy their merchandise. Successful vendors customize product descriptions in catalogs to appeal to their buyers' tastes. For example, the product descriptions in a skateboarder catalog will differ from the descriptions in a clothing catalog for mature adults.

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR FIRST DRAFT

A draft is a complete version of a piece of writing, but it is not the final version. The step in the writing process after drafting, as you may remember, is revising. During revising, you will have the opportunity to make changes to your first draft before you put the finishing touches on it during the editing and proofreading stage. A first draft gives you a working version that you can later improve.

WRITING AT WORK

Workplace writing in certain environments is done by teams of writers who collaborate on the planning, writing, and revising of documents, such as long reports, technical manuals, and the results of scientific research. Collaborators do not need to be in the same room, the same building, or even the same city. Many collaborations are conducted over the Internet.

In a perfect collaboration, each contributor has the right to add, edit, and delete text. Strong communication skills, in addition to strong writing skills, are important in this kind of writing situation because disagreements over style, content, process, emphasis, and other issues may arise.

The collaborative software, or document management systems, that groups use to work on common projects is sometimes called groupware or workgroup support systems.

The reviewing tool on some word-processing programs also gives you access to a collaborative tool that many smaller workgroups use when they exchange documents. You can also use it to leave comments to yourself.

TIP

If you invest some time now to investigate how the reviewing tool in your word processor works, you will be able to use it with confidence during the revision stage of the writing process. Then, when you start to revise, set your reviewing tool to track any changes you make, so you will be able to tinker with text and commit only those final changes you want to keep.

DISCOVERING THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A FIRST DRAFT

If you have been using the information in this chapter step by step to help you develop an assignment, you already have both a formal topic outline and a formal sentence outline to direct your writing. Knowing what a first draft looks like will help you make the creative leap from the outline to the first draft. A first draft should include the following elements:

- An introduction that piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers to keep reading.
- A *thesis statement* that presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing.
- A topic sentence in each paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement.
- Supporting sentences in each paragraph that develop or explain the topic sentence. These can be specific facts, examples, anecdotes, or other details that elaborate on the topic sentence.
- A conclusion that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion.

These elements follow the standard five-paragraph essay format, which you probably first encountered in high school. This basic format is valid for most essays you will write in college, even much longer ones. For now, however, Mariah focuses on writing the three body paragraphs from her outline. Chapter 8 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish" covers writing introductions and conclusions, and you will read Mariah's introduction and conclusion in Chapter 8 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish".

THE ROLE OF TOPIC SENTENCES

Topic sentences make the structure of a text and the writer's basic arguments easy to locate and comprehend. In college writing, using a topic sentence in each paragraph of the essay is the standard rule. However, the topic sentence does not always have to be the first sentence in your paragraph even if it the first item in your formal outline.

TIP

When you begin to draft your paragraphs, you should follow your outline fairly closely. After all, you spent valuable time developing those ideas. However, as you begin to express your ideas in complete sentences, it might strike you that the topic sentence might work better at the end of the paragraph or in the middle. Try it. Writing a draft, by its nature, is a good time for experimentation.

The topic sentence can be the first, middle, or final sentence in a paragraph. The assignment's audience and purpose will often determine where a topic sentence belongs. When the purpose of the assignment is to persuade, for example, the topic sentence should be the first sentence in a paragraph. In a persuasive essay, the writer's point of view should be clearly expressed at the beginning of each paragraph.

Choosing where to position the topic sentence depends not only on your audience and purpose but also on the essay's arrangement, or order. When you organize information according to order of importance, the topic sentence may be the final sentence in a paragraph. All the supporting sentences build up to the topic sentence. Chronological order may also position the topic sentence as the final sentence because the controlling idea of the paragraph may make the most sense at the end of a sequence.

When you organize information according to spatial order, a topic sentence may appear as the middle sentence in a paragraph. An essay arranged by spatial order often contains paragraphs that begin with descriptions. A reader may first need a visual in his or her mind before understanding the development of the paragraph. When the topic sentence is in the middle, it unites the details that come before it with the ones that come after it.

TIP

As you read critically throughout the writing process, keep topic sentences in mind. You may discover topic sentences that are not always located at the beginning of a paragraph. For example, fiction writers customarily use topic ideas, either expressed or implied, to move readers through their texts. In nonfiction writing, such as popular magazines, topic sentences are often used when the author thinks it is appropriate (based on the audience and the purpose, of course). A single topic sentence might even control the development of a number of paragraphs. For more information on topic sentences, please see "Writing Paragraphs: Separating Ideas and Shaping Content".

Developing topic sentences and thinking about their placement in a paragraph will prepare you to write the rest of the paragraph.

PARAGRAPHS

The paragraph is the main structural component of an essay as well as other forms of writing. Each paragraph of an essay adds another related main idea to support the writer's thesis, or controlling idea. Each related main idea is supported and developed with facts, examples, and other details that explain it. By exploring and refining one main idea at a time, writers build a strong case for their thesis.

Paragraph Length

How long should a paragraph be?

One answer to this important question may be "long enough"—long enough for you to address your points and explain your main idea. To grab attention or to present succinct supporting ideas, a paragraph can be fairly short and consist of two to three sentences. A paragraph in a complex essay about some abstract point in philosophy or archaeology can be three-quarters of a page or more in length. As long as the writer maintains close focus on the topic and does not ramble, a long paragraph is acceptable in college-level writing. In general, try to keep the paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than one full page of double-spaced text.

TIP

Journalistic style often calls for brief two- or three-sentence paragraphs because of how people read the news, both online and in print. Blogs and other online information sources often adopt this paragraphing style, too. Readers often skim the first paragraphs of a great many articles before settling on the handful of stories they want to read in detail.

You may find that a particular paragraph you write may be longer than one that will hold your audience's interest. In such cases, you should divide the paragraph into two or more shorter paragraphs, adding a topic statement or some kind of transitional word or phrase at the start of the new paragraph. Transition words or phrases show the connection between the two ideas.

In all cases, however, be guided by what you instructor wants and expects to find in your draft. Many instructors will expect you to develop a mature college-level style as you progress through the semester's assignments.

STARTING YOUR FIRST DRAFT

Now we are finally ready to look over Mariah's shoulder as she begins to write her essay about digital technology and the confusing choices that consumers face. As she does, you should have in front of you your outline, with its thesis statement and topic sentences, and the notes you wrote earlier in this lesson on your purpose and audience. Reviewing these will put both you and Mariah in the proper mind-set to start.

The following is Mariah's thesis statement.

Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

Here are the notes that Mariah wrote to herself to characterize her purpose and audience.

Purpose: My purpose is to inform readers about the wide variety of consumer digital technology available in stores and to explain why the specifications for these products, expressed in numbers that average consumers don't understand, often cause bad or misinformed buying decisions.

Audience: My audience is my instructor and members of this class. Most of them are not heavy into technology except for the usual laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players, which are not topics I'm writing about. I'll have to be as exact and precise as I can be when I explain possibly unfamiliar product specifications. At the same time, they're more with it electronically than my grandparents' VCR-flummoxed generation, so I won't have to explain every last detail.

Mariah chose to begin by writing a quick introduction based on her thesis statement. She knew that she would want to improve her introduction significantly when she revised. Right now, she just wanted to give herself a starting point. You will read her introduction again in Section 7.4 "Revising and Editing" when she revises it.

TIP

Remember Mariah's other options. She could have started directly with any of the body paragraphs.

You will learn more about writing attention-getting introductions and effective conclusions in "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish."

With her thesis statement and her purpose and audience notes in front of her, Mariah then looked at her sentence outline. She chose to use that outline because it includes the topic sentences. The following is the portion of her outline for the first body paragraph. The roman numeral II identifies the topic sentence for the paragraph, capital letters indicate supporting details, and arabic numerals label subpoints.

II. Ebook readers are changing the way people read.

A. Ebook readers make books easy to access and to carry.

1. Books can be downloaded electronically.

2. Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.

B. The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.

1. Booksellers sell their own ebook readers.

2. Electronics and computer companies also sell ebook readers.

C. Current ebook readers have significant limitations.

1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.

2. Few programs have been made to fit the other way Americans read by borrowing books from libraries.

Mariah then began to expand the ideas in her outline into a paragraph. Notice how the outline helped her guarantee that all her sentences in the body of the paragraph develop the topic sentence.

Ebook readers are changing the way people read, or so ebook developers hope. The main selling point for these handheld devices, which are sort of the size of a paperback book, is that they make books easy to access and carry. Electronic versions of printed books can be downloaded online for a few bucks or directly from your cell phone. These devices can store hundreds of books in memory and, with text-to-speech features, can even read the texts. The market for ebooks and ebook readers keeps expanding as a lot of companies enter it. Online and traditional booksellers have been the first to market ebook readers to the public, but computer companies, especially the ones already involved in cell phone, online music, and notepad computer-technology, will also enter the market. The problem for consumers, however, is which device to choose. Incompatibility is the norm. Ebooks can be read only on the devices they were intended for. Furthermore, use is restricted by the same kind of DRM systems that restrict the copying of music and videos. So, book buyers are often unable to land books to other readers, as they can with a real book. Few accommodations have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?

TIP

If you write your first draft on the computer, consider creating a new file folder for each course with a set of subfolders inside the course folders for each assignment you are given. Label the folders clearly with the course names, and label each assignment folder and word processing document with a title that you will easily recognize. The assignment name is a good choice for the document. Then use that subfolder to store all the drafts you create. When you start each new draft, do not just write over the last one. Instead, save the draft with a new tag after the title—draft 1, draft 2, and so on—so that you will have a complete history of drafts in case your instructor wishes you to submit them.

In your documents, observe any formatting requirements—for margins, headers, placement of page numbers, and other layout matters—that your instructor requires.

CONTINUING THE FIRST DRAFT

Mariah continued writing her essay, moving to the second and third body paragraphs. She had supporting details but no numbered subpoints in her outline, so she had to consult her prewriting notes for specific information to include.

TIP

If you decide to take a break between finishing your first body paragraph and starting the next one, do not start writing immediately when you return to your work. Put yourself back in context and in the mood by rereading what you have already written. This is what Mariah did. If she had stopped writing in the middle of writing the paragraph, she could have jotted down some quick notes to herself about what she would write next.

Preceding each body paragraph that Mariah wrote is the appropriate section of her sentence outline. Notice how she expanded roman numeral III from her outline into a first draft of the second body paragraph. As you read, ask yourself how closely she stayed on purpose and how well she paid attention to the needs of her audience.

III. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras.

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.

1. Compact digital cameras are light but lack the megapixels.

2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large but can be used for many functions.

3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts and SLRs.

B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing “megapixel wars.”

C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy.

Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras in amateur photographers’ gadget bags. My father took hundreds of slides when his children were growing up, but he had more and more trouble getting them developed. So, he decided to go modern. But, what kind of camera should he buy? The small compact digital camera could slip right in his pocket, but if he tried to print a photograph larger than an 8 × 10, the quality would be poor. Then he investigated buying a single lens reflex camera, or SLR, but they were big and bulky. Then he discovered yet a third type, which combined the smaller size of the compact digital camera with the zoom lenses available for SLRs. His first thought was to buy one of those, but then he realized he had a lot of decisions to make. How many megapixels should the camera be? Five? Ten? What is the advantage of each? Then came the size of the zoom lens. He knew that 3x was too small, but what about 25x? Could he hold a lens that long without causing camera shake? He read hundreds of photography magazines and buying guides, and he still wasn't sure he was right.

Mariah then began her third and final body paragraph using roman numeral IV from her outline.

IV. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.

A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?

B. In the screen-size wars, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer? Does every home really need a media center?

Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You could listen to the guys in the electronic store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen. 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show decent blacks and can be viewed or a wider angle than current LCD screens. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen models. Don't let someone else make you buy more television than you need!

WRITING A TITLE

A writer's best choice for a title is one that alludes to the main point of the entire essay. Like the headline in a newspaper or the big, bold title in a magazine, an essay's title gives the audience a first peek at the content. If readers like the title, they are likely to keep reading.

Following her outline carefully, Mariah crafted each paragraph of her essay. Moving step by step in the writing process, Mariah finished the draft and even included a brief concluding paragraph (you will read her conclusion in Chapter 8 "Writing Essays: From Start to Finish"). She then decided, as the final touch for her writing session, to add an engaging title.

Thesis Statement: Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

Working Title: Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?

WRITING YOUR OWN FIRST DRAFT

Now you may begin your own first draft, if you have not already done so. Follow the suggestions and the guidelines presented in this section.

Key Takeaways

- Make the writing process work for you. Use any and all of the strategies that help you move forward in the writing process.

- Always be aware of your purpose for writing and the needs of your audience. Cater to those needs in every sensible way.
- Remember to include all the key structural parts of an essay: a thesis statement that is part of your introductory paragraph, three or more body paragraphs as described in your outline, and a concluding paragraph. Then add an engaging title to draw in readers.
- Write paragraphs of an appropriate length for your writing assignment. Paragraphs in college-level writing can be a page long, as long as they cover the main topics in your outline.
- Use your topic outline or your sentence outline to guide the development of your paragraphs and the elaboration of your ideas. Each main idea, indicated by a roman numeral in your outline, becomes the topic of a new paragraph. Develop it with the supporting details and the subpoints of those details that you included in your outline.
- Generally speaking, write your introduction and conclusion last, after you have fleshed out the body paragraphs.

Exercises

1. Using the topic for the essay that you outlined in Section 7.2 "Outlining", describe your purpose and your audience as specifically as you can. Use your own sheet of paper to record your responses. Then keep these responses near you during future stages of the writing process.

My purpose: ____

____

____

My audience: ____

____

____

2. To build your sense of appropriate paragraph length, use the Internet to find examples of the following items. Copy them into a file, identify your sources, and present them to your instructor with your annotations, or notes.

- A news article written in short paragraphs. Take notes on, or annotate, your selection with your observations about the effect of combining paragraphs that develop the same topic idea. Explain how effective those paragraphs would be.
- A long paragraph from a scholarly work that you identify through an academic search engine. Annotate it with your observations about the author's paragraphing style.

3. Study how Mariah made the transition from her sentence outline to her first draft. First, copy her outline onto your

own sheet of paper. Leave a few spaces between each part of the outline. Then copy sentences from Mariah's paragraph to align each sentence with its corresponding entry in her outline.

4. Reread body paragraphs two and three of the essay that Mariah is writing. Then answer the questions on your own sheet of paper.

- In body paragraph two, Mariah decided to develop her paragraph as a nonfiction narrative. Do you agree with her decision? Explain. How else could she have chosen to develop the paragraph? Why is that better?
- Compare the writing styles of paragraphs two and three. What evidence do you have that Mariah was getting tired or running out of steam? What advice would you give her? Why?
- Choose one of these two body paragraphs. Write a version of your own that you think better fits Mariah's audience and purpose.

4.4 REVISING AND EDITING

Learning Objectives

- Identify major areas of concern in the draft essay during revising and editing.
- Use peer reviews and editing checklists to assist revising and editing.
- Revise and edit the first draft of your essay and produce a final draft.

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practice, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision.

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF REVISING AND EDITING

Revising and editing allow you to examine two important aspects of your writing separately, so that you can give each task your undivided attention.

- When you revise, you take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.
- When you edit, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature

piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

TIP

How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing? Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them throughout this course; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
- Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.

Many people hear the words *critic*, *critical*, and *criticism* and pick up only negative vibes that provoke feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. For this, you need to teach yourself where to look.

CREATING UNITY AND COHERENCE

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may become less than they want it to be. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has unity, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. When the writing has coherence, the ideas flow smoothly. The wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph.

TIP

Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with unity and coherence. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify places where you find yourself confused, and write a note to yourself about possible fixes.

CREATING UNITY

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist a good digression. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends, unplanned digressions usually harm a piece of writing.

Mariah stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she tentatively titled "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she digressed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the off-topic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph.

Read the following paragraph twice, the first time without Mariah's changes, and the second time with them.

Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ~~You could listen to the guys in the electronic store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs.~~ You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. ~~This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p.~~ The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen. 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. ~~The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ The ~~other~~ important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed or a wider angle than current LCD screens. ~~But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints.~~ Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen models. Don't ~~let someone else make you~~ buy more television than you need!

TIP

When you reread your writing to find revisions to make, look for each type of problem in a separate sweep. Read it straight through once to locate any problems with unity. Read it straight through a second time to find problems with coherence. You may follow this same practice during many stages of the writing process.

WRITING AT WORK

Many companies hire copyeditors and proofreaders to help them produce the cleanest possible final drafts of large writing projects. Copyeditors are responsible for suggesting revisions and style changes; proofreaders check documents for any errors in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation that have crept in. Many times, these tasks are done on a freelance basis, with one freelancer working for a variety of clients.

CREATING COHERENCE

Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays. Table 7.3 "Common Transitional Words and Phrases" groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

Table 4.3 Common Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitions That Show Sequence or Time

after	before	later
afterward	before long	meanwhile
as soon as	finally	next
at first	first, second, third	soon
at last	in the first place	then

Transitions That Show Position

above	across	at the bottom
at the top	behind	below
beside	beyond	inside
near	next to	opposite
to the left, to the right, to the side	under	where

Transitions That Show a Conclusion

indeed	hence	in conclusion
in the final analysis	therefore	thus

Transitions That Continue a Line of Thought

consequently	furthermore	additionally
because	besides the fact	following this idea further
in addition	in the same way	moreover
looking further	considering…, it is clear that	

Transitions That Change a Line of Thought

but	yet	however
nevertheless	on the contrary	on the other hand

Transitions That Show Importance

above all	best	especially
in fact	more important	most important
most	worst	

Transitions That Introduce the Final Thoughts in a Paragraph or Essay

finally	last	in conclusion
most of all	least of all	last of all

All-Purpose Transitions to Open Paragraphs or to Connect Ideas Inside Paragraphs

admittedly	at this point	certainly
granted	it is true	generally speaking
in general	in this situation	no doubt
no one denies	obviously	of course
to be sure	undoubtedly	unquestionably

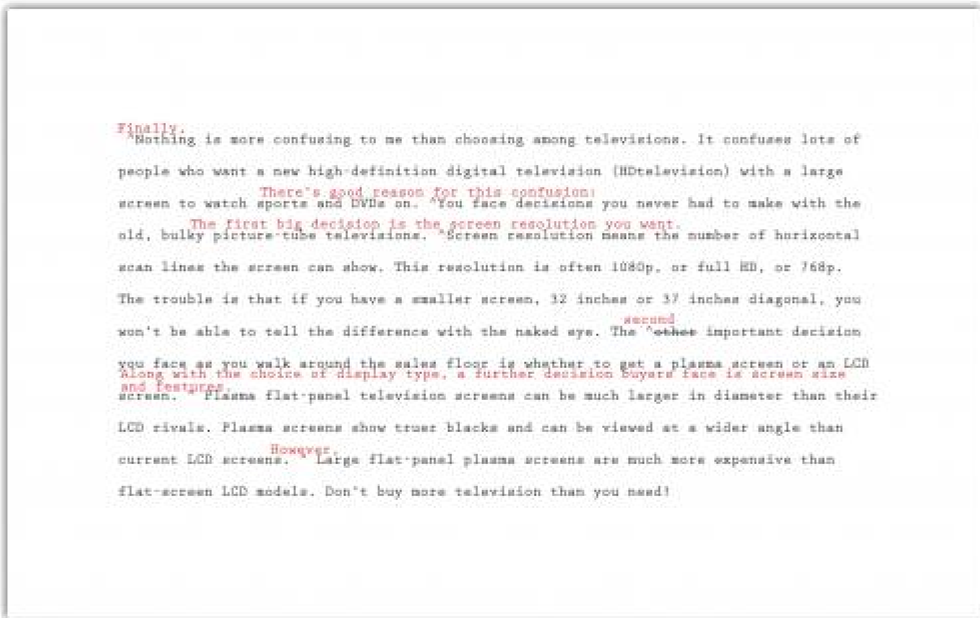
Transitions that Introduce Examples

for instance	for example	
Transitions That Clarify the Order of Events or Steps		
first, second, third	generally, furthermore, finally	in the first place, also, last
in the first place, furthermore, finally	in the first place, likewise, lastly	

After Maria revised for unity, she next examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off topic.

TIP

Many writers make their revisions on a printed copy and then transfer them to the version on-screen. They conventionally use a small arrow called a caret (^) to show where to insert an addition or correction.



Finally,
^Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of
people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDtelevision) with a large
There's good reason for this confusion:
screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ^You face decisions you never had to make with the
The first big decision is the screen resolution you want.
old, bulky picture-tube televisions. ^Screen resolution means the number of horizontal
scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p.
The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you
second
won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The ^~~other~~ important decision
you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD
Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features.
screen. ^Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their
LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than
However,
current LCD screens. ^Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than
flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need!

BEING CLEAR AND CONCISE

Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a lot of words in order to get out all that they feel they need to say. Do either of these composing styles match your style? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise.

If you have a tendency to write too much, you will need to look for unnecessary words. If you have a tendency to be vague or imprecise in your wording, you will need to find specific words to replace any overly general language.

IDENTIFYING WORDINESS

Sometimes writers use too many words when fewer words will appeal more to their audience and better fit their purpose. Here are some common examples of wordiness to look for in your draft. Eliminating wordiness helps all readers, because it makes your ideas clear, direct, and straightforward.

- **Sentences that begin with**
  There is
  or
  There are
  Wordy: There are two major experiments that the Biology Department sponsors.**Revised:** The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.
- **Sentences with unnecessary modifiers.Wordy:** Two extremely famous and well-known consumer advocates spoke eloquently in favor of the proposed important legislation.**Revised:** Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favor of the proposed legislation.
- **Sentences with deadwood phrases that add little to the meaning.** Be judicious when you use phrases such as *in terms of*, *with a mind to*, *on the subject of*, *as to whether or not*, *more or less*, *as far as…is concerned*, and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point.**Wordy:** As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy.A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.**Revised:** As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy.A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.
- **Sentences in the passive voice or with forms of the verb** ***to be*****.** Sentences with passive-voice verbs often create confusion, because the subject of the sentence does not perform an action. Sentences are clearer when the subject of the sentence performs the action and is followed by a strong verb. Use strong active-voice verbs in place of forms of *to be*, which can lead to wordiness. Avoid passive voice when you can.**Wordy:** It might perhaps be said that using a GPS device is something that is a benefit to drivers who have a poor sense of direction.**Revised:** Using a GPS device benefits drivers who have a poor sense of direction.
- **Sentences with constructions that can be shortened.Wordy:** The e-book reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone.My over-sixty uncle bought an e-book reader, and his wife bought an e-book reader, too.**Revised:** The e-book reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone.My over-sixty uncle and his wife both bought e-book readers.

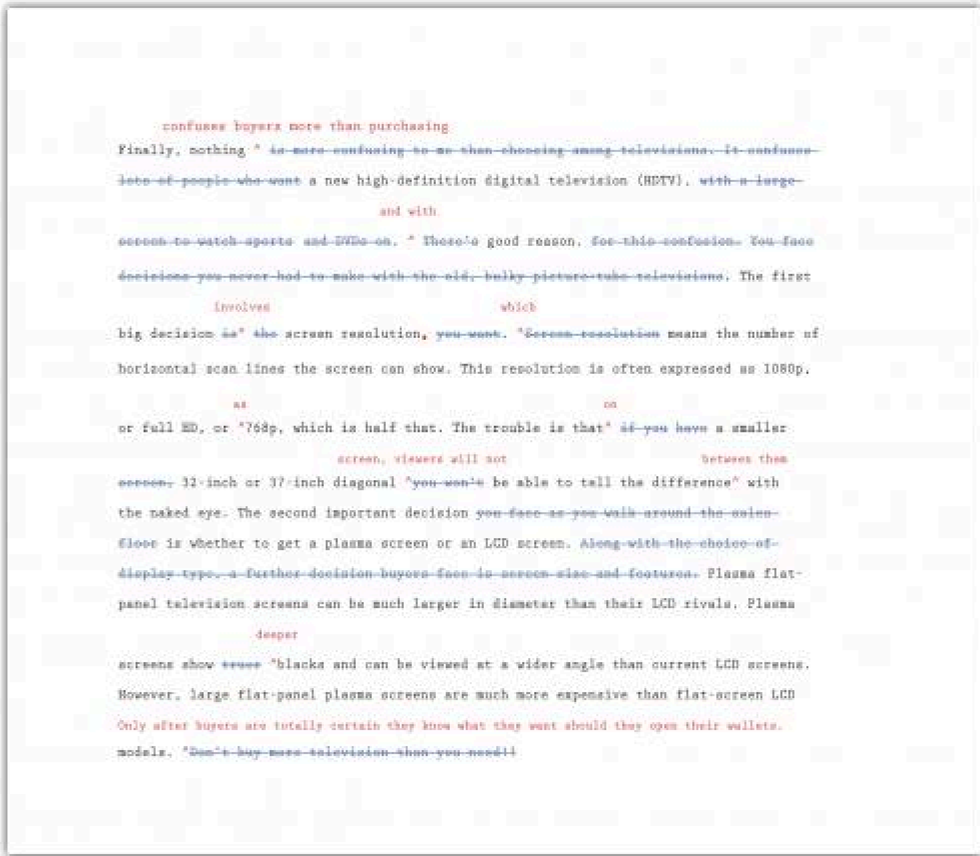
CHOOSING SPECIFIC, APPROPRIATE WORDS

Most college essays should be written in formal English suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate. For more information about word choice, see "Working with Words: Which Word Is Right?".

- **Avoid slang.** Find alternatives to *bummer*, *kewl*, and *rad*.
- **Avoid language that is overly casual.** Write about "men and women" rather than "girls and guys" unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.
- **Avoid contractions.** Use *do not* in place of *don't*, *I am* in place of *I'm*, *have not* in place of *haven't*, and so on. Contractions are considered casual speech.
- **Avoid clichés.** Overused expressions such as *green with envy*, *face the music*, *better late than never*, and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.

- **Be careful when you use words that sound alike but have different meanings.** Some examples are *allusion/illusion*, *complement/compliment*, *council/counsel*, *concurrent/consecutive*, *founder/flounder*, and *historic/historical*. When in doubt, check a dictionary.
- **Choose words with the connotations you want.** Choosing a word for its connotations is as important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word *proud*and the negative connotations of *arrogant* and *conceited*.
- **Use specific words rather than overly general words.** Find synonyms for *thing*, *people*, *nice*, *good*, *bad*, *interesting*, and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear.

Now read the revisions Mariah made to make her third paragraph clearer and more concise. She has already incorporated the changes she made to improve unity and coherence.


confuses buyers more than purchasing
Finally, nothing ^ ~~is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want~~ a new high-definition digital television (HDTV), ~~with a large~~
and with
~~screen to watch sports and DVDs on.~~ ^ There's good reason. ~~for this confusion. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions.~~ The first
involves which
big decision ~~is~~^ ~~the~~ screen resolution, ~~you want.~~ ^~~Screen resolution~~ means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often expressed as 1080p,
as on
or full HD, or ^768p, which is half that. The trouble is that^ ~~if you have~~ a smaller
screen, viewers will not between them
~~screen,~~ 32-inch or 37-inch diagonal ^~~you won't~~ be able to tell the difference^ with the naked eye. The second important decision ~~you face as you walk around the sales floor~~ is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma
deeper
screens show ~~truer~~ ^blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. However, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD
Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets.
models. ^~~Don't buy more television than you need!!~~

COMPLETING A PEER REVIEW

After working so closely with a piece of writing, writers often need to step back and ask for a more objective reader. What writers most need is feedback from readers who can respond only to the words on the page. When they are ready, writers show their drafts to someone they respect and who can give an honest response about its strengths and weaknesses.

You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader's feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called peer review.

You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other's essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a useful framework for the peer review session.

QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW

Title of essay: ____

Date: ____

Writer's name: ____

Peer reviewer's name: ____

This essay is about

____.

Your main points in this essay are

____.

What I most liked about this essay is

____.

These three points struck me as your strongest:

1. Point: ____
   Why: ____
2. Point: ____
   Why: ____
3. Point: ____
   Why: ____

These places in your essay are not clear to me:

1. Where: ____
   Needs improvement because
   ____
2. Where: ____
   Needs improvement because ____
3. Where: ____
   Needs improvement because ____

The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is

____.

WRITING AT WORK

One of the reasons why word-processing programs build in a reviewing feature is that workgroups have become a common feature in many businesses. Writing is often collaborative, and the members of a workgroup and their supervisors often critique group members' work and offer feedback that will lead to a better final product.

USING FEEDBACK OBJECTIVELY

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience).

It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to take that feedback into consideration in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

USING FEEDBACK FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

You might get feedback from more than one reader as you share different stages of your revised draft. In this situation, you may receive feedback from readers who do not understand the assignment or who lack your involvement with and enthusiasm for it.

You need to evaluate the responses you receive according to two important criteria:

1. Determine if the feedback supports the purpose of the assignment.
2. Determine if the suggested revisions are appropriate to the audience.

Then, using these standards, accept or reject revision feedback.

EDITING YOUR DRAFT

If you have been incorporating each set of revisions as Mariah has, you have produced multiple drafts of your writing. So far, all your changes have been content changes. Perhaps with the help of peer feedback, you have made sure that you sufficiently supported your ideas. You have checked for problems with unity and coherence. You have examined your essay for word choice, revising to cut unnecessary words and to replace weak wording with specific and appropriate wording.

The next step after revising the content is editing. When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment.

TIP

Editing often takes time. Budgeting time into the writing process allows you to complete additional edits after revising.

Editing and proofreading your writing helps you create a finished work that represents your best efforts. Here are a few more tips to remember about your readers:

- Readers do not notice correct spelling, but they *do* notice misspellings.
- Readers look past your sentences to get to your ideas—unless the sentences are awkward, poorly constructed, and frustrating to read.
- Readers notice when every sentence has the same rhythm as every other sentence, with no variety.
- Readers do not cheer when you use *there*, *their*, and *they're* correctly, but they notice when you do not.
- Readers will notice the care with which you handled your assignment and your attention to detail in the delivery of an error-free document.

The last section of this book offers a useful review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Use it to help you eliminate major errors in your writing and refine your understanding of the conventions of language. Do not hesitate to ask for help, too, from peer tutors in your academic department or in the college's writing lab. In the meantime, use the checklist to help you edit your writing.

CHECKLIST

Editing Your Writing

Grammar

- Are some sentences actually sentence fragments?
- Are some sentences run-on sentences? How can I correct them?
- Do some sentences need conjunctions between independent clauses?
- Does every verb agree with its subject?
- Is every verb in the correct tense?
- Are tense forms, especially for irregular verbs, written correctly?
- Have I used subject, object, and possessive personal pronouns correctly?
- Have I used *who* and *whom* correctly?
- Is the antecedent of every pronoun clear?
- Do all personal pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Have I used the correct comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs?
- Is it clear which word a participial phrase modifies, or is it a dangling modifier?

Sentence Structure

- Are all my sentences simple sentences, or do I vary my sentence structure?
- Have I chosen the best coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to join clauses?
- Have I created long, overpacked sentences that should be shortened for clarity?
- Do I see any mistakes in parallel structure?

Punctuation

- Does every sentence end with the correct end punctuation?
- Can I justify the use of every exclamation point?
- Have I used apostrophes correctly to write all singular and plural possessive forms?
- Have I used quotation marks correctly?

Mechanics and Usage

- Can I find any spelling errors? How can I correct them?
- Have I used capital letters where they are needed?
- Have I written abbreviations, where allowed, correctly?
- Can I find any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as *to*/*too*/*two*?

TIP

Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write *principle* but wrote *principal* instead. A grammar checker often queries constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.

TIP

Proofreading requires patience; it is very easy to read past a mistake. Set your paper aside for at least a few hours, if not a day or more, so your mind will rest. Some professional proofreaders read a text backward so they can concentrate on spelling and punctuation. Another helpful technique is to slowly read a paper aloud, paying attention to every word, letter, and punctuation mark.

If you need additional proofreading help, ask a reliable friend, a classmate, or a peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

FORMATTING

Remember to use proper format when creating your finished assignment. Sometimes an instructor, a department, or a college will require students to follow specific instructions on titles, margins, page numbers, or the location of the writer's name. These requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often observe the American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) style guides, especially when citations of sources are included.

To ensure the format is correct and follows any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit an assignment.

Key Takeaways

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.
- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.
- Coherence in writing means that the writer's wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent.
- Writing should be clear and concise, with no unnecessary words.
- Effective formal writing uses specific, appropriate words and avoids slang, contractions, clichés, and overly general words.
- Peer reviews, done properly, can give writers objective feedback about their writing. It is the writer's responsibility to evaluate the results of peer reviews and incorporate only useful feedback.
- Remember to budget time for careful editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your editing skills.

Exercises

1.Answer the following two questions about Mariah's paragraph in "Creating Unity" above:

- Do you agree with Mariah's decision to make the deletions she made? Did she cut too much, too little, or just enough? Explain.
- Is the explanation of what screen resolution means a digression? Or is it audience friendly and essential to understanding the paragraph? Explain.

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2. Now start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

3. Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph in "Creating Coherence."

- Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.
- What transition words or phrases did Mariah add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?
- What effect does adding additional sentences have on the coherence of the paragraph? Explain. When you read both versions aloud, which version has a more logical flow of ideas? Explain.

4. Now return to the first draft of the essay you wrote and revise it for coherence. Add transition words and phrases

where they are needed, and make any other changes that are needed to improve the flow and connection between ideas.

5. Answer the following questions about Mariah's revised paragraph:

- Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Mariah's writing.
- Do you agree with the changes that Mariah made to her paragraph? Which changes would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain. What other changes would you have made?
- What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun *you* have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?

6. Now return once more to your essay in progress. Read carefully for problems with word choice. Be sure that your draft is written in formal language and that your word choice is specific and appropriate.

7. Exchange essays with a classmate and complete a peer review of each other's draft in progress. Remember to give positive feedback and to be courteous and polite in your responses. Focus on providing one positive comment and one question for more information to the author.

8. Work with two partners. Go back to #3 in this lesson and compare your responses about Mariah's paragraph with your partners'. Recall Mariah's purpose for writing and her audience. Then, working individually, list where you agree and where you disagree about revision needs.

9. With the help of the checklist, edit and proofread your essay.

4.5 REVISING AND PRESENTING YOUR WRITING

I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter. -James A. Michener
Half my life is an act of revision. -John Irving

Introductory Exercises

1. Find an article you read online and review it, noting at least one area that would benefit from revision. Please share your results with classmates.

2. Exchange draft revisions of a document prepared for a class or work assignment with a classmate or colleague. Note at least one strength and one area for improvement. Provide feedback to the writer.

One of the hardest tests to pass is the one of peer review. In the academic environment, professors conduct research, learn lessons, and share their findings by contributing articles for professional journals. Each academic journal article undergoes peer review, or evaluation by colleagues in the same field as the professor who wrote the article. These evaluations, often conducted by leaders in each field, do not only consider the value of the writer's findings. They also evaluate the mechanics of the document (spelling and grammar) and its presentation, organization, and design. The first time a scholar submits an article for peer review, he or she can expect rejections and liberal use of the red pen.

You may not experience such a rigorous and vigorous review of your writing, but in many ways the world of business is equally challenging. Academic publications ultimately value solid findings that contribute to the field or discipline. Business writing ultimately values writing that produces results or outcomes in environments where you do not have the luxury of controlling the variables, designing the context, or limiting the scope of your inquiry. Your business document will be evaluated by people you never met or even anticipated would read it, and errors will have a negative impact on its performance.

In every career, industry, and profession, today's business climate is a results-oriented environment. Regardless of what you write, there exists the possibility, even probability, that misunderstandings and miscommunications can and will occur. Although you will not always have control over the importance of the ideas you are assigned to communicate in your writing, there is one thing you can control: errors. If you avoid mistakes, both in the document itself and in the way your audience interprets your message, your document will have its best chance of success. To this end a thorough revision is an important part of your writing process.

As you review and evaluate documents, those written by you and others, you will need to keep in mind the three goals of being correct, clear, and concise. Next you will have to focus on effectiveness and efficiency, recognizing that in a climate of increasing demands and limited resources like time, you need to get it right the first time.

The environment of a business writer can be stressful, but it can also be rewarding. Recognition from your peers—suppliers, internal department colleagues, or customers—can make it all worthwhile. Still, the reward in terms of acknowledgement may come in the form of silence. When your document clearly meets expectations and accomplishes its goal, the outcome may be the absence of error or misinterpretation, a rare occasion that often goes unheralded. As a business writer you need to value your work and note what works. When it does, take pride in your hard work in effort. You may not always be celebrated for your error-free documents that communicate concepts and ideas clearly, but know that they are successful, and their success is your success.

4.6 GENERAL REVISION POINTS TO CONSIDER

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the process of revision
- List three general elements of every document that require revision

Just when you think the production of your document is done, the revision process begins. Runners often refer to "the wall," where the limits of physical exertion are met and exhaustion is imminent. The writing process requires effort, from overcoming writer's block to the intense concentration composing a document often involves. It is only natural to have a sense of relief when your document is drafted from beginning to end. This relief is false confidence, though. Your document is not complete, and in its current state it could, in fact, do more harm than good. Errors, omissions, and unclear phrases may lurk within your document, waiting to reflect poorly on you when it reaches your audience. Now is not time to let your guard down, prematurely celebrate, or to mentally move on to the next assignment. Think of the revision process as one that hardens and strengthens your document, even though it may require the sacrifice of some hard-earned writing.

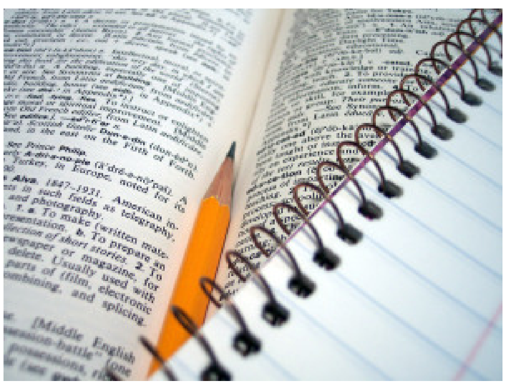
General revision requires attention to content, organization, style, and readability. These four main categories should give you a template from which to begin to explore details in depth. A cursory review of these elements in and of itself is insufficient for even the briefest review. Across this chapter we will explore ways to expand your revision efforts to cover the common areas of weakness and error. You may need to take some time away from your document to approach it again with a fresh perspective. Writers often juggle multiple projects that are at different stages of development. This allows the writer to leave one document and return to another without losing valuable production time. Overall, your goal is similar to what it was during your writing preparation and production: a clear mind.

EVALUATE CONTENT

Content is only one aspect of your document. Let's say you were assigned a report on the sales trends for a specific product in a relatively new market. You could produce a one-page chart comparing last year's results to current figures and call it a day, but would it clearly and concisely deliver content that is useful and correct? Are you supposed to highlight trends? Are you supposed to spotlight factors that contributed to the increase or decrease? Are you supposed to include projections for next year? Our list of questions could continue, but for now let's focus on content and its relationship to the directions. Have you included the content that corresponds to the given assignment, left any information out that may be necessary to fulfill the expectations, or have you gone beyond the assignment directions? Content will address the central questions of who, what, where, when, why and how within the range and parameters of the assignment.

EVALUATE ORGANIZATION

Organization is another key aspect of any document. Standard formats that include an introduction, body, and conclusion may be part of your document, but did you decide on a direct or indirect approach? Can you tell? A direct approach will announce the main point or purpose at the beginning, while an indirect approach will present an introduction before the main point. Your document may use any of a wide variety of organizing principles, such as chronological, spatial, compare/contrast. Is your organizing principle clear to the reader?



Beyond the overall organization, pay special attention to transitions. Readers often have difficulty following a document if the writer makes the common error of failing to make one point relevant to the next, or to illustrate the relationships between the points. Finally, your conclusion should mirror your introduction and not introduce new material.

EVALUATE STYLE

Style is created through content and organization, but also involves word choice and grammatical structures. Is your document written in an informal or formal tone, or does it present a blend, a mix, or an awkward mismatch? Does it provide a coherent and unifying voice with a professional tone? If you are collaborating on the project with other writers or contributors, pay special attention to unifying the document across the different authors' styles of writing. Even if they were all to write in a professional, formal style, the document may lack a consistent voice. Read it out loud—can you tell who is writing what? If so, that is a clear clue that you need to do more revising in terms of style.

EVALUATE READABILITY

Readability refers to the reader's ability to read and comprehend the document. A variety of tools are available to make an estimate of a document's reading level, often correlated to a school grade level. If this chapter has a reading level of 11.8, it would be appropriate for most readers in the eleventh grade. But just because you are in grade thirteen, eighteen, or twenty-one doesn't mean that your audience, in their everyday use of language, reads at a postsecondary level. As a business writer, your goal is to make your writing clear and concise, not complex and challenging.

You can often use the "Tools" menu of your word processing program to determine the approximate reading level of your document. The program will evaluate the number of characters per word, add in the number of words per sentence, and come up with a rating. It may also note the percentage of passive sentences, and other information that will allow you to evaluate readability. Like any computer-generated rating, it should serve you as one point of evaluation, but not the only point. Your concerted effort to choose words you perceive as appropriate for the audience will serve you better than any computer evaluation of your writing.

Key Takeaways

The four main categories—content, organization, style, and readability—provide a template for general revision.

Exercises

1. Select a document, such as an article from a Web site, newspaper, magazine, or a piece of writing you have completed for a course. Evaluate the document according to the four main categories described in this section. Could the document benefit from revision in any of these areas? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask how much time and attention they dedicate to the revision process of their written work. Compare your results with classmates.
3. Find a particularly good example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.
4. Find a particularly bad example of writing according to the above criteria. Review it and share it with your classmates.

4.7 SPECIFIC REVISION POINTS TO CONSIDER

Learning Objectives

- List six specific elements of every document to check for revision

When revising your document, it can be helpful to focus on specific points. When you consider each point in turn, you will be able to break down the revision process into manageable steps. When you have examined each point, you can be confident that you have avoided many possible areas for errors. Specific revision requires attention to the following:

- Format
- Facts
- Names
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

Let's examine these characteristics one by one.

FORMAT

Format is an important part of the revision process. Format involves the design expectations of author and audience. If a letter format normally designates a date at the top, or the sender's address on the left side of the page before the salutation, the information should be in the correct location. Formatting that is messy or fails to conform to the company style will reflect poorly on you before the reader even starts to read it. By presenting a document that is properly formatted according to the expectations of your organization and your readers, you will start off making a good impression.

FACTS

Another key part of the revision process is checking your facts. Did you know that news organizations and magazines employ professional fact-checkers? These workers are responsible for examining every article before it gets published and consulting original sources to make sure the information in the article is accurate. This can involve making phone calls to the people who were interviewed for the article—for example, "Mr. Diaz, our report states that you are thirty-nine years old. Our article will be published on the fifteenth. Will that be your correct age on that date?" Fact checking also involves looking facts up in encyclopedias, directories, atlases, and other standard reference works; and, increasingly, in online sources.

While you can't be expected to have the skills of a professional fact-checker, you do need to reread your writing with a critical eye to the information in it. Inaccurate content can expose you and your organization to liability, and will create far more work than a simple revision of a document. So, when you revise a document, ask yourself the following:

- Does my writing contain any statistics or references that need to be verified?
- Where can I get reliable information to verify it?

It is often useful to do independent verification—that is, look up the fact in a different source from the one where you first got it. For example, perhaps a colleague gave you a list of closing averages for the Dow Jones Industrial on certain dates. You still have the list, so you can make sure your document agrees with the numbers your colleague provided. But what if your colleague made a mistake? The Web sites of the *Wall Street Journal*and other major newspapers list closings for "the Dow," so it is reasonably easy for you to look up the numbers and verify them independently.

NAMES

There is no more embarrassing error in business writing than to misspell someone's name. To the writer, and to some readers, spelling a name "Michelle" instead of "Michele" may seem like a minor matter, but to Michele herself it will make a big difference. Attribution is one way we often involve a person's name, and giving credit where credit is due is essential. There are many other reasons for including someone's name, but regardless of your reasons for choosing to focus on them, you need to make sure the spelling is correct. Incorrect spelling of names is a quick way to undermine your credibility; it can also have a negative impact on your organization's reputation, and in some cases it may even have legal ramifications.

SPELLING

Correct spelling is another element essential for your credibility, and errors will be glaringly obvious to many readers. The negative impact on your reputation as a writer, and its perception that you lack attention to detail or do not value your work, will be hard to overcome. In addition to the negative personal consequences, spelling errors can become factual errors and destroy the value of content. This may lead you to click the "spell check" button in your word processing program, but computer spell-checking is not enough. Spell checkers have improved in the years since they were first invented, but they are not infallible. They can and do make mistakes.

Typically, your incorrect word may in fact be a word, and therefore, according to the program, correct. For example, suppose you wrote, "The major will attend the meeting" when you meant to write "The mayor will attend the meeting." The program would miss this error because "major" is a word, but your meaning would be twisted beyond recognition.

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation marks are the traffic signals, signs, and indications that allow us to navigate the written word. They serve to warn us in advance when a transition is coming or the complete thought has come to an end. A period indicates the thought is complete, while a comma signals that additional elements or modifiers are coming. Correct signals will help your reader follow the thoughts through sentences and paragraphs, and enable you to communicate with maximum efficiency while reducing the probability of error (Strunk & White, 1979).

Table 4.4 "Punctuation Marks" lists twelve punctuation marks that are commonly used in English in alphabetical order along with an example of each.

Table 4.4 Punctuation Marks

	Symbol	Example
Apostrophe	’	Michele’s report is due tomorrow.
Colon	:	This is what I think: you need to revise your paper.
Comma	,	The report advised us when to sell, what to sell, and where to find buyers.
Dash	—	This is more difficult than it seems—buyers are scarce when credit is tight.
Ellipsis	…	Lincoln spoke of “a new nation…dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”
Exclamation Point	!	How exciting!
Hyphen	–	The question is a many-faceted one.
Parentheses	( )	To answer it (or at least to begin addressing it) we will need more information.
Period	.	The answer is no. Period. Full stop.
Question Mark	?	Can I talk you into changing your mind?
Quotation Marks	“ ”	The manager told him, “I will make sure Renée is available to help you.”
Semicolon	;	Theresa was late to the meeting; her computer had frozen and she was stuck at her desk until a tech rep came to fix it.

It may be daunting to realize that the number of possible punctuation errors is as extensive as the number of symbols and constructions available to the author. Software program may catch many punctuation errors, but again it is the committed writer that makes the difference. Here we will provide details on how to avoid mistakes with three of the most commonly used punctuation marks: the comma, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

COMMAS

The comma is probably the most versatile of all punctuation marks. This means you as a writer can use your judgment in many cases as to whether you need a comma or not. It also means that the possible errors involving commas are many. Commas are necessary some of the time, but careless writers often place a comma in a sentence where it is simply not needed.

Commas are used to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction like “but,” “and,” and “or.”

The advertising department is effective, but don’t expect miracles in this business climate.

Commas are not used simply to join two independent clauses. This is known as the comma splice error, and the way to correct it is to insert a conjunction after the comma.

Examples
The advertising department is effective, the sales department needs to produce more results.
The advertising department is effective, *but* the sales department needs to produce more results.

Commas are used for introductory phrases and to offset clauses that are not essential to the sentence. If the meaning would remain intact without the phrase, it is considered nonessential.

Examples

After the summary of this year's sales, the sales department had good reason to celebrate.

The sales department, *last year's winner of the most productive award*, celebrated their stellar sales success this year.

The sales department celebrated their stellar sales success this year.

Commas are used to offset words that help create unity across a sentence like "however" and "therefore."

Examples

The sales department discovered, *however*, that the forecast for next year is challenging.

However, the sales department discovered that the forecast for next year is challenging.

Commas are often used to separate more than one adjective modifying a noun.

The sales department discovered the *troublesome, challenging* forecast for next year.

Commas are used to separate addresses, dates, and titles; they are also used in dialogue sequences.

Examples

John is from Ancud, Chile.

Katy was born on August 2, 2002.

Mackenzie McLean, D. V., is an excellent veterinarian.

Lisa said, "When writing, omit needless words."

SEMICOLONS

Semicolons have two uses. First, they indicate relationships among groups of items in a series when the individual items are separated by commas. Second, a semicolon can be used to join two independent clauses; this is another way of avoiding the comma splice error mentioned above. Using a semicolon this way is often effective if the meaning of the two independent clauses is linked in some way, such as a cause-effect relationship.

Examples

Merchandise on order includes women's wear such as sweaters, skirts, and blouses; men's wear such as shirts, jackets, and slacks; and outwear such as coats, parkas, and hats.

The sales campaign was successful; without its contributions our bottom line would have been dismal indeed.

APOSTROPHES

The apostrophe, like the semicolon, has two uses: it replaces letters omitted in a contraction, and it often indicates the possessive.

Because contractions are associated with an informal style, they may not be appropriate for some professional writing. The business writer will—as always—evaluate the expectations and audience of the given assignment.

It's great news that sales were up. *It is* also good news that *we've* managed to reduce our advertising costs.

When you indicate possession, pay attention to the placement of the apostrophe. Nouns commonly receive "'s" when they are made possessive. But plurals that end in "s" receive a hanging apostrophe when they are made possessive, and the word "it" forms the possessive ("its") with no apostrophe at all.

Examples

Mackenzie*'s* sheep are ready to be sheared.

The parent*s'* meeting is scheduled for Thursday.

We are willing to adopt a dog that has already had its shots.

GRAMMAR

Learning to use good, correct standard English grammar is more of a practice than an event, or even a process. Grammar involves the written construction of meaning from words and involves customs that evolve and adapt to usage over time. Because grammar is always evolving, none of us can sit back and rest assured that we "know" how to write with proper grammar. Instead, it is important to write and revise with close attention to grammar, keeping in mind that grammatical errors can undermine your credibility, reflect poorly on your employer, and cause misunderstandings.

Jean Wyrick has provided a list of common errors in grammar to watch out for, which we have adapted here for easy reference (Wyrick, 2008). In each case, the error is in *italics* and the *[correct form]* is italicized within square bracket.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

The subject and verb should agree on the number under consideration. In faulty writing, a singular subject is sometimes mismatched with a plural verb form, or vice versa.

Examples

Sales have not been consistent and they *doesn't [do not]* reflect your hard work and effort.

The president appreciates your hard work and *wish [wishes]* to thank you.

VERB TENSE

Verb tense refers to the point in time where action occurs. The most common tenses are past, present, and future. There is nothing wrong with mixing tenses in a sentence if the action is intended to take place at different times. In faulty or careless writing, however, they are often mismatched illogically.

Examples

Sharon was under pressure to finish the report, so she *uses [used]* a shortcut to paste in the sales figures.

The sales department holds a status meeting every week, and last week's meeting *will be [was]* at the Garden Inn.

SPLIT INFINITIVE

The infinitive form of verb is one without a reference to time, and in its standard form it includes the auxiliary word "to," as in "to write is to revise." It has been customary to keep the "to" next to the verb; to place an adverb between them is known as splitting the infinitive. Some modern writers do this all the time (for example, "to boldly go…"), and since all grammar is essentially a set of customs that govern the written word, you will need to understand what the custom is where you work. If you are working with colleagues trained across the last fifty years, they may find split infinitives annoying. For this reason, it's often best to avoid splitting an infinitive wherever you can do so without distorting the meaning of the sentence.

Examples

The Marketing Department needs assistance *to accurately understand our readers [to understand our readers accurately]*.

David pondered *how to best revise [how best to revise]* the sentence.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE

A double negative uses two negatives to communicate a single idea, duplicating the negation. In some languages, such as Spanish, when the main action in the sentence is negative, it is correct to express the other elements in the sentence negatively as well. However, in English, this is incorrect. In addition to sounding wrong (you can often hear the error if you read the sentence out loud), a double negative in English causes an error in logic, because two negatives cancel each other out and yield a positive. In fact, the wording of ballot measures is often criticized for confusing voters with double negatives.

Examples

John *doesn't need no [any]* assistance with his sales presentation. [Or *John needs no assistance with his sales presentation*.]

Jeri *could not find no [any]* reason to approve the request. [Or *Jeri could find no reason to approve the request*.]

IRREGULAR VERBS

Most verbs represent the past with the addition of the suffix "ed," as in "ask" becomes "asked." Irregular verbschange a vowel or convert to another word when representing the past tense. Consider the irregular verb "to go"; the past tense is "went," not "goed."

Examples

The need *arised [arose]* to seek additional funding.

Katy *leaped [leapt]* onto the stage to introduce the presentation.

COMMAS IN A SERIES

A comma is used to separate the items in a series, but in some writing styles the comma is omitted between the final two items of the series, where the conjunction joins the last and next-to-last items. The comma in this position is known as the "serial comma." The serial comma is typically required in academic writing and typically omitted in journalism. Other writers omit the serial comma if the final two items in the series have a closer logical connection than the other items. In business writing, you may use it or omit it according to the prevailing style in your organization or industry. Know your audience and be aware of the rule.

Examples

Lisa is an amazing wife, mother, teacher, *gardener, and editor*.

Lisa is an amazing wife, mother teacher, *gardener and editor*.

Lisa is an amazing teacher, editor, gardener, *wife and mother*.

FAULTY COMPARISONS

When comparing two objects by degree, there should be no mention of "est," as in "biggest" as all you can really say is that one is bigger than the other. If you are comparing three or more objects, then "est" will accurately communicate which is the "biggest" of them all.

Examples

Between the twins, Mackenzie is the *fastest [faster]* of the two.

Among our three children, Mackenzie is the *tallest*.

DANGLING MODIFIERS

Modifiers describe a subject in a sentence or indicate how or when the subject carried out the action. If the subject is omitted, the modifier intended for the subject is left dangling or hanging out on its own without a clear relationship to the sentence. Who is doing the seeing in the first sentence?

Examples

Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, celebrations were in order.

Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, *we decided* that celebrations were in order.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

Modifiers that are misplaced are not lost, they are simply in the wrong place. Their unfortunate location is often far from the word or words they describe, making it easy for readers to misinterpret the sentence.

Examples

Trying to avoid the deer, *the tree hit my car*.

My car hit the tree when I tried to avoid a deer in the road.

Key Takeaway

By revising for format, facts, names, spelling, punctuation, and grammar, you can increase your chances of correcting many common errors in your writing.

Exercises

1. Select a news article from a news Web site, newspaper, or magazine. Find as many facts in the article as you can that could require fact-checking. Then check as many of these facts as you can, using sources available to you in the library and on the Internet. Did you find any errors in the article? Discuss your findings with your classmates.

2. Find an example of an assertion without attribution and share it with classmates.

3. Find an example of an error in a published document and share it with classmates.

4. Interview a coworker or colleague and specifically ask them to share a story where an error got past them during the revision process and made it to print or publication. How did they handle it? How much time did it take to correct? What did they learn from the experience? Compare your results with classmates.

4.8 STYLE REVISIONS

Learning Objectives

- Discuss and demonstrate the use of twelve points to consider for style revisions.

You know the difference between cloudy and clear water, but can you tell when your writing is cloudy, when meaning is hidden in shadows, when the message you are trying to communicate is obscured by the style you use to present it? Water filtration involves removing particulates, harmful inorganic and organic materials, and clarifying the water. In the same way, the revision process requires filtration. You may come across word choices you thought were appropriate at the time or notice words you thought you wrote but are absent, and the revision process will start to produce results. Some words and sentence constructions will be harmful to the effective delivery and require attention. Some transitions fail to show the connections between thoughts and need to be changed.

Another way of conceptualizing the revision process in general and the clarifying process specifically is the common reference to a diamond in the rough. Like muddy water, diamonds do not come to have significant value until they have had their rough edges removed, have received expert polish, and been evaluated for clarity. Your attention to this important process will bring the value quotient of your writing up as it begins to more accurately communicate intended meaning. As we've discussed before, now is not the time to lose momentum. Just the opposite, now is the time to make your writing shine.

Here we will discuss several strategies to help clarify your writing style. If you have made wise word choices, the then next step to clarifying your document is to take it sentence by sentence. Each sentence should stand on its own, but each sentence is also interdependent on all other sentences in your document. These strategies will require significant attention to detail and an awareness of grammar that might not be your area of strength, but the more you practice them the more they will become good habits that will enhance your writing.

BREAK UP LONG SENTENCES

By revising long sentences you can often increase the overall clarity of your document. To do this, let's start off with one strategy that will produce immediate results. Count the number of conjunctions in your document. Word processing programs will often perform a search for a specific a word and for our use, "and" will do just fine. Simple sentences often become compound and complex through the use of the word "and." The further the subject, the action, and the modifiers or descriptions are from one another is directly related to the complexity of the sentence, increasing the probability of reader error and misunderstandings. Look for the word "and" and evaluate whether the sentence has two complete thoughts or ideas. Does it try to join two dissimilar ideas or ones better off on their own?

In prose, and your expository writing classes, you may have learned that complex sentences can communicate emotions, settings, and scenes that evoke a sense of place and time with your reading audience. In business writing, our goals aim more toward precision and the elimination of error; a good business document won't read like a college essay. A professor may have advised you to avoid short, choppy writing. Are we asking you to do something along those lines? No. Choppy writing is hard to follow, but simple, clear writing does the job with a minimum of fuss and without decoration.

In their best-selling book *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White (1979) emphasize clarity as a central goal. However, the following is one of their rules: "Do not break sentences in two." As effective business writers we would agree with this rule, and while it may seem to contradict the preceding paragraph, let's consider what they mean by that rule. They encourage writers to avoid sentence fragments by refraining from using a period where the sentence needs a comma. That means that an independent clause should be connected to a dependent clause when necessary, and as we've discussed previously, a comma and a conjunction are appropriate for the task. The sentence fragment cannot stand alone, so we would agree with the rule as written.

But we would also qualify its use: when you have two long and awkward independent clauses that form an unwieldy sentence, it may indeed be better to divide the clauses into two independent sentences. Your skill as a business writer is required to balance the needs of the sentence to communicate meaning with your understanding of audience expectations, and clarity often involves concise sentences.

REVISE BIG WORDS AND LONG PHRASES

Big words can clutter your writing with needless jargon that may be a barrier to many readers. Even if you know your audience has significant education and training in a field, you may need to include definitions and examples as effective strategies to communicate meaning. Don't confuse simple writing with simplistic writing. Your task will almost certainly not require an elementary approach for new readers, but it may very well require attention to words and the degree to which they contribute to, or detract from, the communication of your intended message. Long noun sequences, often used as descriptive phrases, can be one example of how writing can reduce clarity. If you need to describe a noun, use a phrase that modifies the noun clearly, with commas to offset for example, to enhance clarity.

Another long phrase to watch out for is often located in the introduction. Long preambles can make the sentence awkward and will require revision. Sentences that start with "It is" or "There are" can often be shortened or made clearer through revision.

EVALUATE LONG PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A prepositional phrase is a phrase composed of a preposition (a "where" word; a word that indicates location) and its object, which may be a noun, a pronoun, or a clause. Some examples of simple prepositional phrases include "with Tom," "before me," and "inside the building security perimeter."

Prepositional phrases are necessary—it would be difficult to write without them—but some add to the bottom line word count without adding much to the sentence. Bureaucratic writing often uses this technique in an attempt to make a sentence sound important, but the effort usually has the undesirable dual effects of obscuring meaning and sounding pompous.

Examples
The 1040 Form will *in all certainty* serve the majority of our customers.
The 1040 Form will *certainly* serve the majority of our customers.

The revision places an adverb in place of a long prepositional phrase and allows for a reduction in the word count while strengthening the sentence.

DELETE REPETITIOUS WORDS

Some level of repetition is to be expected and can be beneficial. It is also important to be consistent in your use of words when precise terminology is appropriate. However, needless repetition can make your document less than vigorous and discourage readers. For example, use of the word "said" when attributing dialogue is acceptable a couple of times, but if it is the only word you use, it will lose its impact quickly. People can "indicate," "point out," "share," and "mention" as easily as they can "say" words or phrases. Synonyms are useful in avoiding the boredom of repetition.

ELIMINATE ARCHAIC EXPRESSIONS OR REFERENCES

Some writing has been ritualized to the point of cliché and has lost its impact. For example, consider "Heretofore, we have discussed the goal of omitting needless words." *Heretofore* is an outdated word that could easily be cut from the previous sentence. Another example is "as per your request for documents that emphasize clarity and reduce reader error." Feel free to eliminate *as per your request* from your word choices.

Similar to outdated words and phrases, some references are equally outdated. While it is important to recognize leaders in a field, and this text does include references to pioneers in the field of communication, it also focuses on current research and concepts. Without additional clarification and examples, readers may not understand references to an author long since passed even though he or she made an important contribution to the field. For example, Shannon and Weaver pioneered the linear model of communication that revolutionized our understanding of interaction and contributed to computer interfaces as we know them today (McLean, 2005). However, if we mention them without explaining how their work relates to our current context, we may lose our readers. Similarly, references to films like *My Fair Lady* may well be less understood than the use of *The Princess Diaries* as an example of the transformative process the lead characters undergo, from rough, street-smart women to formally educated, polished members of the elite.

AVOID FILLERS

Like, you know, like, you know what I mean, ahh, umm, and all the fillers you may use or hear in oral communication have, well, little or no place in the written representation of the spoken word. Review your writing for extra words that serve the written equivalent of "like" and omit them. They do not serve you as an author, and do not serve the reading audience.

ELIMINATE SLANG

Many college professors can give examples of e-mails they have received from students that use all the modern characteristics of instant message and text abbreviation combined with a complete disregard for any norms of grammar or spelling, resulting in nearly incomprehensible messages. If your goal is to be professional, and the audience expectations do not include the use of slang, then it is inappropriate to include it in your document. Eliminate slang as you would a jargon term that serves as a barrier to understanding meaning. Not everyone will understand your slang word no more than they would a highly specialized term, and it will defeat your purpose. Norms for capitalization and punctuation that are routinely abandoned in efficient text messages or tweets are necessary and required in professional documents. Finally, there is no place in reputable business writing for offensive slang or profanity.

EVALUATE CLICHÉS

Clichés are words or phrases that through their overuse have lost their impact. That definition does not imply they have lost their meaning, and sometimes a well-placed cliché can communicate a message effectively. "Actions speak louder than words" is a cliché, but its five words speak volumes that many of your readers will recognize. This appeal to familiarity can be an effective strategy to communicate, but use it carefully. Excessive reliance on clichés will make your writing trite, while eliminating them altogether may not serve you well either. As an effective business writer, you will need to evaluate your use of clichés for their impact versus detraction from your message.

EMPHASIZE PRECISE WORDS

Concrete words that are immediately available to your audience are often more effective than abstract terms that require definitions, examples, and qualifications. All these strategies have their place, but excessive use of abstractions will make your document less than precise, requiring additional clarification that can translate to work for you as the author and, more importantly, for your readers. Qualifiers deserve special mention here. Some instructors may indicate that words like "may," "seems," or "apparently" make your writing weak. Words are just words and it is how we use them that creates meaning. Some qualifiers are necessary, particularly if the document serves as record or may be the point of discussion in a legal issue. In other cases direct language is required, and qualifiers must be eliminated. Too many qualifiers can weaken your writing, but too few can expose you to liability. As a business writer, your understanding of audience expectations and assignment requirements will guide you to the judicious use of qualifiers.

EVALUATE PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION

When you are writing in a series or have more than one idea to express, it is important to present them in similar ways to preserve and promote unity across your document. Parallel construction refers to the use of same grammatical pattern; it can be applied to words, phrases, and sentences. For example, "We found the seminar interesting, entertaining, and inspiring" is a sentence with parallel construction, whereas "We found the seminar interesting, entertaining, and it inspired us" is not. If your sentences do not seem to flow well, particularly when you read them out loud, look for misplaced parallels and change them to make the construction truly parallel.

OBSCURED VERBS

Business writing should be clear and concise. If the meaning is obscured, then revision is required. One common problem is the conversion of verbs into nouns with the addition of suffixes like: -ant,-ent, -ion, -tion, -sion, -ence, -ance, and ing. Instead of hiding meaning within the phrase "through the consolidation of," consider whether to use the verb forms "consolidated" or "consolidating." Similarly, instead of "the inclusion of," consider using "including," which will likely make the sentence more active and vigorous.

THE "IS IT PROFESSIONAL?" TEST

Finally, when revising your document with an attention to detail, you simply need to ask the question: is it professional? If a document is too emphatic, it may seem like an attempt at cheerleading. If it uses too much jargon, it may be appropriate for "nerds" but may limit access to the information by a nontechnical audience. If the document appears too simplistic, it may seem to be "talking down" to the audience, treating the readers more like children than adults. Does your document represent you and your organization in a professional manner? Will you be proud of the work a year from now? Does it accomplish its mission, stated objectives, and the audience's expectations? Business writing is not expository, wordy, or decorative, and the presence of these traits may obscure meaning. Business writing is professional, respectful, and clearly communicates a message with minimal breakdown.

Key Takeaways

Revising for style can increase a document's clarity, conciseness, and professionalism.

Exercises

1. Which of the following sentences are examples of good business writing in standard English? For the sentences needing improvement, make revisions as you see fit and explain what was wrong with the original sentence. Discuss your results with your classmates.

- Caitlin likes gardening, golfing, hiking, and to swim.
- At any given point in time, well, there is a possibility that we could, like, be called upon for help.
- The evaluation of writing can be done through the examination and modification of each sentence.
- While in the meeting, the fire alarm rang.
- Children benefit from getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, and outdoor playtime.
- Yee has asked us to maximize the department's ka-ching by enhancing the bling-bling of our merchandise; if we fail to do this the darn president may put the kibosh on our project.
- Ortega's memo stated in no uncertain terms that all employees need to arrive for work on time every day.
- Although there are many challenges in today's market and stock values have dropped considerably since last year, but we can hope to benefit from strategic thinking and careful decision making.
- If you are unable to attend the meeting, please let Steve or I know as soon as possible.
- One of the shipping containers are open.

2.Find an example of a good example of effective business writing, review it, and share it with your classmates.

3. Find an example of a bad example of effective business writing, review it, and share it with your classmates.

4. Revision requires attention to detail, and you may be under pressure to produce quality results within a deadline. How do you communicate your need for time for the revision process to those who are waiting on you to complete the document? Share and discuss your responses with your classmates.

4.9 EVALUATING THE WORK OF OTHERS

Learning Objectives

- Describe five elements of critical analysis to use in evaluating someone else's writing.
- Demonstrate how to deliver an evaluation constructively and respectfully.

As an experienced business writer, you may be called upon to review others' work. Having a clear understanding of the process will help you be efficient in your review, producing constructive advice that would benefit the essay while resisting change for change's sake.

FIVE STEPS IN EVALUTION

By following a sequence of orderly steps, you can increase the likelihood that your evaluation of someone else's writing will be fair, constructive, and useful. Below are the five steps in evaluation:

1. Understand the assignment.
2. Evaluate how well the writing carries out the assignment.
3. Evaluate assertions.
4. Check facts.
5. Look for errors.

First, review the instructions that were given to the writer. Make sure you understand the assignment and the target audience. What resources did the writer have access to, and how much time was allotted for completing the assignment? What purpose did the document need to fulfill, and what role will this document have in future business activities or decisions?

Second, evaluate how well the document fulfills its stated goals. As a reader, do you see the goals carried out in the document? If you didn't know the writer and you were to find the document next year in a file where you were searching for information, would it provide you with the information it aims to convey? For example, suppose the document refers to the sales history of the past five years. Does the writer provide the sales history for the reader's reference, or indicate where the reader can get this information?

Evaluate the assertions made in the document. An assertion is a declaration, statement, or claim of fact. Suppose the writer indicates that the sales history for the past five years is a significant factor. Does the writer explain why this history is significant? Is the explanation logical and sufficient?

Evaluate the facts cited in the document. Does the writer credit the sources of facts, statistics, and numbers? For example, suppose the writer mentions that the population of the United States is approximately three hundred million. Obviously, the writer did not count all U.S. residents to arrive at this number. Where did it come from? If you have access to sources where you can independently verify the accuracy of these details, look them up and note any discrepancies.

Finally, check the document for proper format and for errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Word processing spell checkers do not catch all errors.

DELIVERING THE EVALUATION

If you are asked to evaluate someone else's written work, keep in mind that not everyone can separate process from product, or product from personality. Many authors, particularly those new to the writing process, see the written word as an extension of self. To help the recipient receive your evaluation as professional advice, rather than as personal criticism, use strategies to be tactful and diplomatic.

Until you know the author and have an established relationship, it is best to use "I" statements, as in "I find this sentence difficult to understand." The sentence places the emphasis on the speaker rather than the sentence, and further distances the author from the sentence. If you were to say, "This sentence is awful," all the author may hear is, "I am an awful writer" and fail to pay attention to your message, the sentence under examination, or ways to improve it. Business writing produces products, and all products can be improved, but not all authors can separate messenger from message.

Avoid the use of the word *you* in your evaluation, oral or written, as it can put the recipient on the defensive. This will inhibit listening and decrease the probability of effective communication (McLean, 2005). If you phrase an evaluation point as, "Why did you include this word here?" it can be interpreted as a personal attack. Just as speakers are often quite self-conscious of their public speaking abilities, writers are often quite attached to the works they have produced. Anticipating and respecting this relationship and the anxiety it sometimes carries can help you serve as a better evaluator.

Phrasing disagreement as a question is often an effective response strategy. Let's rephrase that previous question to, "What is this sentence intended to communicate?" This places the emphasis on the sentence, not the author, and allows for dialogue. Phrasing your evaluation as a question emphasizes your need to understand, and provides the author with space to respond in a collaborative fashion.

Focus on the document as a product, an "it," and avoid associating the author or authors with it. There may be times when the social rank or status of the individual involved with work requires respectful consideration, and choosing to focus on the document as a work in progress, distinct from authors themselves, can serve you well. This also means that at times you may notice a glaring error but be reluctant to challenge the author directly as you anticipate a less than collaborative response. By treating the document as a product, and focusing on ways to strengthen it, keeping in mind our goals of clear and concise as reference points, you can approach issues without involving personalities.

Key Takeaways

When evaluating the work of others, make sure you understand the assignment, evaluate how well the writing carries out the assignment, evaluate assertions, check facts, and watch for errors. Deliver your evaluation with tact and diplomacy.

Exercises

1. Select a piece of writing from a Web site, book, newspaper, or magazine. Imagine that you are delivering an evaluation to the author of the piece. Using the strategies in this section, write a tactful and diplomatic critique. Your instructor may choose to make this a class exercise, asking students to exchange papers and evaluate each others' writing.
2. Select a piece of writing from a Web site, book, newspaper, or magazine. Imagine that you are editing it half its original length. Share the article and your revised copy with your classmates.
3. What responsibility do you have to point out the need for correction in a document when the author or team leader outranks you at work? Does it make a difference if you anticipate they will take the feedback negatively? How do you reconcile these concerns with your responsibility to the organization? Share and discuss your responses with your classmates.

4.10 PROOFREADING AND DESIGN EVALUATION

Learning Objectives

- Understand the difference between revising and proofreading, and how to use proofreading marks.
- Describe six design elements for evaluation.

In traditional publishing, proofreading and design are the final stages a book undergoes before it is published. If the earlier steps of research, organizing, writing, revising, and formatting have been done carefully, proofreading and design should go smoothly. Now is not the time to go back and revise a document's content, or to experiment with changes in format. Instead, the emphasis is on catching any typographical errors that have slipped through the revision process, and "pouring" the format into a design that will enhance the writer's message.

PROOFREADING

By now you have completed a general and specific review of the document, with attention to detail. You may have made changes, and most word processing programs will allow you to track those changes across several versions and authors.

If you work in an environment where a document exists as a hard copy during the revision process, you may use or see handwritten proofreading symbols. Professional proofreaders often use standard markings that serve to indicate where changes needed to be made on a physical document. Some of today's word processing programs incorporate many proofreading symbols in their menus. It is useful to be familiar with the various proofreading marks that were traditionally used to review and revise hard copy documents. Even if you never use the symbols in a document, your awareness of them—and the points of emphasis under review—will serve you well. Do you need to insert a word, delete a word, capitalize a letter, or start a new paragraph? There are specific symbols for each of these actions because the review and revision process has common and consistent elements that need to be addressed.

DESIGN EVALUATION

If you are asked to review a document, design an element that deserves consideration. While most of our attention has focused on words (i.e., sentence construction and common errors), design can have a strong impact on the representation and presentation of information.

FRAMING

Framing refers to how information is presented, including margins, line justifications, and template expectations. Just as frame creates a border around a painting, highlighting part of the image while hiding the margins, the frame of a page influences how information is received. Margins create space around the edge and help draw attention to the content. One-inch margins are standard, but differences in margin widths will depend on the assignment requirements. A brief letter, for example, may have margins as wide as two inches so that the body of the letter fills up the stationery in a more balanced fashion. Template expectations are distinct from audience expectation, though they are often related. Most software programs have templates for basic documents, including letters, reports, and résumés.

Templates represent the normative expectations for a specific type of document. Templates have spaces that establish where a date should be indicated and where personal contact information should be represented. They also often allow you to "fill in the blank," reflecting each document's basic expectations of where information is presented.

For example, line justification involves where the text lines up on the page. Letters often have a left justify, lining up the text on the left side of the page while allowing the ends of each line on the right side to be "ragged," or not aligned. This creates even spaces between words and gives the appearance of organization while promoting white space, the space on the page free of text. Balance between text (often black) and white space creates contrast and allows for areas of emphasis. Left justify often produces the appearance of balance, as the words are evenly spaced, while left and right justify can produce large gaps between words, making the sentences appear awkward and hard to read.

TYPEFACES

Typeface refers to design of symbols, including letters and numbers (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998). The creation of the face of the type, as in a typing machine or printing press, has long been both an art and a science. In past centuries, carvings of the face of the type in copperplate, where ink was applied and then pressed to paper, created intricate and intriguing images designed to communicate style, prestige, status, and formality with the communication of words and symbols. We no longer use copper or hot lead type, but the typeface still exists as a medium for communication in addition to the word itself.

There are two general categories of typeface: serif and sans serif. "Sans" means without, so the emphasis here is on whether the face of the type has a serif or not. A serif is a small cross line, often perpendicular to the stroke of the letter, that is decorative but also serves the useful purpose of differentiating characters that could otherwise look similar (e.g., "m" and "rn," "d" and "cl," or "3" and "8"). For this reason, serif typefaces, such as Times New Roman and Garamond, are often easier to read, especially when the font size is small. Sans serif fonts, such as Arial and Helvetica, lack the serif and can be harder to read in long text sequences. They are most commonly used for headings. However, when text is to be read electronically (on the screen of a computer or other device), serifs can tend to break up, so sans serif typefaces can be a better choice.

The rule of thumb, or common wisdom, is to limit your document to two typefaces, contrasting sans serif (headings) with text (serif). Take care not to use a font that is hard to read, creating an unnecessary barrier for your reader. Also, use a font that conveys the tone of your professional message to enhance your effectiveness.

PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs are the basic organizational unit for presenting and emphasizing the key points in a document. Effective paragraphs can provide an effective emphasis strategy, but the placement within the page can also influence recall and impact. The first point presented is often the second in importance, the second point is the least important, and the third point in a series of three is often the most important. People generally recall the last point presented, and tend to forget or ignore the content in the middle of a sequence. Use this strategy to place your best point in the most appropriate location.

A lengthy document that consists of paragraph after paragraph can become monotonous, making reading a chore and obscuring pieces of information that need to stand out. To give the document visual variety and to emphasize key information, consider the following strategies:

- Bullets
- Numbers
- Boldface

- Italics
- Underlining
- Capitalization (all caps)

Remember, however, that using all caps (all capitals) for body text (as opposed to headings) is often considered rude, like shouting, particularly in electronic communications.

VISUAL AIDS

If you have the luxury of including visual aids, such as graphics and pictures, in your document, take care to make sure that the verbal and visual messages complement each other. The visual should illustrate the text, and should be placed near the words so that the relationship is immediately clear. Sometimes during editing, a photograph will get pushed to the next page, leaving the relevant text behind and creating discontinuity. This creates a barrier for your reader, so avoid it if possible.

DESIGNING INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTS

Finally, documents increasingly have an interactivity component that can lead the reader in many directions. Providing links can facilitate interactivity, and that depth of resources can be a distinct advantage when writing documents to be read on a computer. However, be careful when integrating a web link within your document, as your audience may leave your message behind and not return. If you create a link associated with clicking on a photograph or icon, make sure that the scroll-over message is clear and communicates whether the reader will leave the current page. As we have seen in many design elements, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with each option and it requires a skilled business writer to create and deliver an effective message.

Key Takeaways

Proofreading and design put the finishing touches on a completed document.

Exercises

EXERCISES

1. Using proofreading marks, mark the errors in the following paragraph:

I never wanted to bacome a writer, but when I decidedon a career in sales, I found out that being able to write was a skill that would help me. So much of my daily work involved Writing that I sometimes thought i'd fallen asleep and woken up in someone else's life. Messages, about actual sales, were the least of it. In order to attract customers, I have to send notes to people I already knew, asking them for sales leads. Then when I got a lead, I'ld write to the contact asking for a few munutes of their time.If I got to meet with them or even have a phote conversation, my next task was to write them a thank—you not. Oh, and the reports-I was always filing out reports; for my sales manager, tracking my progress with each customer and each lead. If someone had tell me how much writing sails would involve, I think I would of paid more attention to my writing courses en school.

2. With a writing assignment in draft form from your class, swap with a classmate and review the spelling, grammar, and punctuation, using proofreading marks where applicable.

UNIT 5 EMAILS, MEMOS & LETTERS

5.1 TEXT, E-MAIL, AND NETIQUETTE

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the role of text messaging in business communication.
- Write effective e-mails for both internal and external communication.
- Demonstrate the appropriate use of netiquette

Text messages and e-mails are part of our communication landscape, and skilled business communicators consider them a valuable tool to connect. Netiquette refers to etiquette, or protocols and norms for communication, on the Internet.

TEXTING

Whatever digital device you use, written communication in the form of brief messages, or texting, has become a common way to connect. It is useful for short exchanges, and is a convenient way to stay connected with others when talking on the phone would be cumbersome. Texting is not useful for long or complicated messages, and careful consideration should be given to the audience.

It is often said that you can tell how old someone is by how he or she inputs a phone number on a cell phone. If the person uses his or her thumb while holding the digital device, that person may have been raised on video games and be adept at one-handed interfaces. If he holds the digital device with one hand and inputs the number with the other, he may be over thirty, or may be less comfortable with some technological devices. Of course, there is no actual correlation between input and age, but it is a useful example to use when considering who your audience is when writing a text message. If the person is a one-hander, and knows all the abbreviations common to texting, you may be able to use similar codes to communicate effectively. If the person is a two-hander, you are better off using fewer words and spelling them out. Texting can be a great tool for connecting while on the go, but consider your audience and your company, and choose words, terms, or abbreviations that will deliver your message.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS TEXTING

- Know your recipient; "? % dsct" may be an understandable way to ask a close associate what the proper discount is to offer a certain customer, but if you are writing a text to your boss, it might be wiser to write, "what % discount does Murray get on $1K order?"
- Anticipate unintentional misinterpretation. Texting often uses symbols and codes to represent thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Given the complexity of communication, and the useful but limited tool of texting, be aware of its limitation and prevent misinterpretation with brief messages.
- Contacting someone too frequently can border on harassment. Texting is a tool. Use it when appropriate but don't abuse it.

- Unplug yourself once in awhile. Do you feel constantly connected? Do you feel lost or "out of it" if you don't have your cell phone and cannot connect to people, even for fifteen minutes? Sometimes being unavailable for a time can be healthy—everything in moderation, including texting.
- Don't text and drive. Research shows that the likelihood of an accident increases dramatically if the driver is texting behind the wheel (Houston Chronicle, 2009). Being in an accident while conducting company business would reflect poorly on your judgment as well as on your employer.

E-MAIL

Electronic mail, usually called e-mail, is quite familiar to most students and workers. It may be used like text, or synchronous chat, and it can be delivered to a cell phone. In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy letters for external (outside the company) correspondence, as well as taking the place of memos for internal (within the company) communication (Guffey, 2008). E-mail can be very useful for messages that have slightly more content than a text message, but it is still best used for fairly brief messages.

Many businesses use automated e-mails to acknowledge communications from the public, or to remind associates that periodic reports or payments are due. You may also be assigned to "populate" a form e-mail in which standard paragraphs are used but you choose from a menu of sentences to make the wording suitable for a particular transaction.

E-mails may be informal in personal contexts, but business communication requires attention to detail, awareness that your e-mail reflects you and your company, and a professional tone so that it may be forwarded to any third party if needed. E-mail often serves to exchange information within organizations. Although e-mail may have an informal feel, remember that when used for business, it needs to convey professionalism and respect. Never write or send anything that you wouldn't want read in public or in front of your company president.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS E-MAILS

- Proper salutations should demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups in case a message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient. For example, use a salutation like "Dear Ms. X" (external) or "Hi Barry" (internal).
- Subject lines should be clear, brief, and specific. This helps the recipient understand the essence of the message. For example, "Proposal attached" or "Your question of 10/25."
- Close with a signature. Identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains your name and business contact information.
- Avoid abbreviations. An e-mail is not a text message, and the audience may not find your wit cause to ROTFLOL (roll on the floor laughing out loud).
- Be brief. Omit unnecessary words.
- Use a good format. Include line breaks between sentences or divide your message into brief paragraphs for ease of reading. A good e-mail should get to the point and conclude in three small paragraphs or less.
- Reread, revise, and review. Catch and correct spelling and grammar mistakes before you press "send." It will take more time and effort to undo the problems caused by a hasty, poorly written e-mail than to get it right the first time.
- Reply promptly. Watch out for an emotional response—never reply in anger—but make a habit of replying to all e-mails within twenty-four hours, even if only to say that you will provide the requested information in forty-eight or seventy-two hours.
- Use "Reply All" sparingly. Do not send your reply to everyone who received the initial e-mail unless your message absolutely needs to be read by the entire group.
- Avoid using all caps. Capital letters are used on the Internet to communicate emphatic emotion or yelling and are considered rude.

- Test links. If you include a link, test it to make sure it is complete.
- E-mail ahead of time if you are going to attach large files (audio and visual files are often quite large) to prevent exceeding the recipient's mailbox limit or triggering the spam filter.
- Give feedback or follow up. If you don't get a response in twenty-four hours, e-mail or call. Spam filters may have intercepted your message, so your recipient may never have received it.

Let's look at two examples of business e-mail. In Figure 5.1, we have an e-mail form. In Figure 5.2, we have a letter written specifically for the situation and audience.

Figure 5.1

> Welcome to [company name].
>
> Dear [customer's name],
>
> Thank you for registering with the [company name].
>
> You can manage your personal information from the "My Account" section of the site when you sign in to [company name].
>
> You can change your contact details and password, track recent orders, add alternate shipping addresses, and manage your preferences and customer profile all in this one convenient location.
>
> Thank you for your interest in [company name].
>
> We look forward to your next visit.

Figure 5.2

> To: Harriet Adamo, Physical Plant Manager, XYZ Corporation
> From: Mel Vargas, Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Company
> Sent: Monday 10/25/09 8:14 AM
> Subject: construction interruptions
>
> Harriet,
>
> I know employees of XYZ Corp. are looking forward to moving into the new ABC Street building in January, but recently groups of employees who do not have business here have been walking through the building. These visits create a safety hazard, interrupt the construction workers, and could put your occupancy date in jeopardy.
>
> Would you please instruct your staff members who haven't already been moved to ABC Street to stay out of the building? If they need to meet here with someone who has already moved, they should conduct their business and leave promptly via the nearest staircase.
>
> We need to avoid further interruptions so our construction workers can get the building ready for occupancy on schedule. If you have any questions, please call me.

Thanks,
Mel

Melvin R. Vargas
Construction Site Manager, Maxim Construction Co.
1234 Main Street, Big City, USA 98765-1111
(111) 123-4567, ext. 89

NETIQUETTE

We create personal pages, post messages, and interact via mediated technologies as a normal part of our careers, but how we conduct ourselves can leave a lasting image, literally. The photograph you posted on your MySpace page may have been seen by your potential employer, or that nasty remark in a post may come back to haunt you later. Some fifteen years ago, when the Internet was a new phenomenon, Virginia Shea laid out a series of ground rules for communication online that continue to serve us today.

VIRGINIA SHEA'S RULES OF NETIQUETTE

- Remember the human on the other side of the electronic communication.
- Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.
- Know where you are in cyberspace.
- Respect other people's time and bandwidth.
- Make yourself look good online.
- Share expert knowledge.
- Keep flame wars under control.
- Respect other people's privacy.
- Don't abuse your power.
- Be forgiving of other people's mistakes.

Her rules speak for themselves and remind us that the golden rule (treat others as you would like to be treated) is relevant wherever there is human interaction (Shea, 1994).

Key Takeaways

- A text message is a brief written message sent and received using a digital device. It is useful for informal, brief, time-sensitive communication.
- E-mail is useful for both internal and external business communications. The content and formatting of an e-mail message should reflect professionalism and follow the rules of netiquette.

- Social customs that exist in traditional, live, human interaction also influence the rules and customs by which we interact with each other in the online environment.

Exercises

1. Write a text message in your normal use of language. It should use all your normal abbreviations (e.g., FWIW, IMHO, LOL), even if not everyone understands them.

2. Find an example of an e-mail that you wish you had never sent or received. Rewrite it to eliminate the characteristics that you find problematic. Share it with your classmates.

3. Choose at least three e-mails you have sent or received that are good examples of business communication. What makes them good examples? Could they be improved in any way? Share your suggestions with classmates.

4. When is e-mail inappropriate? Why?

5. Find a "flame war," or heated discussion in an online forum and note how it is handled. Compare the results with your classmates.

6. In your experience, how do people behave when they interact online? Share your observations with your classmates.

5.2 VIDEO: TEXT, EMAIL, AND NETIQUETTE

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=30

5.3 Memos

Functions and Audience

Short for "memorandum," a memo is a type of document used to communicate with others in the same organization. Memos (or memoranda) are typically used for fairly short messages of one page or less, but informal reports of several pages may also employ memo format.

Format

Memos are distinguished by a header that includes DATE, TO, FROM, and SUBJECT lines. Other lines, such as CC or BCC, may be added as needed. An RE ("Reference") line may be used instead of SUBJECT, but this use is becoming rarer as "RE" is often mistaken as "Reply" because of its use in email.

- DATE: List the date on which the memo is distributed.
- TO: List the names of the recipients of the memo. If there are several recipients, it's acceptable to use a group name, such as "All Employees" or "Personnel Committee Members."
- FROM: List the name and job title of the writer(s).
- SUBJECT: Think of the SUBJECT line as the title for the memo. Make it specific so that readers can immediately identify the topic.

These headings may be double- or single-spaced, and the SUBJECT line is often in all capital letters. Furthermore, the order of the items can vary. Many organizations have their own style preferences on these issues. If not, the order listed above, double-spaced, is the most common.

The text of memos typically uses block format, with single-spaced lines, an extra space between paragraphs, and no indentions for new paragraphs. However, if a report using memo format stretches to a few pages in length, double spacing may be used to improve its readability.

Organization

Professional communication forms are organized according to one of two strategies: Direct and indirect.

- The *direct* organization strategy presents the purpose of the document in the first paragraph (sometimes the first sentence) and provides supporting details in the body.
- The *indirect* organization strategy opens with relevant, attention-getting details that do not directly state the purpose of the document. The purpose is revealed in the body of the message, usually sandwiched between supporting details.

The direct approach is used for good news or routine communication; the indirect approach is used for persuasive, sales, or bad news messages.

A directly stated purpose is welcome in good news or routine messages but could be viewed as abrupt or insensitive in a bad news or persuasive message. When the audience is not receptive to the message, it is best to lead up to the purpose gradually.

In both types of organization, action information (such as deadlines or contact information) or a courteous closing statement is placed in the last paragraph.

Organization Strategy	**Definition**	**Type of Document**	**Content**		
Introduction	***Body***	***Conclusion***			
Direct	Writer arrives at purpose quickly, sometimes in the first sentence.	Used for good news or routine communication (audience is receptive or neutral)	Purpose	Details	Action information or courteous close
Indirect	Writer gradually builds up to the purpose, which is stated in the body.	Used for negative, persuasive, or sales messages (audience is not receptive)	Relevant, attention-getting statements	Purpose statement is sandwiched by details.	Action information or courteous close

Sample Direct Memo

Sample Indirect Memo

Style and Tone

While memo reports and policy memos are examples of documents that have a more formal tone, most memos will have a conversational style—slightly informal but still professional. The audience of memos are those with whom the writer works, so the writing style usually assumes a relationship with them (and therefore a certain lack of formality); just keep in mind that the relationship is a professional one, so the writing should reflect that. Furthermore, as with all workplace documents, the audience may contain a variety of readers, and the style and tone should be appropriate for all of their technical and authority levels.

Too Informal	Too Formal, Stuffy-Sounding, Wordy	Appropriate Balance
Hi, everyone. Hope you had a great weekend. You know those awards we give out every so often? It's time for those again!	Variety Craft Supplies' mission is to provide customers with affordable, quality supplies with superb customer service. Excellent customer service includes being knowledgeable about the supplies, but it also goes beyond that. It's about having the right attitude about helping customers. It's time to reward employees who have a customer-oriented outlook.	Direct and concise opening states the purpose of the memo. Please submit your nominations for the quarterly Customer Service Excellence Award by April 8. Help us identify great employees!

Common Memo Writing Situations

Memos are used in a variety of workplace communication situations, from documentation of procedures and policies to simple announcements. Below are some common types of memos:

- Policies (changes and new)
- Instructions
- Procedures
- Announcements
- Trip reports

Distribution Medium

Memos may be distributed manually through print medium in organizations in which not all employees have access to email. Organizations with access to email may distribute memos as attachments to email.

In organizations in which email reaches every employee (or every employee in the memo's audience), writers must determine whether to send a memo or an email message to convey their information. In cases such as this, writers should consider three factors: the nature of the message, the depth/number of its details, and its likelihood of being printed for easier reference. These types of messages should be written up in memo format and attached to an email message for fast (and environmentally friendly) distribution:

- Messages that have an official aura, such as new policies or revisions of policies.
- Messages containing much detail (such as instructions on how to calibrate a complicated piece of machinery).
- Messages requiring reference away from a computer (necessitating a print copy). Print copies of emails generally use a small type that is difficult to read.

5.4 MEMORANDUMS

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the purpose and format of a memo.
- Understand effective strategies for business memos.

MEMOS

A memo (or memorandum, meaning "reminder") is normally used for communicating policies, procedures, or related official business within an organization. It is often written from a one-to-all perspective (like mass communication), broadcasting a message to an audience, rather than a one-on-one, interpersonal communication. It may also be used to update a team on activities for a given project, or to inform a specific group within a company of an event, action, or observance.

MEMO PURPOSE

A memo's purpose is often to inform, but it occasionally includes an element of persuasion or a call to action. All organizations have informal and formal communication networks. The unofficial, informal communication network within an organization is often called the grapevine, and it is often characterized by rumor, gossip, and innuendo. On the grapevine, one person may hear that someone else is going to be laid off and start passing the news around. Rumors change and transform as they are passed from person to person, and before you know it, the word is that they are shutting down your entire department.

One effective way to address informal, unofficial speculation is to spell out clearly for all employees what is going on with a particular issue. If budget cuts are a concern, then it may be wise to send a memo explaining the changes that are imminent. If a company wants employees to take action, they may also issue a memorandum. For example, on February 13, 2009, upper management at the Panasonic Corporation issued a declaration that all employees should buy at least $1,600 worth of Panasonic products. The company president noted that if everyone supported the company with purchases, it would benefit all (Lewis, 2009).

While memos do not normally include a call to action that requires personal spending, they often represent the business or organization's interests. They may also include statements that align business and employee interest, and underscore common ground and benefit.

MEMO FORMAT

A memo has a header that clearly indicates who sent it and who the intended recipients are. Pay particular attention to the title of the individual(s) in this section. Date and subject lines are also present, followed by a message that contains a declaration, a discussion, and a summary.

In a standard writing format, we might expect to see an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. All these are present in a memo, and each part has a clear purpose. The declaration in the opening uses a declarative sentence to announce the main topic. The discussion elaborates or lists major points associated with the topic, and the conclusion serves as a summary.

Let's examine a sample memo.

Figure 5.3

To: All Employees
From: Larry Ogawa, President, University of State
Date: February 14, 2009
Subject: Future Expenditure Guidelines

After careful deliberation, I have determined it is necessary to begin the initial steps of a financial stewardship program that carries UState through what appears to be a two-year cycle of a severe state shortfall in revenue and subsequent necessary legislative budget reductions.

Beginning February 9, 2009, the following actions are being implemented for the General Fund, Auxiliary Fund, and Capital Fund in order to address the projected reductions in our state aid for the remainder of this year 2008–09 and for next year 2009–10.

1. Only purchases needed to operate the university should be made so that we can begin saving to reduce the impact of 2009–10 budget reductions.

2. Requests for out-of-state travel will require approval from the Executive Committee to ensure that only necessary institutional travel occurs.

3. Purchases, including in-state travel and budget transfers, will require the appropriate vice president's approval.

Please understand that we are taking these prudent steps to create savings that will allow UState to reduce the impact of projected cuts in expected 2009–10 legislative reductions.

Thank you for your cooperation, and please direct any questions to my office.

FIVE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MEMOS

AUDIENCE ORIENTATION

Always consider the audience and their needs when preparing a memo. An acronym or abbreviation that is known to management may not be known by all the employees of the organization, and if the memo is to be posted and distributed within the organization, the goal is clear and concise communication at all levels with no ambiguity.

PROFESSIONAL, FORMAL TONE

Memos are often announcements, and the person sending the memo speaks for a part or all of the organization. While it may contain a request for feedback, the announcement itself is linear, from the organization to the employees. The memo may have legal standing as it often reflects policies or procedures, and may reference an existing or new policy in the employee manual, for example.

SUBJECT EMPHASIS

The subject is normally declared in the subject line and should be clear and concise. If the memo is announcing the observance of a holiday, for example, the specific holiday should be named in the subject line—for example, use “Thanksgiving weekend schedule” rather than “holiday observance.”

DIRECT FORMAT

Some written business communication allows for a choice between direct and indirect formats, but memorandums are always direct. The purpose is clearly announced.

OBJECTIVITY

Memos are a place for just the facts, and should have an objective tone without personal bias, preference, or interest on display. Avoid subjectivity.

Key Takeaways

Memos are brief business documents usually used internally to inform or persuade employees concerning business decisions on policy, procedure, or actions.

Exercises

1. Find a memo from your work or business, or borrow one from someone you know. Share it with your classmates, observing confidentiality by blocking out identifying details such as the name of the sender, recipient, and company. Compare and contrast.

2. Write a memo informing your class that an upcoming holiday will be observed. Post and share with classmates.

5.5 Letters

Learning Objectives

- Describe the fifteen parts of a standard business letter.
- Access sample business letters and write a sample business letter.

LETTERS

Letters are brief messages sent to recipients that are often outside the organization (Bovee & Thill, 2010).They are often printed on letterhead paper, and represent the business or organization in one or two pages. Shorter messages may include e-mails or memos, either hard copy or electronic, while reports tend to be three or more pages in length.

While e-mail and text messages may be used more frequently today, the effective business letter remains a common form of written communication. It can serve to introduce you to a potential employer, announce a product or service, or even serve to communicate feelings and emotions. We'll examine the basic outline of a letter and then focus on specific products or writing assignments.

All writing assignments have expectations in terms of language and format. The audience or reader may have their own idea of what constitutes a specific type of letter, and your organization may have its own format and requirements. This chapter outlines common elements across letters, and attention should be directed to the expectations associated with your particular writing assignment. There are many types of letters, and many adaptations in terms of form and content, but in this chapter, we discuss the fifteen elements of a traditional block-style letter.

Letters may serve to introduce your skills and qualifications to prospective employers, deliver important or specific information, or serve as documentation of an event or decision. Regardless of the type of letter you need to write, it can contain up to fifteen elements in five areas. While you may not use all the elements in every case or context, they are listed in Table 5.1 "Elements of a Business Letter".

Table 5.1 Elements of a Business Letter

Content	Guidelines
1. Return Address	This is your address where someone could send a reply. If your letter includes a letterhead with this information, either in the header (across the top of the page) or the footer (along the bottom of the page), you do not need to include it before the date.
2. Date	The date should be placed at the top, right or left justified, five lines from the top of the page or letterhead logo.
3. Reference (Re:)	Like a subject line in an e-mail, this is where you indicate what the letter is in reference to, the subject or purpose of the document.
4. Delivery (Optional)	Sometimes you want to indicate on the letter itself how it was delivered. This can make it clear to a third party that the letter was delivered via a specific method, such as certified mail (a legal requirement for some types of documents).
6. Salutation	A common salutation may be "Dear Mr. (full name)." But if you are unsure about titles (i.e., Mrs., Ms., Dr.), you may simply write the recipient's name (e.g., "Dear Cameron Rai") followed by a colon. A comma after the salutation is correct for personal letters, but a colon should be used in business. The salutation "To whom it may concern" is appropriate for letters of recommendation or other letters that are intended to be read by any and all individuals. If this is not the case with your letter, but you are unsure of how to address your recipient, make every effort to find out to whom the letter should be specifically addressed. For many, there is no sweeter sound than that of their name, and to spell it incorrectly runs the risk of alienating the reader before your letter has even been read. Avoid the use of impersonal salutations like "Dear Prospective Customer," as the lack of personalization can alienate a future client.
7. Introduction	This is your opening paragraph, and may include an attention statement, a reference to the purpose of the document, or an introduction of the person or topic depending on the type of letter. An emphatic opening involves using the most significant or important element of the letter in the introduction. Readers tend to pay attention to openings, and it makes sense to outline the expectations for the reader up front. Just as you would preview your topic in a speech, the clear opening in your introductions establishes context and facilitates comprehension.
8. Body	If you have a list of points, a series of facts, or a number of questions, they belong in the body of your letter. You may choose organizational devices to draw attention, such as a bullet list, or simply number them. Readers may skip over information in the body of your letter, so make sure you emphasize the key points clearly. This is your core content, where you can outline and support several key points. Brevity is important, but so is clear support for main point(s). Specific, meaningful information needs to be clear, concise, and accurate.
9. Conclusion	An emphatic closing mirrors your introduction with the added element of tying the main points together, clearly demonstrating their relationship. The conclusion can serve to remind the reader, but should not introduce new information. A clear summary sentence will strengthen your writing and enhance your effectiveness. If your letter requests or implies action, the conclusion needs to make clear what you expect to happen. It is usually courteous to conclude by thanking the recipient for his or her attention, and to invite them to contact you if you can be of help or if they have questions. This paragraph reiterates the main points and their relationship to each other, reinforcing the main point or purpose.
10. Close	"Sincerely" or "Cordially" are standard business closing statements. ("Love," "Yours Truly," and "BFF" are closing statements suitable for personal correspondence, but not for business.) Closing statements are normally placed one or two lines under the conclusion and include a hanging comma, as in Sincerely,
11. Signature	Five lines after the close, you should type your name (required) and, on the line below it, your title (optional).
12. Preparation Line	If the letter was prepared, or word-processed, by someone other than the signatory (you), then inclusion of initials is common, as in MJD or abc.
13. Enclosures/ Attachments	Just like an e-mail with an attachment, the letter sometimes has additional documents that are delivered with it. This line indicates what the reader can look for in terms of documents included with the letter, such as brochures, reports, or related business documents.
14. Courtesy Copies or "CC"	The abbreviation "CC" once stood for carbon copies but now refers to courtesy copies. Just like a "CC" option in an e-mail, it indicates the relevant parties that will also receive a copy of the document.
15. Logo/Contact Information	A formal business letter normally includes a logo or contact information for the organization in the header (top of page) or footer (bottom of page).

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LETTERS

Remember that a letter has five main areas:

1. The heading, which establishes the sender, often including address and date
2. The introduction, which establishes the purpose
3. The body, which articulates the message
4. The conclusion, which restates the main point and may include a call to action

1. The signature line, which sometimes includes the contact information

A sample letter is shown in Figure 13.5 “Sample Business Letter”.

Figure 5.5 Sample Business Letter

(1 inch margins on all sides of the letter)

1. **Return Address:** (if not in letterhead logo)
2. **Date:** 01/01/201X

3. **Reference—Re:** How to write a letter
4. **Delivery (optional):** USPS Certified Mail #123456789
5. **Recipient Note (optional):** Confidential

6. **Salutation:** Dear Student X:

7. **Introduction:** This letter is to inform you that the myth of a paperless office, where you will not be required to produce hard copy letters on letterhead, is a myth.

8. **Body:** While email has largely replaced letter writing for many applications, there remain several reasons for producing a hard-copy letter. The first reason is that you are required to write it for this class, as many employers still produce letters as a normal part of business communication, including documentation. Next, we must consider that paper sales in business have increased across the last decade, showing no signs of the decrease we would associate with the transition to the paperless office. Finally, business letters serve many functions, and your proficiency in their efficient and effective production will contribute to your personal and professional success.

9. **Conclusion:** Letter writing is a skill that will continue to be required in the business environment of today and tomorrow.

10. **Close:** Sincerely,

11. **Signature Line:** Scott McLean

12. **Preparation Line:** GSM/ep

13. **Enclosures:** (optional, if needed)

14. **Courtesy Copies:** cc: Jenn Yee

15. **Logo/Contact Information:**
13 N. Mill Street
Nyack, NY 10960

Always remember that letters represent you and your company in your absence. In order to communicate effectively and project a positive image,

- be clear, concise, specific, and respectful;
- each word should contribute to your purpose;
- each paragraph should focus on one idea;
- the parts of the letter should form a complete message;
- the letter should be free of errors.

Key Takeaways

- Letters are brief, print messages often used externally to inform or persuade customers, vendors, or the public.
- A letter has fifteen parts, each fulfilling a specific function.

Exercises

1. Create a draft letter introducing a product or service to a new client. Post and share with classmates.

2. Find a business letter (for example, an offer you received from a credit card company or a solicitation for a donation) and share it with your classmates. Look for common elements and points of difference.

3. Now that you have reviewed a sample letter, and learned about the five areas and fifteen basic parts of any business letter, write a business letter that informs a prospective client or customer of a new product or service.

5.6 VIDEO: MEMORANDUMS AND BUSINESS LETTERS

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=30

5.7 Business Letter Format

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout will help you write business letters required in many different situations, from applying for a job to requesting or delivering information. While the examples that are discussed specifically are the application letter and cover letter, this handout also highlights strategies for effective business writing in general.

PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND

Business writing is different

Writing for a business audience is usually quite different than writing in the humanities, social sciences, or other academic disciplines. Business writing strives to be crisp and succinct rather than evocative or creative; it stresses specificity and accuracy. This distinction does not make business writing superior or inferior to other styles. Rather, it reflects the unique purpose and considerations involved when writing in a business context.

When you write a business document, you must assume that your audience has limited time in which to read it and is likely to skim. Your readers have an interest in what you say insofar as it affects their working world. They want to know the "bottom line": the point you are making about a situation or problem and how they should respond.

Business writing varies from the conversational style often found in email messages to the more formal, legalistic style found in contracts. A style between these two extremes is appropriate for the majority of memos, emails, and letters. Writing that is too formal can alienate readers, and an attempt to be overly casual may come across as insincere or unprofessional. In business writing, as in all writing, you must know your audience.

In most cases, the business letter will be the first impression that you make on someone. Though business writing has become less formal over time, you should still take great care that your letter's content is clear and that you have proofread it carefully.

Pronouns and active versus passive voice

Personal pronouns (like *I*, *we*, and *you*) are important in letters and memos. In such documents, it is perfectly appropriate to refer to yourself as *I* and to the reader as*you*. Be careful, however, when you use the pronoun *we* in a business letter that is written on company stationery, since it commits your company to what you have written. When stating your opinion, use *I*; when presenting company policy, use *we*.

The best writers strive to achieve a style that is so clear that their messages cannot be misunderstood. One way to achieve a clear style is to minimize your use of the passive voice. Although the passive voice is sometimes necessary, often it not only makes your writing dull but also can be ambiguous or overly impersonal. Here's an example of the same point stated in passive voice and in the active voice:

PASSIVE: The net benefits of subsidiary divestiture were grossly overestimated.

[Who did the overestimating?]

ACTIVE: The Global Finance Team grossly overestimated the net benefits of subsidiary divestiture.

The second version is clearer and thus preferable.

Of course, there are exceptions to every rule. What if you are the head of the Global Finance Team? You may want to get your message across without calling excessive attention to the fact that the error was your team's fault. The passive voice allows you to gloss over an unflattering point—but you should use it sparingly.

Focus and specificity

Business writing should be clear and concise. Take care, however, that your document does not turn out as an endless series of short, choppy sentences. Keep in mind also that "concise" does not have to mean "blunt"—you still need to think about your tone and the audience for whom you are writing. Consider the following examples:

After carefully reviewing this proposal, we have decided to prioritize other projects this quarter.

Nobody liked your project idea, so we are not going to give you any funding.

The first version is a weaker statement, emphasizing facts not directly relevant to its point. The second version provides the information in a simple and direct manner. But you don't need to be an expert on style to know that the first phrasing is diplomatic and respectful (even though it's less concise) as compared with the second version, which is unnecessarily harsh and likely to provoke a negative reaction.

Business letters: where to begin

Reread the description of your task (for example, the advertisement of a job opening, instructions for a proposal submission, or assignment prompt for a course). Think about your purpose and what requirements are mentioned or implied in the description of the task. List these requirements. This list can serve as an outline to govern your writing and help you stay focused, so try to make it thorough. Next, identify qualifications, attributes, objectives, or answers that match the requirements you have just listed. Strive to be exact and specific, avoiding vagueness, ambiguity, and platitudes. If there are industry- or field-specific concepts or terminology that are relevant to the task at hand, use them in a manner that will convey your competence and experience. Avoid any language that your audience may not understand. Your finished piece of writing should indicate how you meet the requirements you've listed and answer any questions raised in the description or prompt.

APPLICATION LETTERS AND COVER LETTERS

Many people believe that application letters and cover letters are essentially the same. For purposes of this handout, though, these kinds of letters are different. The letter of application is a sales letter in which you market your skills, abilities, and knowledge. A cover letter, on the other hand, is primarily a document of transmittal. It identifies an item being sent, the person to whom it is being sent, and the reason for its being sent, and provides a permanent record of the transmittal for both the writer and the reader.

APPLICATION LETTERS

When writing an application letter, remember that you probably have competition. Your audience is a professional who screens and hires job applicants—someone who may look through dozens or even hundreds of other applications on the day she receives yours. The immediate objective of your application letter and accompanying resume is to attract this person's attention. Your ultimate goal is to obtain an interview.

As you write your application letter, be sure you complete three tasks: catch the reader's attention favorably, convince the reader that you are a qualified candidate for the job, and request an interview.

Application letter checklist:

- Identify the job by title and let the recipient know how you heard about it.
- Summarize your qualifications for the job, specifically your work experience, activities that show your leadership skills, and your educational background.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.
- Ask for an interview, stating where you can be reached and when you will be available. If your prospective

employer is located in another city and you plan to visit the area, mention the dates for your trip.
- If you are applying for a specific job, include any information pertinent to the position that is not included in your resume.

To save your reader time and to call attention to your strengths as a candidate, state your objective directly at the beginning of the letter.

Example:

I am seeking a position as a manager in your Data Center. In such a management position, I can use my master's degree in information systems and my experience as a programmer/analyst to address business challenges in data processing.

If you have been referred to a company by one of its employees, a career counselor, a professor, or someone else, mention that before stating your job objective.

Example:

During the recent ARRGH convention in Washington, D.C., one of your sales representatives, Dusty Brown, informed me of a possible opening for a manager in your Data Center. My extensive background in programming and my master's degree in information systems make me highly qualified for the position.

In subsequent paragraphs, expand on the qualifications you mentioned in your opening. Add any appropriate details, highlighting experience listed on your resume that is especially pertinent to the job you are seeking. Close with a request for an interview. Proofread your letter carefully.

Two sample letters of application are presented below. The first letter (Sample #1) is by a recent college graduate responding to a local newspaper article about the company's plan to build a new computer center. The writer is not applying for a specific job opening but describes the position he seeks. The second letter (Sample #2) is from a college senior who does not specify where she learned of the opening because she is uncertain whether a position is available.

Sample #1

6123 Farrington Road

Apt. B11
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
January 11, 2005

Taylor, Inc.
694 Rockstar Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Human Resources Director:

I just read an article in the *News and Observer* about Taylor's new computer center just north of Durham. I would like to apply for a position as an entry-level programmer at the center.

I understand that Taylor produces both in-house and customer documentation. My technical writing skills, as described in the enclosed resume, are well suited to your company. I am a recent graduate of DeVry Institute of Technology in Atlanta with an Associate's Degree in Computer Science. In addition to having taken a broad range of courses, I served as a computer consultant at the college's computer center where I helped train users to work with new systems.

I will be happy to meet with you at your convenience and discuss how my education and experience match your needs. You can reach me at my home address, at (919) 233-1552, or at krock@devry.alumni.edu.

Sincerely,

Raymond Krock

Sample #2

6123 Farrington Road
Apt. G11
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
January 11, 2005

Taylor, Inc.
694 Rockstar Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am seeking a position in your engineering department where I may use my training in computer sciences to solve Taylor's engineering problems. I would like to be a part of the department that developed the Internet Selection System but am unsure whether you have a current opening.

I expect to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from North Carolina State University in June and by that time will have completed the Computer Systems Engineering Program. Since September 2000, I have been participating, through the University, in the Professional Training Program at Computer Systems International in Raleigh. In the program I was assigned to several staff sections as an apprentice. Most recently, I have been a programmer trainee in the Engineering Department and have gained a great deal of experience in computer applications. Details of the academic courses I have taken are included in the enclosed resume.

If there is a position open at Taylor Inc., please let me know whom I should contact for further information. I look forward to hearing from you soon. I may be reached at my office(919-866-4000 ext. 232) or via email (Brock@aol.com).

Sincerely,

Rebecca Brock

COVER LETTERS

As mentioned previously, application letters and cover letters are not the same. A cover letter identifies an item being sent, the person to whom it is being sent, and the reason for its being sent. A cover letter provides a permanent record of the transmittal for both the writer and the reader.

In a cover letter, keep your remarks brief. Your opening should explain what you are sending and why. In an optional second paragraph, you might include a summary of the information you are sending. A letter accompanying a proposal, for example, might point out sections in the proposal that might be of particular interest to the reader. The letter could then go on to present a key point or two explaining why the writer's firm is the best one for the job. The closing paragraph should contain acknowledgements, offer additional assistance, or express the hope that the material will fulfill its purpose.

The following are examples of cover letters. The first letter (Sample #1) is brief and to the point. The second letter (Sample #2) is slightly more detailed because it touches on the manner in which the information was gathered.

Sample #1

Your Company Logo and Contact Information

January 11, 2005

Brian Eno, Chief Engineer
Carolina Chemical Products
3434 Pond View Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Mr. Eno:

Enclosed is the final report on our installment of pollution control equipment at Eastern Chemical Company, which we send with Eastern's Permission. Please call me collect (ext. 1206) or email me at the address below if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Nora Cassidy
Technical Services Manager
ncassidy@company.com

Enclosure: Report

Sample #2

Your Company Logo and Contact Information

January 11, 2005

Brian Eno, Chief Engineer
Ecology Systems, Inc.
8458 Obstructed View Lane
Durham, NC 27708

Dear Mr. Eno:

Enclosed is the report estimating our power consumption for the year as requested by John Brenan, Vice President, on September 4.

The report is the result of several meetings with Jamie Anson, Manager of Plant Operations, and her staff and an extensive survey of all our employees. The survey was delayed by the transfer of key staff in Building A. We believe, however, that the report will provide the information you need to furnish us with a cost estimate for the installation of your Mark II Energy Saving System.

We would like to thank Billy Budd of ESI for his assistance in preparing the survey. If you need more information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Nora Cassidy
New Projects Office
ncassidy@company.com

Enclosure: Report

For samples of various types of resumes and business letters:

http://careers.unc.edu/

http://www.provenresumes.com

http://www.4hb.com/letters/index.html

UNIT 6 EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS

6.1 Preparing Job Materials: Reading Job Ads

Getting a job is hard work. Higher than normal unemployment and significant increases in the number of college graduates mean that even well-qualified applicants may find it challenging to land the position they want. This chapter endeavors to help you set yourself apart – in a positive way – by improving the one part of the job search you can control: your application materials.

The sections that follow will help you create and improve your job materials by connecting information gleaned from job ads and corporate websites to experience you already have so that you can position yourself as uniquely qualified for the position you want.

Rhetorically Reading a Job Ad

The first step in getting a job is finding the one you want. This section will provide strategies for scanning job ads for key words and using these keywords and phrases to tailor descriptions of relevant experiences for your resume and cover letter.

Where to Find a Job Ad

When looking for a job ad, it is important to consider reputable job searching sites, as well as the websites for particular companies that you might like to work for. Here are some links for reputable job searching sites:

- Monster
- Indeed
- Career Builder
- Glass Door
- Employ-A-Bull

- Is there an application deadline?
- What is the title of the position?
- Who should the application materials be addressed to?
- Is this position specific to a particular department within the company?
- What are the requirements necessary to fill this position? (educational requirements, years of experience, particular knowledge, etc.)
- What are the responsibilities for this position? In other words, what will you, as an employee, do on a daily basis?
- Does the position require teamwork?
- Is this a management position?
- Does the job ad mention writing or communication skills as a part of the position?
- Are there any technical proficiencies required for this position?

- What adjectives does the job ad use to describe the ideal employee?
- How long has the company been operating?
- What is the company's mission statement?
- What kinds of products or services do they provide?
- What types of clients does the company serve?

For information about these and other, industry specific job search sites, please visit this gallery of job search websites: PC Magazine Best Job Search Websites.

What to Look for in a Job Ad

A job ad is the way companies let potential employees know what they need and what they want in an applicant. The job ad also provides important clues regarding how to talk about your experiences in a way that make them attractive to the employer. Your job as an applicant is to read the job ad critically and to develop a list of key words, phrases, and information related to the position.

Questions to Ask Yourself about Key Information

To answer the remaining questions, you will need to do some external research, such as visiting the company's website.

Matching Qualifications to Job Ads

After analyzing your ad for key words, use this grid (created by Meredith Johnson) to organize these key words in the "What they want" column according to categories–skills, experiences, education, qualities & values. Then reflect on your own skills, experiences, education, and qualities & values. How do they match up with the keywords you've identified? You probably won't be able to fill in all the blanks in the "What I've got" column, but that's okay.

	What they want as outlined in the job ad. List from most important to least important	**What I've got**
Skills(i.e. hardware/software skills, writing skills, building skills, etc.)		
Example	*Java and database administration*	*X class at USF that covered Java and X class at USF that covered database administration*
Experiences (i.e. jobs, internships, volunteering, co-ops, etc.)		
Example	*0-2 years experience in Civil Engineering*	*A co-op at Nederveld Associates, Inc.*
Education (i.e. college, high school, seminars, workshops, etc.)		
Example	*College education*	*B.S. from USF*
Qualities and values (i.e. hard working, good communicator, etc.)		
Example	*Someone who is responsible*	*Worked as a lifeguard*

Learn how to improve your problem-solving and persuasive skills. Employ your writing and reasoning skills to make a difference in the world. View samples and write a proposal to conduct research, develop a Web site, solve a problem, or provide a service. Proposals are persuasive texts that articulate ways to solve a problem, conduct needed research, or provide a service.

Proposals may attempt to persuade readers to act or they may seek funding. Writers of proposals support claims with reasoning, library and Internet research, and original research, including questionnaires, interviews, and ethnographers. Ironically, even a proposal that seeks funding to conduct research needs to be firmly grounded in research. In other words, you often have to conduct research in order to craft a proposal, even if your ultimate goal is to secure funding for additional research.

In school, your instructors may ask you to write proposals to solve or improve a problem. For example, you could write a proposal to better meet the needs of students so 50% of them don't fail to complete their degrees. Or you could attempt to solve that age-old problem of parking on overcrowded campuses. Instructors across the disciplines may ask you to write research proposals, outlining a topic, describing its significance, and presenting a schedule for more thoroughly researching the topic. In business classes, your teachers may assign business plans or your teachers may seek proposals to improve the curriculum.

Proposals are arguments that seek particular outcomes from the readers of the proposals. Proposals can offer to trade services for money or goods, proposals can seek funding to conduct research, and proposals might present a call for action.

In general, proposals address three distinct purposes:

1. **Research Proposals**: Students and professionals often write research proposals, describing research they'd like to complete in college classes, professional settings, and laboratories. For example, a student might write a proposal to conduct a full-length research report, essentially outlining the topic, describing the significance of the topic, and explaining when and how the research would be conducted.
2. **Essay Proposals**: People write proposals as editorials or essays, hoping to influence people about various topics. The proposals go beyond arguing one side of a topic: They present a call for action. For example, a student might write an editorial in the student newspaper calling for a task force to explore ways to create healthier food choices on campus. An activist might write an article for a magazine, advocating particular health care reforms. A terrorism expert might argue for enacting certain policies in airports.
3. **Consulting Proposals**: Did you know that billions of dollars are awarded to successful proposals every year? People write proposals seeking funding for necessary services. For example, an environmental consulting business might sell its services to the EPA, offering to conduct a water contamination report, or an accounting firm might sell its services as an independent auditor.

In the U.S. much of the research conducted by university faculty and scientists is funded by government agencies and private foundations. Professional researchers often refer to the Community of Science, a funding source database, which identifies $33 billion in funding opportunities. Another popular funding source database is IRIS.

As suggested by the table below, proposals are a remarkably diverse genre, coming in all shapes and sizes. Proposals can be page length or book length, covering hundreds of pages. Proposals can be presented in essay form and published in trade magazines. Alternatively, proposals can be submitted in an internal memo format or in an external report format. Some large organizations, such as the National Science Foundation, have online submission procedures.

Purposes	Audiences	Voices/Persona	Media
• Call for a specific action • Conduct research • Provide services	• Corporation • Foundation • Business • Newspaper	• Professional • Academic researcher • Activist • Persuasive	• Letters • Memos • External proposal • Editorial • Email • Web sites

Consider the context, audience, purpose, and media invoked by the following readings. Also examine how ideas are developed in these texts. Are assertions grounded in personal experience, interviews with authorities, questionnaires, Internet and library research, or empirical research?

1. MIT's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (Sample Student Proposals)
2. DECA, an association of marketing students, calls for a variety of proposals, which can be entered into a nationwide competition.
3. Students at Brown University rewrote the Student Code of Conduct because they weren't happy with the university's code.
4. The Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry publishes Children and TV Violence to warn parents about the effects of violence on TV on their children, as suggested by the research of their members.
5. The American Psychological Association, the leading professional group of psychologists, has published Childhood Exposure to Media Violence Predicts Young Adult Aggressive Behavior, According to a New 15-Year Study.
6. The Union of Concerned Scientists publishes Powerful Solutions: 7 Ways to Switch America to Renewable Electricity, suggesting ways Americans can switch to renewable energy sources.
7. NSF , the National Science Foundation, offers many sample proposals on its Web site, helping to guide future proposal writers.
8. NEH, National Endowment for the Humanities, publishes successful proposals (in DOC and HTML and PDF formats) on its Web site; see sample proposals.
9. EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, provides hundreds of proposals on its site; see sample proposals.
10. Preventing AIDS: An Investment in the Future by Lawrence H. Summers. Representing the United States government as the Secretary of the Treasury, Lawrence H. Summers explains the importance of thinking globally when it comes to infectious

Proposals typically outline a problem, detail solutions to the problem, and define the costs for solving the problem. Proposals provide information about the qualifications of the person or people suggesting the solution. When funds are sought to conduct the promised work, a detailed budget is provided. More formal proposals contain evaluation information–that is, a plan to evaluate the success of the proposal once it's implemented.

A proposal designed to affect readers' opinions about public policies differs from one seeking funding for research or to conduct research. Accordingly, the following analysis of key features is presented as a series of considerations as opposed to a comprehensive blueprint.

Focus

Proposal writers bring focus to their proposals by highlighting the urgency of the problem and by providing the evidence readers need to believe the proposed solution can work.

Development

It's true that some proposals are won on appeals to emotion. But ultimately, an argument needs to be based on reason. You need to conduct research to find the facts, opinions, and research that support your proposal.

Reading sample proposals can help you find and adopt an appropriate voice and persona. By reading samples, you can learn how others have prioritized particular criteria. Below are some additional suggestions for developing your proposal.

Define the Problem(s)

Obvious problems can be defined briefly, whereas more subtle problems may need considerable development. For example, Michael McManus details the problems with divorce for over five pages in Why Is It in the Government's Interests to SaveMarriages? Thus, this part of your proposal may be as short as a sentence or many pages long. Occasionally writers will view the problem as so obvious to their audience that they won't even introduce it; see, for example, What You Can Do About Global Warming by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

When they read the introduction to your proposals, readers are likely to ask these two questions:

Who benefits from the proposal? Will the project have significant impact? Who is submitting the proposal? What is their interest in solving the problem? Is this person or organization qualified to solve the problem?

In order to answer these questions, provide specifics including statistics, quotes from authorities, results from past research, interviews, and questionnaires. Notice how the following excerpt stuns readers in its introduction with gruesome statistics. These statistics provide the background information that readers may need to understand the proposal:

Three hundred million people live on less than US$l per day. Life expectancy is 48 years and falling. More than one-third of all children are malnourished; more than 40 per cent have no access to education. Twenty-eight million people live with HIV/AIDS, and for over 100 million people, war is a part of daily life. And yet, in spite of these grim statistics, there are still grounds for optimism. The spread of democracy and the growing strength of African civil society, combined with the efforts by some African leaders to chart a new course, offer a real chance to tackle the root causes of poverty and conflict.

Define Method(s)

How will you gather information (secondary research or primary research)? In the humanities, writers do not explicitly mention their methods, whereas in the sciences and social sciences writers often explicitly mention their methods.

1. If you are proposing to conduct research, your readers will want information regarding how you propose to conduct the research. Will your research involve Internet and library research? Will you interview authorities?
2. If your proposal calls for laboratory research, your readers will want to see that you have access to the laboratory and tools needed to carry out the research.
3. If you are proposing a service, readers will want to ensure you can actually provide the service.

Present Your Solution(s)

Successful proposals are not vague about proposed solutions. Instead, they tend to outline step-by-step activities and objectives, perhaps even associating particular activities and objectives with dollar figures–if money is sought to conduct the proposal.
Critical readers are likely to view proposals skeptically, preferring inaction (which doesn't cost anything) to action (which may involve risk). As they review the solutions you propose, they may ask the following three questions:

1. Is the solution feasible?
2. How much time will it take to complete the proposal?
3. Will other factors resolve the problem over time? In other words, is the problem urgent?

Appeal to Character/Persona

People often imply or explicitly make "appeals to character." In other words, they attempt to suggest they have credibility, that they are good people with the best interests of their readers in mind.

The persona you project as a writer plays a fundamental role in the overall success of your proposal. Your opening sentences generally establish the tone of your text and present to the reader a sense of your persona, both of which play a tremendous role in the overall persuasiveness of your argument. By evaluating how you define the problem, consider counterarguments, or marshal support for your claims, your readers will make inferences about your character.

When reviewing proposals, reviewers are particularly concerned about the credibility of the author. When an author is advocating a course of action, critical readers wonder about how the author(s) benefit from the proposal–or why they are presenting the proposal. Notice, for example, when the Brown American Civil Liberties Union rewrote the Code of Student Conduct, they were quick to agree with doubting readers that they also dislike "hate speech," yet they thought stifling free speech on campus wasn't the best way to counteract hate speech:

We at the Brown American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) are proposing the following changes to the Code of Student Conduct in an effort to ensure a consistent, unambiguous, and Constitutionally acceptable disciplinary code that does not consider protected speech a violation or an aggravating factor under any circumstances. We fully support the University's efforts to promote tolerance, understanding, and to prevent discrimination and prejudice. However, we strongly disagree with the assertion that the current Code prohibits only "behavior" and not Constitutionally protected speech. In addition, we believe that although hate speech may be offensive, it should not be censored. The solution to hate speech is more speech, not less. Brown must insure that all opinions, no matter how unpopular, can be freely stated and challenged within a free and open University. The current "behavior" guidelines, no matter how well intentioned, can potentially still be used to punish unpopular, yet Constitutionally protected speech. The potential for the current code to be wrongly interpreted by the University Disciplinary Council (UDC) is great, and has been used in the past to justify harsher penalties for speech-related violations than for actual physical confrontations. We seek to rectify this situation, and we feel our proposals should satisfy both the desire to protect the Brown community and to protect the rights of community members. We urge the timely and respectful consideration of our reform proposals listed below. [Brown University: Revising the Code of Student Conduct]

In less formal circumstances, writers will speak personally about the importance of the proposal. Consider, for example, this excerpt from one of the students' proposals featured at MIT's site on Undergraduate Research Proposals:

I am very enthusiastic to continue working with the multidisciplinary team of researchers involved with this project. As a student, I am excited to be able to supplement my education with out-of-class research. While learning about the organizations that are perceived to be on the "cutting edge," those that have incorporated the best technologies and most innovative organizational approaches into their management structures, I will gain a better understanding of the overall business environments of both our society and of our world. Because the scope of this initiative is greater than what current consulting firms have to offer, this project is particularly attractive. Having an interest in the field of professional consulting, work on this project would allow me to explore in greater depth the subject material that a future career in consulting would involve. In addition, I will have the honor of working with a distinguished group of faculty and staff members that are under the direction of [faculty supervisor's name].

Because I am a student majoring in economics, minoring in psychology, and I possess a strong interest in management science, this multidisciplinary research initiative, which draws upon all three of these fields, really feels like a "nice fit" in terms of what it has to offer and by what I can give back. [Sample UROP Proposals]

In circumstances when a service is being proposed or when a research project is being proposed, they want to ensure the author has the resources, skills, and experience necessary to successfully provide the service.

Appeal to Emotion

Proposals are more firmly grounded in appeals to logic and character than appeals to emotion. Often, appeals to emotion would seem unethical or unprofessional. Critical readers tend to emphasize facts and qualifications when assessing proposals. Notice, for example, that:

The AMA doesn't put a face on all of the deaths caused by insufficient organs. [AMA House Supports Studies on Organ Donation Incentives]

The Union of Concerned Scientists doesn't emotionally describe the effects of global warming. [The Union of Concerned Scientists]

However, because of the power of emotional appeals, you may want to slip them into the introduction and conclusion of your proposal. Just be discreet and careful. Most modern, well-educated readers are quick to see through such manipulative attempts and

they prefer the bulk of a proposal to be grounded in research and logic.
Additional emotional appeals include:

- Appeals to authority. (According to the EPA, global warming will raise sea levels.)
- Appeals to pity. (I should be allowed to take the test again because I had the flu the first time I took it.)
- Personal attacks on the opposition, which rhetoricians call ad hominem attacks. (I wouldn't vote for that man because he's a womanizer.)

Appeal to Logic

Successful proposals are firmly grounded in logic. You need to provide evidence if you hope to sway educated readers. Your description of the problem must be firmly grounded in research. You can add depth and persuasiveness to your proposal by citing authorities, interviewing experts, and researching past attempts to solve the problem. Trained as critical readers, your teachers and college-educated peers expect you to provide evidence–that is, logical reasoning, personal observations, expert testimony, facts, and statistics.

Consider Counterarguments

Typically, proposal writers are under severe word-length restrictions. In professional contexts, they may be competing with hundreds, perhaps thousands of writers who each have five pages to sell their solution. Accordingly, each word is precious so proposal writers do not want to give significant air time to articulating counterarguments or counter solutions.

Even so, at some point in your proposal, you may need to present counterarguments or consider the wisdom of alternative solutions. Essentially, whenever you think your readers may think your alternative solutions are more feasible, you need to account for their concerns. Elaborating on counterarguments is particularly useful when you have an unusual claim or a skeptical audience.

Consider, for example, Jonathan Trager's "Libertarian Solutions: How Small-government Solutions Can Successfully Stop the Terrorist Threat." Addressing the best ways to protect our airports in light of 9/11, Trager spends the bulk of his proposal critiquing other people's solutions. In particular he critiques these three recommendations:

1. Have government bureaucrats man x-ray machines in airports.
2. Regulate immigration more effectively.
3. Grant more power to law enforcement.

Using an inductive organization, it really isn't until the middle of his proposal that he cites his four solutions:

1. Stop disarming pilots.
2. Dismantle the drug war.
3. Return to a non-interventionist foreign policy.

Prohibit the American government from giving weapons–or money to buy weapons–to foreign nations.

Use Visuals

Readers love visual representations of proposals because they enable readers to see the proposal, engaging readers at a visual level. Consider the effects of the following creative uses of visuals: To augment their proposal on ways to alleviate parking problems at Harvard (see Students Tackle Parking Problems), the students provided video clips, illustrating how robotic garages can best solve Harvard's parking problems.

Chunk Your Contents

Consider "chunking" your proposal. For example, some proposals call for a 50-word abstract and a 500-word executive summary. Many of the proposals linked in this section provide brief and extended examples

Organization

Most proposals to conduct research or provide a service are organized as classical arguments: The author briefly presents the problem and then proposes the solutions. Occasionally, writers will employ a more inductive organization, particularly when the proposed solution may seem controversial.

Style

You can make your proposal more persuasive by using unambiguous, concrete language, appealing to the reader's senses and relating the subject or concept to information that the reader already understands, moving from given to new information.information.

6.2 The Art of the Pick-Up: Wooing Your Future Employer in the Cover Letter

On Wooing Your Audience (Or Not)

Imagine for a moment that you're in the market for a new significant other. Well, good news: your friend, Imma MutualFriend, claims that she knows your perfect match and tells you all about this person. From what you're told about this match, you're interested too. Imma promises to connect you two soon.

Flash forward, and the time comes for you to meet this supposed match. At a party, Imma points you in their direction. With the goal of wooing this person with all of your wonderful qualifications, you approach your match.

"Hi," you say. "I'm Ithink Iwannadateyou."

"Hi, it's nice to meet you," your respondent shyly replies. "I'm Notsure IfIwantoyet." Although coy, Notsure is leaning in your direction and smiling, appearing receptive to your initiation of a conversation.

"So, Imma MutualFriend has told me a lot about you," you say.

Notsure smiles and nods.

Then, you press forward—but not with anything Imma shared with you about Notsure; instead, you lead with information about yourself.

"Let me tell you a little about myself," you say. You tell Notsure where you're from, where you went to school, and all your interests. Notsure continues to nod. Then, after your thorough yet exhaustive "about me" statements, you delve into the past experiences and qualifications you think would be relevant to your position as Notsure's future significant other. This includes details about your past two serious relationships, your full dating history, and then a long list of qualifications you gained from all these experiences that show you have the skills and knowledge to be the perfect date and long-term partner.

Twenty minutes later, you're still talking about yourself to Notsure, and Notsure really hasn't gotten out so much as a peep, nor have you specifically discussed what interests you about Notsure from what you already knew. When you finally pause and focus back in to your would-be potential partner, you notice that Notsure is completely zoned out—and looks sleepy and bored! Then, you notice Notsure's eyes start to gaze beyond your shoulder—to meet another candidate's stare from across the party!

It appears you've lost your "perfect match's" interest! But how could this be? In this competitive market of date-seekers, don't people want you to explain all your experiences and qualifications up front? Why didn't you keep Notsure's attention with all the amazing information you provided about yourself?

You see, the same principle applies to the composition of your cover letter for employment purposes: while it seems that immediately sharing your experiences and explaining your own qualifications would be the most effective approach, there is much more of a weaving of information about both parties needed in the conversation to truly stimulate interest from your audience. To truly catch the attention of your audience, you should lead with them first. While it may seem counterintuitive, as you are trying to prove yourself quickly, you will likely be much more successful if you learn to truly "woo" your audience by proving the knowledge (and interest) you have about them—rather than focusing solely on all the great things you have to say about yourself.

How is this done in practice? In your cover letter, instead of just talking "at" your reader, as was the case with the failed "pick up" with Notsure above, you want to weave your points into somewhat of a "conversation" in which both parties—yourself and your audience—are acknowledged and discussed. In particular, you want to write in a way that leads with your audience first and then follows with connecting statements about yourself.

By beginning your cover letter in this manner, you will prove you've done your research, engage the interest of your audience, show that this particular conversation/person (or cover letter) is not like any other to you, and, most importantly, hold these feelings within your audience's mind for the duration of the "conversation." This method requires a whole lot more work than slapping different names on the same generic cover letter, but it's worth it when you actually get a phone call for an interview and score a shiny new job rather than being passed up for another candidate who had similar qualifications but instead knew how to engage an audience.

In the next section, we will delve more specifically into how you can accomplish this "art of the pick-up" in your cover letter using other Writing Commons texts, including Megan McIntyre and Cassandra Branham's Writing a Cover Letter, and Joe Schall's Writing Cover Letters as complementary resources (you may want to read them first).

The Cover Letter as a Conversation

Especially in the Beginning, It's Not Really About You

In McIntyre and Branham's Writing a Cover Letter, the authors explain that you must not begin a cover letter with your own qualifications. Instead, they note, "it's important to establish what job you're applying for and that you know something about the company before describing yourself." Further, the authors explain that you should avoid a "generic letter that includes no specific information about the company or position."

The natural tendency in a cover letter is to begin by writing about oneself directly. After all, the cover letter is supposed to be about you, right? Partially, but, in a truly strong cover letter (and pick-up attempt)—not really! Here's the truth: while you need to talk about yourself, it's not really all about you. It's about engaging the audience with information about themselves (interests, goals, the future) and explaining how you connect with this information and where you fit in.

Let's go back to your pick-up quest with Notsure. In your initial moments of the conversation, instead of engaging your audience with information about what you knew about them, you talked solely about yourself and your qualifications for a relationship. This approach didn't work: by the end of this, Notsure IfIwantoyet had transformed into Surely NotInterested! Your generic and self-centered sort of address with Notsure shows no specific interest in your audience and can leave the them feeling like you say this same thing to all of your potential matches—a tactic which, both in love and cover letters, doesn't leave your audience feeling known or special in any way.

In order to really interest your audience, you need to say something particular early on in your "conversation" to make it clear that you're interested in this specific audience. Within the first few lines of your cover letter, then, after writing that you are interested in a specific position with the company, state what excites you about this company. However, don't just say, "I'm excited about this company and its future"—this is generic and tells your audience nothing about your specific interest and knowledge about them as an individual entity. You must delve deeply into the employer's public materials to get a full sense of its mission, goals, and future plans and then articulate your connection to this information up front and consistently throughout the cover letter. A good starting idea is to locate information about the company's "big picture" information, such as a mission statement or vision (more on how to find this later), state it, and describe how you connect with this statement early on in the cover letter.

In Notsure's case, if you had done your research, as in asked Notsure's friends about their interests or at least expressed what you did know, you could have led with something specific and more substantial that would have immediately shown your specific interest and engaged your audience. For example, if you knew that Notsure's favorite hobby was athletic competitions, you might have said, "Imma MutualFriend mentioned you're training for an Ironman competition. I've trained for 5Ks before and so I'm really interested in hearing more about this!" This indicates your interest in Notsure's future and goals, and it also shows your own connection to the act.

While the company can't talk back to you the way Notsure could, you can bet that if you show all the things you know about the company and how you fit in, you'll likely get conversation back in the form of a call for an interview!

Note: Do be careful not to tell the company very basic information about itself if it does nothing to connect with your case for employment. For example, telling a company you know it has 3,000 employees does nothing to make your case for employment unless it has a specific connection to something you do and can offer (for example, it might if you're a human resources specialist and they have made hiring 2,000 more people a public goal). Your goal is to supply research about the company that you can personally make a connection to yourself with in the beginning of and throughout the cover letter.

After the Beginning, Keep Weaving

To truly "woo" your audience and keep them engaged, the act of leading with your audience must also continue beyond the first paragraph or the initial lines of your cover letter "conversation." You must find a way to balance, or weave together, a thread about the company and one about your own qualifications and experiences. Just as with the opening lines, you want the body of your cover letter to read much more like a conversation between two parties than you just talking at your audience about yourself. In his Writing Commons text, Writing Cover Letters, Joe Schall states: "[t]he best tip that I have heard on cover letter writing is that the letter is for the audience, not for you. Certainly you are selling yourself, but you do that best by molding your skills to what an employer needs and by knowing all that you can about your audience. In sum, know what your audience is interested in and how you might fit into a company's plans, not the other way around."

The way you can achieve this task is not by talking about the company once and then giving a laundry list of information about yourself, but rather by spending a generous amount of your time explicitly stating how and where you would fit in this company and its culture/goals/future. You want to intertwine specific, engaging information about the company with your own past experiences and qualifications by stating something specific you learned about the company's goals and attaching it to a qualification you have that could help meet that goal. For example, you might find from the company's recent earnings call that this company has the goal to double sales of a specific application within seven years. If you knew this and had applicable skills and background experiences that you feel could help make this goal, you could state: "I learned from your 2015 Quarter 3 earnings call that you plan to double the sales of CoolNewApp by 2022. In my job as a customer service representative at OldJob, I led a small team that helped to quadruple the sales of AddOnProduct over two years . . . (add more about how you could help with CoolNewApp)."

This sort of weaving together of commonalities helps to immediately create connection and stimulate interest in your audience's mind. It also shows you've done your research and have a specific—not a generic—interest in this particular company for very concrete reasons. In the final section of this text, we will discuss how to conduct this research appropriately.

Getting Down to Business: How to Do Your Research So You Can Get to Wooing

Now that you understand the need to continually talk about the company in which you're interested in your cover letter, how do you find credible information that (a) shows you've done thorough research on the company and (b) demonstrates that you truly understand how you fit in and can contribute to the company's goals and future plans?

First of all, you must press beyond the "Google Trap" and look at the primary sources first: this would be the company's website and public materials—not Wikipedia or other people's summations of the company. Do not rely on Wikipedia and secondary sources to tell the company's story. Go directly to the source first and use what you can from the company's own telling of its story. Beyond this research, you have many other options to get credible information about a company that take your ability to talk about the company to the next level. Here are some tips to get you started:

Visit the EDGAR Database

If the company is publicly traded, you can find extremely detailed information about a company's activities, registrations, financial statements, reports, public presentations, and even correspondence via a platform provided by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission called EDGAR (Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval database). Here's a great guide to the many ways you can use EDGAR to find out how to interpret EDGAR database information. As an example, let's say you are interested in a marketing position with Annie's Homegrown, a natural and organic foods company. Using EDGAR, you can find hundreds of documents and presentations made by this company to strategically tailor your cover letter to information about Annie's own plans. Within the EDGAR database, you can quickly uncover very detailed information about the company you wish to work for, including mission statements, growth strategies, innovation strategies, and even some of the company's self-proclaimed "big ideas" for the upcoming year. Now, using this research, you can potentially make direct statements about how you see yourself aiding in these growth strategies and big ideas by connecting your own strengths, abilities, and experiences to these goals. When Annie's reads your cover letter, it will feel as if you are speaking directly to the mind of the reader—probably because you have done your research and have now proven you are well-versed in the direction in which this company hopes to go! This sort of in-depth research is worlds better than stating generically that you are "excited about the company's future."

Surf Social Media

Another great way to get information about a company is to surf its social media pages. Look to the company's public profiles on sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and, for some companies, sites like Pinterest, Instagram, and Tumblr. Read blog posts and announcements. See if the company responds to consumer comments on the page to help assess the "voice" that the company hopes to project. Of particular interest should be new customer engagement initiatives, such as large contests and social media engagement campaigns, or new innovations the company announces it is working on—especially if your skills can help add to these efforts. Find those areas that are of particular interest to the job you're applying for and that you also (a) can contribute to directly or (b) want to learn more about helping with, and you automatically have yet another way to connect with the company in your cover letter.

Check the News

Go to a wide-sweeping news search that will find results across many channels. Try Google Newsas a starting point. Search first for the company's name and see what's happening with the company now. Look for changes or announcements: Are they changing leadership? Are they introducing a new product soon? Read the company's recent public statements. Look for information about any new hires, new management, statements about future innovation and growth, potential mergers, and the like. Know everything you can about this company of interest, and state specifically in the cover letter, within the first few lines, what you know and why this excites you. Once again, if you see things that directly connect with your area of expertise, mention them and then discuss how you could aid with this task.

Follow the Leader

Once you have the name of the company leaders (think titles such as CEO, CFO, COO, CMO, etc.), check for their names on LinkedIn and in the news. You may find that they have made recent public statements about or news appearances for their company. If the company is publicly traded, look up recent earnings calls involving these leaders. Read press releases put out via company leadership. If you find that the CEO of the company you're applying for recently (think within the last 1 to 3 months for a range) made an appearance on a show, podcast, radio show, etc., discussing its newest initiatives, find the clip or transcript, watch it or read it, and potentially use the big takeaways as potential talking points in your cover letter. This will show you are following the major players in the company and that you have a very specific interest in the movements of the leadership.

Make the Pick-Up: Tying It All Together

Ultimately, just like your romantic "pick-up" attempt with Notsure, your goal with the cover letter is to convince your audience that you are a worthy candidate—one that should be pursued just as you are pursuing them. But, instead of spending your time selling yourself by unloading paragraphs of generic information or details that are only really about you, take the time to do your research, lead with the audience, show a genuine interest in this specific audience, and structure your writing in way that plays out much like a conversation involving information about both your audience and how you connect to the goals, mission, and future of your audience. The point is, just like with the "pick-up," the audience of your cover letter likes to feel special and acknowledged—within in the first few lines of your "conversation" and throughout the duration of it. Instead of hitting your audience over the head with a written list of everything you have done, make connections. Explain how you fit into the puzzle and your audience will begin to see you in its future. If you take the time to woo your audience in this manner, you will demonstrate that you want this opportunity more than any other and you will very much increase the likelihood of scoring that first date—or that big interview and great new job at the company of your dreams.

6.3 Writing Cover Letters[1]

When reading cover letters, the key benchmark I use is simple: Do I get to know both the person and the professional? As we read a cover letter, we should have a sense that no other candidate could have written this particular document in this particular way. Hence, we respect and honor the individual.

In conversation, the term "cover letter" is used loosely to mean any professional letter that you write in an attempt to get a job, with the term "cover" denoting that the letter is usually a "cover piece" designed to introduce and accompany your resume. Thus, too many writers think of the cover letter as mere mechanical introductory fluff—disposable goods—when in fact it can be more important than your resume.

Tone: Making it Sound Good

- The proper tone for the cover letter is one of an informed, straightforward, courteous, relaxed, literate writer.
- Use "I" comfortably as a sentence subject, but avoid being too informal—overusing contractions or jargon could make you appear unprofessional.
- Avoid being too cocky, aggressive, idealistic, or unrealistic; come off as mature, self-aware, and confident.

Appearance and Mechanics: Making it Look Good

- Limit cover letters to one page, and type them using single-spaced or 1.5-spaced typing, with about one-inch margins or more on all sides of the page.
- Skip lines between paragraphs.
- Favor short paragraphs over long ones.
- Use highly readable, tight, fonts, such as Helvetica or Times, and point sizes no larger than 12 and no smaller than 10.
- Spell check, then proofread the hard copy carefully. Present the final version of the letter on durable white or off-white paper.
- Mail your letter and resume flat in a large envelope rather than folded in a small one. That way they will be easier to read and Xerox.

---

1. "Writing Cover Letters" was written by Joe Schall, The Pennsylvania State University, as a part of Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER initiative and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

The Heading and Greeting: Following the Formats

- At the top right or left corner of the page, type your address, your phone number, your e-mail address, and the date. Below that, at the left margin, put the name, title, and address of the person receiving the letter.
- Skip a line or two, then type "Dear," the person's title (Dr., Ms., Mr.), name, and a colon.
- If possible, find out the proper title, spelling, and gender of the receiver of the letter (all it usually takes is a phone call or a little web surfing). If you cannot be certain of the recipient's gender, it is acceptable to use both the first and last name (i.e., "Dear Jan Morris"). If no name is available, use a logical title such as "Dear Human Resources Representative." Greetings such as "Dear Sir or Madam" and "To Whom it May Concern" are old-fashioned—some even find them offensive—and should be avoided.

The Opening Paragraph: Showcasing Your Homework

- Ideally, open with a reference to how you derived knowledge of the company or position.
- If possible, provide context by some artful name dropping ("Ms. Judith Sowers, a Quality Control Specialist in your Meredith plant, informs me that you are seeking . . ."). Otherwise, simply be forthright about why you are writing the letter ("I am writing to you because . . .").
- Include particulars about the company's activities and vision—prove that you have done your homework and know something about the company's products and mission. Even quote a mission statement if you can.
- Establish your own professional context by naming your major and school.

The Body Paragraphs: Selling your Skills

- One paragraph may suffice here, but use more if necessary, especially if you have several different skills or experiences to sell. Stick to one topic per paragraph.
- Through concrete examples, provide evidence of your work ethic and success—cite courses, co-ops, papers, projects, theses, or internships you have completed. Make your examples both quantitative and qualitative. Some writers use a bulleted list to introduce narrative examples of their skills. Some even provide URLs for their home pages or other web pages they helped to create.
- Introduce your resume ("As the enclosed resume shows . . .") and interpret it for your audience rather than simply repeat its details. Apply your education, work experience, and activities directly to the job, proving that you are a highly capable candidate.

The Closing Paragraph and Signoff: Exiting Gracefully

- Keep your closing short and simple. Do not waste time. Be gracious and sincere, not falsely flattering nor pushy. Respectfully indicate your desire for further action, reminding the company of your availability.
- Remembering that a company could try to call you over a break or during the summer, indicate relevant phone numbers right in the text. Provide your e-mail address as well.
- Under the final paragraph, skip a line or two, then, directly under your heading address, type "Sincerely," then handwrite and type your name beneath.
- Indicate that a resume is included along with the letter by typing the word "Enclosure" at the left margin near the bottom of the page.

6.4 Establishing Your Professional Self: Résumé Writing

Compiling a résumé can feel like a daunting task. Just like essay writing, résumé creation works well as a process. Before worrying about the format of the résumé and where to place everything in a document, consider beginning by compiling an informal list of past and present work experience and education. Once you have a first draft, look at résumés in the field you are applying to, since every field has different standards and preferences. Remember: there are no one-size-fits all résumés. The key to constructing a polished résumé is tailoring your experience to the job to which you're applying.

After you've read the job ad(s) and identified key skills and words/phrases (see McIntyre and Branham's "Reading Job Ads"), you might consider creating an exhaustive list of possible content for each section of the resume. Not all resumes will have all the sections below. In fact, depending on the amount of relevant experience and skills you have, you may eliminate more than one of these sections. However, maintaining a much longer list of possible content will allow you to more easily tailor your resume to various positions.

Creating Your List

To begin, list each of the potential sections (the list of headings below is not exhaustive). The idea is to create headings that allow you to categorize and demonstrate your most relevant qualifications and experiences. For each of these categories, use bullet points with phrases rather than complete sentences to describe your experiences. Action verbs, such as communicated, completed, produced, etc., help to convey your participation. To get started, consider the following questions for each section:

POTENTIAL SECTION HEADING	QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
OBJECTIVE	• What particular position am I seeking? • How will my skills be appropriate for this particular position? • What key words from the job ad might help me frame my skills for this position? The key to writing a quality objective statement is specificity. Instead of writing: "To obtain an entry-level marketing position," try "To obtain an entry-level social media marketing position with a global media conglomerate that will allow me to benefit the company through my knowledge of social media promotions." Please note: not all resumes should include an objective. In fact, for many resume writers the extra space taken up by the objective may be better used to expand other sections. Additionally, many employers do not expect to see objectives.
SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS	• What skills or experiences do I have that make me particularly well-suited for this position? • If an employer reads no other section of my résumé, what do I want her to know about my qualifications? • How can I quantify my experiences? • What are my most impressive relevant skills and experiences?
EDUCATION	• What university did I attend, and what degree(s) have I earned or am I pursuing? • In what subject is my degree? • If I am still pursuing a degree, what is my expected month and year of graduation? • What relevant course have I taken? • What, if any, academic honors have I received? • What relevant projects have I completed during my coursework (i.e., capstone projects, community service project, client-based projects, theses, etc.)? • What is my GPA? (Please note: most resume writers only include GPAs of 3.0 or higher.)
WORK EXPERIENCE	• Where and for how long have I worked? • What were my job titles? • What were my job duties? • How can I frame these duties using keywords from the job ad? • What skills did I use and/or develop as part of this position (i.e., communication and writing skills, interpersonal skills, organization skills, etc.)?
LINGUISTIC SKILLS	• Am I bilingual? • Do I have intermediate proficiency in another language?
TECHNICAL SKILLS	• Am I proficient in any software like Excel, PowerPoint, etc.? • Do I know any coding languages? • Can I use any field specific software? • Do I have experience with collaborative writing spaces like Google Docs?
ACCOMPLISHMENTS	• Have I won any academic, athletic, teaching, or volunteering awards? • Have I been awarded any notable scholarships? • Have I earned a high academic GPA? • Have I taken any summer study abroad trips?

ACTIVITIES (i.e., volunteer work, shadowing, leadership/ membership in honors societies, etc.)	• Am I a member of any academic or professional organization(s)? • Have I shadowed a professional in my desired profession? • Have I volunteered for an organization or project? Have I organized an event?

Narrowing Your List

Once you've created your long list of experiences, you'll have to decide how to narrow that list in order to create a concise, cohesive résumé. While it might be tempting to include all of your educational, employment, and extracurricular experiences on your résumé, including details that are not relevant to the position for which you are applying can often take attention away from your most relevant qualifications. In order to highlight your most impressive experiences, it is important to think critically about what the job you are targeting requires and how your experiences match up with those needs.

Undergraduate résumés are typically one full page in length. However, if you have a significant amount of experience in your field, your résumé might be longer than one full page. The rule of thumb is this: Limit your undergraduate résumé to one full page unless you can fill at least one and a half full pages with relevant experiences. For many of you, this means you will need to eliminate some of your less relevant experiences.

You can narrow your list in three ways: by eliminating sections, by eliminating one or more experience within a section, or by cutting down your descriptions of one or more experiences.

Eliminating Sections: The quickest way to pare down your list is to eliminate sections that have no content. For example, if you only speak English, you don't need a "Linguistic Skills" section. Additionally, if you have a section that is not relevant to a particular position, you might eliminate that section. For example, if you are applying for a position as a house painter and the job ad makes no mention of office or computer work, you might eliminate your "Technical Skills" section.

Eliminating Experiences: Another way to highlight your most relevant experience is by eliminating some experiences within a section. For example, if you are applying for a position as technical support specialist, and you were previously employed as a technical support specialist, a customer service representative, and a teacher at a daycare center, you might eliminate your position at the daycare from your résumé. Eliminating this experience from your résumé does not mean that this position did not teach you valuable things; however, your work as a technical support specialist and a customer service representative are more relevant to the position for which you are currently applying.

Cutting Down Descriptions: One final way to trim down your list of experiences is by cutting down descriptions. Typically, you will include descriptions in the form of bulleted lists that help you to describe your employment, volunteer, or educational experiences. However, although it is important to make sure that you reader knows how these experiences are relevant to the position for which you are now applying, it is not necessary to tell your reader everything about these experiences. For example, if you're applying for a position as a customer service technician and you were previously employed as a cashier at a supermarket, rather than highlighting your job duties, such as ringing up groceries, you might focus on the customer service skills that you developed at this position, such as ensuring customer satisfaction. This enables you to trim down your list by focusing on skills rather than duties. Rather than providing an exhaustive list, you should aim to include 2-4 bullets for each experience that you are describing.

Creating a Draft

Once you have tailored your list to highlight your most relevant experiences for the position to which you applying, you're ready to take your list and turn it into a draft of your résumé. Joe Schall's "Writing the Conventional Resume" will help you think more about how to organize and format your sections.

6.5 Writing the Conventional Résumé[2]

Writing the Conventional Résumé

I learned about résumé writing from my students. The students with the best résumés, I found, were those who understood that a résumé is principally an objective summary of your skills and achievements, secondly a subtly clever argument that you are worth hiring, and finally a reflection of your individuality. The key is to work within the conventions while building a résumé that only you could have written. The best way to begin is to study the conventions, then mimic the qualities of a good model, with an eye for places where your individuality can emerge. Finally, I should note here that employers sometimes use the terms "résumé" and "curriculum vitae" (or CV) interchangeably, and both terms loosely mean "life summary."

The conventional résumé is organized according to the sections that follow, moving from the top of the résumé to the bottom.

The Heading

There is no title for this section; it's simply your name and contact information at the top of the page. This section is always presented at the top of the résumé, taking up anywhere from two to five lines. Think of this section as highly readable data about yourself, and format and efficiently word accordingly, following these principles:

- Do not title this section; simply provide your legal name, addresses, and phone numbers as shown in the examples. No matter how attached you are to it, do not use your nickname—use the formal name under which you will be cashing your paychecks.
- Either beneath your name or address, provide relevant e-mail addresses.
- Boldfacing and capitalizing your name is reasonably standard, though not required, and making your name stand out with a larger or fancier font is acceptable, but beware of graphic overkill.
- Never use titles such as "Résumé" or "Personal Data Sheet" on the top of the page—redundant and silly; your name centered at the top automatically tells readers that the document is a resume.
- If the phone number you provide for contact information is a cell phone, note that information efficiently as you present the number. It's useful for readers to know whether or not they're calling a cell phone, because that fact can change their expectations slightly.
- If you've created a personal webpage or online portfolio, you might offer the URL so that readers can visit it for further information. The material at that URL should go beyond the résumé and be professionally presented, of course.

Objective

Some résumé writers do not include an objective, either for reasons of space, personal taste, or because they want to hand out a lot of résumés at a career fair and think that an objective might not allow them to cast as wide a net. But most undergraduate résumés do include an objective, embracing these principles:

- As a rule of thumb, include a job objective on an undergraduate résumé. Keep it as short as is practical, with the goal of taking

2. "Writing the Conventional Resume" was written by Joe Schall, The Pennsylvania State University, as a part of Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER initiative and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

up no more than two lines of text.

- If possible, use an actual job title (“forecaster,” “engineering intern”) and provide the specific type of employer or type of position that you are seeking (“internship at a research facility,” “entry-level position with a consulting firm”).
- Avoid the overuse of phrases such as “a challenging position,” “a progressive company,” “an established firm”—you need not preach to the employer about its status or sound too picky. Your aim here is to categorize the role that you can fulfill.
- Your job objective can be tailored a bit to the position that you are applying for, but avoid mentioning a company’s actual name in your job objective—the objective is intended to define a role, not a specific job at a specific place.

Education

In this section, be at your most objective on the resume—simply report the facts. The order of information is up to you, but most writers begin by providing the title and address of their school. On the next line, provide your exact degree title, including a minor or program emphasis if relevant. Include your projected graduation date even if it is years away. Other material that might be included under “Education”:

- GPA. Generally, include if it is a 3.0 or better; include GPA in major if impressive. Recognize that opinions vary about whether or not your GPA. should be included on the resume, and that even if it is excluded you may be expected to reveal it at some point to a potential employer anyway.
- Dean’s List. Provide actual semesters or years.
- Relevant Coursework. List actual course titles or offer appropriately worded categories. You could combine courses for efficiency (i.e., Statistical Analysis I and II). Typically, you only include courses that you’ve actually completed or are currently enrolled in, although you might include projected courses followed by their target semester of completion in parentheses.
- Curriculum Description. This could be included to describe your background concretely. Turn to your school’s descriptions of course curricula to help you with wording.
- Study Abroad. Always include it and provide the college’s name and location. Most writers include the dates or semesters of attendance as well.
- Honor’s Program. Always include it as a representation of academic accomplishment.
- Thesis. Always include it and list it by title. In place of or in addition to the actual title, even a working title or a summary of the thesis contents or objective is useful.
- Certifications / Training. Consider a subheading under “Education” to reflect formal education that resulted in specialized knowledge or skills. Typical examples include CPR certification, OSHA HAZWOPER training, scuba diving instruction, and the completion of short courses.
- ROTC / Military Training. Especially if military training involved short courses and took place on college campuses, include it and give vital details such as course names, number of hours involved, times of completion, and certifications earned.

Experience / Work Experience / Employment

This section is the heart of the résumé—the place where readers are likely to spend most of their time. Readers here expect concrete detail, an accessible format, and selective interpretation of detail. Methods used to achieve these goals include the following:

- Any of the above three titles is acceptable, though “Experience” is the most standard.
- The convention is to use past tense throughout this section, even to describe jobs that you currently hold. Some writers elect to discuss current jobs in the present tense.
- As a rule, list your work experience in reverse chronological order—most recent first—and provide the actual dates of employment. Go back several years, even early into high school if necessary. Provide exact job titles (invent them honestly if no

actual titles were used), and give the locations of your employers. All jobs need not be directly relevant to the position you are applying for, but be sure that the descriptions of your job duties are worded such that they enhance your accomplishments and responsibilities.

- Use action words to describe your job skills and make each job description specific and efficient. Especially if you favor the present tense in your descriptions, you might using the "-ing" form of active verbs ("performing" rather than "perform").
- Do not feel compelled to describe every job duty ("waitstaff" and "newspaper carrier," for example, can be self-explanatory).
- As a rule, do not include your supervisor's name or phone number, unless you are seeking an internship (where formal applications are rare) and have express permission to do so.
- Including job salaries is rarely a good idea, but providing the number of hours you worked per week can be helpful.
- If computer skills were linked to your job duties, connect the work with them directly, even including software package names or describing what you used the computer programs for.
- Use identical margins and format for parallel items (e.g., line up all of your job titles with each other, and if you boldface one then boldface them all).
- As you describe your experience, be certain to answer these two fundamental questions: "What was done?" and "How was it valuable?"

Computer Skills

Computer Skills is not a mandatory résumé section, although many students include it, knowing that employers are typically interested in your computer expertise. Present the material efficiently, as follows:

- Consider an overall approach that suits your skill level. Some students discuss computer skills in narrative form, others simply list their experience with specific hardware and software packages, and others combine computer skills and other types of skills into one section.
- If relevant, include the version number of software packages, programming languages, and operating systems you've used.
- If you worked on websites as part of your job or as a hobby, consider including the specific URLs so that the reader can access them. If you created an online portfolio that you're proud of, certainly offer that URL, perhaps even in the heading.
- Computer skills might be presented in a simple list or in the form of an informal table, depending on your level of expertise and space constraints.

Activities / Honors / Volunteer Work

For this section, choose whichever title or combination of titles above best fits your examples. "Activities" is the most commonly used. Honors could be presented separately if they are impressive enough or if there are simply too many to include within the "Activities" section. In addition, follow these tips:

- Dates are highly recommended, in that they illustrate your level of participation in activities, but some writers do exclude the dates and favor a simpler approach. Be consistent within the category in relation to whether or not dates are included.
- List the most noteworthy extracurricular activities and include offices that you have held. Include any honors you have received, especially scholarships, but do not repeat items that were included in other sections of the resume.
- Choose descriptions of your leisure activities wisely and sparingly, even to the point of presenting them all on one final line for the sake of efficiency.
- Try to include a conversation piece. I know students who have gotten into great discussions in interviews because they listed beekeeping or piano playing or their golf handicap under "Activities."
- Use high school activities if needed, but avoid letting them sound too "high schoolish" as you present them (better to name

your school sports team than to simply list “high school basketball”). Where possible, link your activities to a community or business (“Volunteer, Bear Creek Nursing Home”) more so than to a high school, even if those activities took place when you were still in high school.

- The bottom line in this section: Provide a window into your uniqueness, whatever that uniqueness is. A volunteer firefighter, Eagle Scout, or licensed pilot can stand out as much as a scholarship recipient or professional sorority officer.

6.6 Quality Checking Your Résumé[3]

Quality Checking Your Résumé

Once your résumé is composed, it must be quality checked. Three prominent issues that arise in a quality check are content, format, and computer-related problems.

Reconsidering Content

- Look over the résumé and be certain you have considered effective wording and strong candidate material within each category, as detailed in the previous page of this manual.
- Consider accuracy and professionalism. If you simply volunteered at a position two hours per week, make sure your wording reflects this. Do your examples and wording reflect someone with a professional attitude or are they too informal or potentially vague?
- Look over your job descriptions carefully. You should be reporting exactly what you did and how it was valuable. Make sure we can see that your work was of use to someone and that performance was a concern.
- Browse for any major time gaps between jobs or other activities. If there are any, fill them in or otherwise eliminate them if possible.
- Review your Activities section with the idea of choosing an overall picture that reflects you and you alone. It should essentially contain an objective listing of information—data, and perhaps some description—unique to you. Your goal in this section is to make the reader want to meet you—to see you as an interesting and worthwhile person.
- Ask yourself: Have I only included content that I would feel comfortable discussing in an interview? At an on-site interview, your résumé might be right on the interviewer’s desk. Expect that you could be quizzed specifically about any résumé content, and if you aren’t sure you could pass such a quiz, eliminate the content.

Reviewing Overall Format

- With few exceptions, an undergraduate résumé should be limited to one page. Those that go beyond one page should seek to fill two pages neatly so that we don’t end up looking at a large block of white space.
- Maintain at least one-inch margins on all four sides of the page, and spread your information out so that it is visually balanced. Do not be afraid of white space as a formatting tool.
- Be sure you have used identical margins and format for related information. Keep parallel information parallel in form. For

3. "Quality Checking Your Résumé" was written by Joe Schall, The Pennsylvania State University, as a part of Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER initiative and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

instance, treat all major headings in the same way.

- Exploit punctuation marks—especially dashes, semicolons, and colons—to present your material efficiently.
- Be line-conscious, especially horizontally, considering how much material can fit on a single line. If you are fighting for space and you see that just one or two words are gobbling up an entire line unnecessarily, revise accordingly.
- Remember that readers look at your résumé left-to-right. Where logical, go to a new line for prominent new information. For instance, most writers put their degree name on a different line than their school name. Avoid line breaks that allow a single description of important information (say, your degree name or a course name) to spill onto more than one line.
- Present the final version of your résumé on durable white or off-white paper. Absolutely avoid odd colors such as purple, green, or pink.

Making the Computer your Ally

- Change fonts types or sizes if needed to fit the résumé to one page, but use just one or two fonts throughout the résumé—Times, Chicago, and Helvetica are popular résumé fonts—and go no lower than 10-point and no higher than 12-point for the bulk of the résumé text. Many writers do choose a larger or fancier font for their name at the top of the résumé, but be sure it's readable and attractive.
- When lining up material, use tabs rather than space bars or even line up like columns by creating a table; otherwise, your output may appear differently than it does on the screen, or print differently from one printer to the next.
- If you need a bit more space horizontally for just a line or two, see if you can "stretch" the relevant lines by resetting the margin on the ruler at the top of the page just for the lines in question.
- Absolutely work with a hard copy of your résumé. Do not trust that the way it looks to you on the computer screen will exactly match the output.
- Proofread with perfection in mind, even having someone else proofread the résumé too. Do not rely just on the spell checker, and certainly not on the grammar checker—neither will ever be capable of proofing a résumé effectively.
- If you need to submit the résumé by e-mail to an employer, do not count on a Word version of the résumé looking the same on someone else's computer as it does on yours—fonts may not translate perfectly, tabbed material may be misaligned, and line length may be compromised. The safest bet is to convert the résumé to a pdf, check the resulting pdf to be sure it's exactly how you want it to look, and then e-mail the pdf file.

As a final quality check, seek collective agreement that your résumé is perfect. Other readers—your peers, professors, parents (gasp!), and the staff at your school's Career Center—can add fresh perspectives (and even corrections) to your résumé. You get the last word, of course, but be sure that more than one other person agrees that you have presented yourself in the best possible way on paper. It pays off.

6.7 Common Action Words Used to Describe Job Experience

Common Action Words Used to Describe Job Experience

Accepted	Coordinated	Experienced	Made	Recognized
Achieved	Correlated	Experimented	Maintained	Recommended
Adapted	Counseled	Explained	Managed	Reconciled
Adjusted	Created		Mapped	Recorded
Administered	Critiqued	Facilitated	Measured	Recruited
Advised		Financed	Mediated	Reorganized
Allocated	Decorated	Formed	Modeled	Reported
Analyzed	Defined	Formulated	Moderated	Researched
Appraised	Delegated	Founded	Monitored	Retrieved
Approved	Demonstrated		Motivated	Reviewed
Arranged	Designed	Generated		Revised
Assembled	Detailed	Governed	Navigated	
Assessed	Determined	Grouped	Negotiated	Scheduled
Assigned	Developed	Guided	Nominated	Screened
Assisted	Devised			Served
	Diagnosed	Handled	Observed	Set forth
Balanced	Digitized	Headed	Operated	Shaped
Budgeted	Directed		Ordered	Simplified
Built	Discovered	Implemented	Organized	Solved
	Displayed	Improved	Originated	Sorted
Calculated	Dissected	Improvised	Overcame	Sparked
Catalogued	Distributed	Increased		Strengthened
Checked	Drafted	Indexed	Participated	Supervise
Clarified		Informed	Performed	Supplemented
Classified	Earned	Initiated	Persuaded	Systematized
Collected	Edited	Innovated	Pioneered	
Communicated	Effected	Inspected	Planned	Trained
Compared	Empowered	Inspired	Predicted	Transcribed
Compiled	Encouraged	Installed	Prepared	Transformed
Composed	Enforced	Integrated	Presented	Translated
Computed	Engineered	Interpolated	Presided	
Conceived	Enlarged	Interviewed	Prioritized	Unified
Conducted	Enlightened	Investigated	Produced	Utilized
Confronted	Enlisted		Programmed	
Constructed	Established	Justified	Promoted	Valuated
Consulted	Estimated		Protected	Validated
Contracted	Evaluated	Keynoted	Provided	Verified

Controlled	Examined			
Converted	Executed	Led	Quantified	Weighed
Conveyed	Expanded	Logged	Questioned	Wrote

UNIT 7 PROPOSALS

7.1 Proposals

Learn how to improve your problem-solving and persuasive skills. Employ your writing and reasoning skills to make a difference in the world. View samples and write a proposal to conduct research, develop a Web site, solve a problem, or provide a service. Proposals are persuasive texts that articulate ways to solve a problem, conduct needed research, or provide a service.

Proposals may attempt to persuade readers to act or they may seek funding. Writers of proposals support claims with reasoning, library and Internet research, and original research, including questionnaires, interviews, and ethnographers. Ironically, even a proposal that seeks funding to conduct research needs to be firmly grounded in research. In other words, you often have to conduct research in order to craft a proposal, even if your ultimate goal is to secure funding for additional research.

Why Write Proposals?

In school, your instructors may ask you to write proposals to solve or improve a problem. For example, you could write a proposal to better meet the needs of students so 50% of them don't fail to complete their degrees. Or you could attempt to solve that age-old problem of parking on overcrowded campuses. Instructors across the disciplines may ask you to write research proposals, outlining a topic, describing its significance, and presenting a schedule for more thoroughly researching the topic. In business classes, your teachers may assign business plans or your teachers may seek proposals to improve the curriculum.

Proposals are arguments that seek particular outcomes from the readers of the proposals. Proposals can offer to trade services for money or goods, proposals can seek funding to conduct research, and proposals might present a call for action.

Diverse Rhetorical Situations

In general, proposals address three distinct purposes:

1. **Research Proposals**: Students and professionals often write research proposals, describing research they'd like to complete in college classes, professional settings, and laboratories. For example, a student might write a proposal to conduct a full-length research report, essentially outlining the topic, describing the significance of the topic, and explaining when and how the research would be conducted.
2. **Essay Proposals**: People write proposals as editorials or essays, hoping to influence people about various topics. The proposals go beyond arguing one side of a topic: They present a call for action. For example, a student might write an editorial in the student newspaper calling for a task force to explore ways to create healthier food choices on campus. An activist might write an article for a magazine, advocating particular health care reforms. A terrorism expert might argue for enacting certain policies in airports.
3. **Consulting Proposals**: Did you know that billions of dollars are awarded to successful proposals every year? People write proposals seeking funding for necessary services. For example, an environmental consulting business might sell its services to the EPA, offering to conduct a water contamination report, or an accounting firm might sell its services as an independent auditor.

In the U.S. much of the research conducted by university faculty and scientists is funded by government agencies and private foundations. Professional researchers often refer to the Community of Science, a funding source database, which identifies $33 billion in funding opportunities. Another popular funding source database is IRIS.

As suggested by the table below, proposals are a remarkably diverse genre, coming in all shapes and sizes. Proposals can be page length or book length, covering hundreds of pages. Proposals can be presented in essay form and published in trade magazines. Alternatively, proposals can be submitted in an internal memo format or in an external report format. Some large organizations, such as the National Science Foundation, have online submission procedures.

Purposes	Audiences	Voices/Persona	Media
• Call for a specific action • Conduct research • Provide services	• Corporation • Foundation • Business • Newspaper	• Professional • Academic researcher • Activist • Persuasive	• Letters • Memos • External proposal • Editorial • Email • Web sites

Rhetorical Analysis of Online Readings

Consider the context, audience, purpose, and media invoked by the following readings. Also examine how ideas are developed in these texts. Are assertions grounded in personal experience, interviews with authorities, questionnaires, Internet and library research, or empirical research?

1. MIT's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (Sample Student Proposals)
2. DECA, an association of marketing students, calls for a variety of proposals, which can be entered into a nationwide competition.
3. Students at Brown University rewrote the Student Code of Conduct because they weren't happy with the university's code.
4. The Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry publishes Children and TV Violence to warn parents about the effects of violence on TV on their children, as suggested by the research of their members.
5. The American Psychological Association, the leading professional group of psychologists, has published Childhood Exposure to Media Violence Predicts Young Adult Aggressive Behavior, According to a New 15-Year Study.
6. The Union of Concerned Scientists publishes Powerful Solutions: 7 Ways to Switch America to Renewable Electricity, suggesting ways Americans can switch to renewable energy sources.
7. NSF , the National Science Foundation, offers many sample proposals on its Web site, helping to guide future proposal writers.
8. NEH, National Endowment for the Humanities, publishes successful proposals (in DOC and HTML and PDF formats) on its Web site; see sample proposals.
9. EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, provides hundreds of proposals on its site; see sample proposals.
10. Preventing AIDS: An Investment in the Future by Lawrence H. Summers. Representing the United States government as the Secretary of the Treasury, Lawrence H. Summers explains the importance of thinking globally when it comes to infectious

What Are Proposals?

Proposals typically outline a problem, detail solutions to the problem, and define the costs for solving the problem. Proposals provide information about the qualifications of the person or people suggesting the solution. When funds are sought to conduct the promised work, a detailed budget is provided. More formal proposals contain evaluation information–that is, a plan to evaluate the success of the proposal once it's implemented.

Key Features of Proposals

A proposal designed to affect readers' opinions about public policies differs from one seeking funding for research or to conduct research. Accordingly, the following analysis of key features is presented as a series of considerations as opposed to a comprehensive blueprint.

Focus

Proposal writers bring focus to their proposals by highlighting the urgency of the problem and by providing the evidence readers need to believe the proposed solution can work.

Development

It's true that some proposals are won on appeals to emotion. But ultimately, an argument needs to be based on reason. You need to conduct research to find the facts, opinions, and research that support your proposal.

Reading sample proposals can help you find and adopt an appropriate voice and persona. By reading samples, you can learn how others have prioritized particular criteria. Below are some additional suggestions for developing your proposal.

Define the Problem(s)

Obvious problems can be defined briefly, whereas more subtle problems may need considerable development. For example, Michael McManus details the problems with divorce for over five pages in Why Is It in the Government's Interests to SaveMarriages? Thus, this part of your proposal may be as short as a sentence or many pages long. Occasionally writers will view the problem as so obvious to their audience that they won't even introduce it; see, for example, What You Can Do About Global Warming by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

When they read the introduction to your proposals, readers are likely to ask these two questions:

Who benefits from the proposal? Will the project have significant impact? Who is submitting the proposal? What is their interest in solving the problem? Is this person or organization qualified to solve the problem?

In order to answer these questions, provide specifics including statistics, quotes from authorities, results from past research, interviews, and questionnaires. Notice how the following excerpt stuns readers in its introduction with gruesome statistics. These statistics provide the background information that readers may need to understand the proposal:

Three hundred million people live on less than US$l per day. Life expectancy is 48 years and falling. More than one-third of all children are malnourished; more than 40 per cent have no access to education. Twenty-eight million people live with HIV/AIDS, and for over 100 million people, war is a part of daily life. And yet, in spite of these grim statistics, there are still grounds for optimism. The spread of democracy and the growing strength of African civil society, combined with the efforts by some African leaders to chart a new course, offer a real chance to tackle the root causes of poverty and conflict.

Define Method(s)

How will you gather information (secondary research or primary research)? In the humanities, writers do not explicitly mention their methods, whereas in the sciences and social sciences writers often explicitly mention their methods.

1. If you are proposing to conduct research, your readers will want information regarding how you propose to conduct the research. Will your research involve Internet and library research? Will you interview authorities?
2. If your proposal calls for laboratory research, your readers will want to see that you have access to the laboratory and tools needed to carry out the research.
3. If you are proposing a service, readers will want to ensure you can actually provide the service.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=49

Present Your Solution(s)

Successful proposals are not vague about proposed solutions. Instead, they tend to outline step-by-step activities and objectives, perhaps even associating particular activities and objectives with dollar figures–if money is sought to conduct the proposal.
Critical readers are likely to view proposals skeptically, preferring inaction (which doesn't cost anything) to action (which may involve risk). As they review the solutions you propose, they may ask the following three questions:

1. Is the solution feasible?
2. How much time will it take to complete the proposal?
3. Will other factors resolve the problem over time? In other words, is the problem urgent?

Appeal to Character/Persona

People often imply or explicitly make "appeals to character." In other words, they attempt to suggest they have credibility, that they are good people with the best interests of their readers in mind.

The persona you project as a writer plays a fundamental role in the overall success of your proposal. Your opening sentences generally establish the tone of your text and present to the reader a sense of your persona, both of which play a tremendous role in the overall persuasiveness of your argument. By evaluating how you define the problem, consider counterarguments, or marshal support for your claims, your readers will make inferences about your character.

When reviewing proposals, reviewers are particularly concerned about the credibility of the author. When an author is advocating a course of action, critical readers wonder about how the author(s) benefit from the proposal–or why they are presenting the proposal. Notice, for example, when the Brown American Civil Liberties Union rewrote the Code of Student Conduct, they were quick to agree with doubting readers that they also dislike "hate speech," yet they thought stifling free speech on campus wasn't the best way to counteract hate speech:

We at the Brown American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) are proposing the following changes to the Code of Student Conduct in an effort to ensure a consistent, unambiguous, and Constitutionally acceptable disciplinary code that does not consider protected speech a violation or an aggravating factor under any circumstances. We fully support the University's efforts to promote tolerance, understanding, and to prevent discrimination and prejudice. However, we strongly disagree with the assertion that the current Code prohibits only "behavior" and not Constitutionally protected speech. In addition, we believe that although hate speech may be offensive, it should not be censored. The solution to hate speech is more speech, not less. Brown must insure that all opinions, no matter how unpopular, can be freely stated and challenged within a free and open University. The current "behavior" guidelines, no matter how well intentioned, can potentially still be used to punish unpopular, yet Constitutionally protected speech. The potential for the current code to be wrongly interpreted by the University Disciplinary Council (UDC) is great, and has been used in the past to justify harsher penalties for speech-related violations than for actual physical confrontations. We seek to rectify this situation, and we feel our proposals should satisfy both the desire to protect the Brown community and to protect the rights of community members. We urge the timely and respectful consideration of our reform proposals listed below. [1]

1. Brown University: Revising the Code of Student Conduct

In less formal circumstances, writers will speak personally about the importance of the proposal. Consider, for example, this excerpt from one of the students' proposals featured at MIT's site on Undergraduate Research Proposals:

I am very enthusiastic to continue working with the multidisciplinary team of researchers involved with this project. As a student, I am excited to be able to supplement my education with out-of-class research. While learning about the organizations that are perceived to be on the "cutting edge," those that have incorporated the best technologies and most innovative organizational approaches into their management structures, I will gain a better understanding of the overall business environments of both our society and of our world. Because the scope of this initiative is greater than what current consulting firms have to offer, this project is particularly attractive. Having an interest in the field of professional consulting, work on this project would allow me to explore in greater depth the subject material that a future career in consulting would involve. In addition, I will have the honor of working with a distinguished group of faculty and staff members that are under the direction of [faculty supervisor's name].

Because I am a student majoring in economics, minoring in psychology, and I possess a strong interest in management science, this multidisciplinary research initiative, which draws upon all three of these fields, really feels like a "nice fit" in terms of what it has to offer and by what I can give back. [Sample UROP Proposals]

In circumstances when a service is being proposed or when a research project is being proposed, they want to ensure the author has the resources, skills, and experience necessary to successfully provide the service.

Appeal to Emotion

Proposals are more firmly grounded in appeals to logic and character than appeals to emotion. Often, appeals to emotion would seem unethical or unprofessional. Critical readers tend to emphasize facts and qualifications when assessing proposals. Notice, for example, that:

The AMA doesn't put a face on all of the deaths caused by insufficient organs. [2]

The Union of Concerned Scientists doesn't emotionally describe the effects of global warming. [3]

However, because of the power of emotional appeals, you may want to slip them into the introduction and conclusion of your proposal. Just be discreet and careful. Most modern, well-educated readers are quick to see through such manipulative attempts and they prefer the bulk of a proposal to be grounded in research and logic.

Additional emotional appeals include:

- Appeals to authority. (According to the EPA, global warming will raise sea levels.)
- Appeals to pity. (I should be allowed to take the test again because I had the flu the first time I took it.)
- Personal attacks on the opposition, which rhetoricians call ad hominem attacks. (I wouldn't vote for that man because he's a womanizer.)

Appeal to Logic

Successful proposals are firmly grounded in logic. You need to provide evidence if you hope to sway educated readers. Your description of the problem must be firmly grounded in research. You can add depth and persuasiveness to your proposal by citing authorities, interviewing experts, and researching past attempts to solve the problem. Trained as critical readers, your teachers and college-educated peers expect you to provide evidence–that is, logical reasoning, personal observations, expert testimony, facts, and statistics.

Consider Counterarguments

Typically, proposal writers are under severe word-length restrictions. In professional contexts, they may be competing with

2. [AMA House Supports Studies on Organ Donation Incentives]
3. The Union of Concerned Scientists

hundreds, perhaps thousands of writers who each have five pages to sell their solution. Accordingly, each word is precious so proposal writers do not want to give significant air time to articulating counterarguments or counter solutions.

Even so, at some point in your proposal, you may need to present counterarguments or consider the wisdom of alternative solutions. Essentially, whenever you think your readers may think your alternative solutions are more feasible, you need to account for their concerns. Elaborating on counterarguments is particularly useful when you have an unusual claim or a skeptical audience.

Consider, for example, Jonathan Trager's "Libertarian Solutions: How Small-government Solutions Can Successfully Stop the Terrorist Threat." Addressing the best ways to protect our airports in light of 9/11, Trager spends the bulk of his proposal critiquing other people's solutions. In particular he critiques these three recommendations:

1. Have government bureaucrats man x-ray machines in airports.
2. Regulate immigration more effectively.
3. Grant more power to law enforcement.

Using an inductive organization, it really isn't until the middle of his proposal that he cites his four solutions:

1. Stop disarming pilots.
2. Dismantle the drug war.
3. Return to a non-interventionist foreign policy.

Prohibit the American government from giving weapons–or money to buy weapons–to foreign nations.

Use Visuals

Readers love visual representations of proposals because they enable readers to see the proposal, engaging readers at a visual level. Consider the effects of the following creative uses of visuals: To augment their proposal on ways to alleviate parking problems at Harvard (see Students Tackle Parking Problems), the students provided video clips, illustrating how robotic garages can best solve Harvard's parking problems.

Chunk Your Contents

Consider "chunking" your proposal. For example, some proposals call for a 50-word abstract and a 500-word executive summary. Many of the proposals linked in this section provide brief and extended examples

Organization

Most proposals to conduct research or provide a service are organized as classical arguments: The author briefly presents the problem and then proposes the solutions. Occasionally, writers will employ a more inductive organization, particularly when the proposed solution may seem controversial.

Style

You can make your proposal more persuasive by using unambiguous, concrete language, appealing to the reader's senses and relating the subject or concept to information that the reader already understands, moving from given to new information.information.

7.2 Business Proposal

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the basic elements of a business proposal.
2. Discuss the main goals of a business proposal.
3. Identify effective strategies to use in a business proposal.

An effective business proposal informs and persuades efficiently. It features many of the common elements of a report, but its emphasis on persuasion guides the overall presentation.

Let's say you work in a health care setting. What types of products or services might be put out to bid? If your organization is going to expand and needs to construct a new wing, it will probably be put out to bid. Everything from office furniture to bedpans could potentially be put out to bid, specifying a quantity, quality, and time of delivery required. Janitorial services may also be bid on each year, as well as food services, and even maintenance. Using the power of bidding to lower contract costs for goods and services is common practice.

In order to be successful in business and industry, you should be familiar with the business proposal. Much like a report, with several common elements and persuasive speech, a business proposal makes the case for your product or service. Business proposals are documents designed to make a persuasive appeal to the audience to achieve a defined outcome, often proposing a solution to a problem.

Common Proposal Elements

Idea

Effective business proposals are built around a great idea or solution. While you may be able to present your normal product, service, or solution in an interesting way, you want your document and its solution to stand out against the background of competing proposals. What makes your idea different or unique? How can you better meet the needs of the company that other vendors? What makes you so special? If the purchase decision is made solely on price, it may leave you little room to underscore the value of service, but the sale follow-through has value. For example, don't consider just the cost of the unit but also its maintenance. How can maintenance be a part of your solution, distinct from the rest? In addition, your proposal may focus on a common product where you can anticipate several vendors at similar prices. How can you differentiate yourself from the rest by underscoring long-term relationships, demonstrated ability to deliver, or the ability to anticipate the company's needs? Business proposals need to have an attractive idea or solution in order to be effective.

Traditional Categories

You can be creative in many aspects of the business proposal, but follow the traditional categories. Businesses expect to see information in a specific order, much like a résumé or even a letter. Each aspect of your proposal has its place and it is to your advantage to respect that tradition and use the categories effectively to highlight your product or service. Every category is an opportunity to sell, and should reinforce your credibility, your passion, and the reason why your solution is simply the best.

Table 7.2 Business Proposal Format

Cover Page	**Title page with name, title, date, and specific reference to request for proposal if applicable.**
Executive Summary	Like an abstract in a report, this is a one- or two-paragraph summary of the product or service and how it meets the requirements and exceeds expectations.
Background	Discuss the history of your product, service, and/or company and consider focusing on the relationship between you and the potential buyer and/or similar companies.
Proposal	The idea. Who, what, where, when, why, and how. Make it clear and concise. Don't waste words, and don't exaggerate. Use clear, well-supported reasoning to demonstrate your product or service.
Market Analysis	What currently exists in the marketplace, including competing products or services, and how does your solution compare?
Benefits	How will the potential buyer benefit from the product or service? Be clear, concise, specific, and provide a comprehensive list of immediate, short, and long-term benefits to the company.
Timeline	A clear presentation, often with visual aids, of the process, from start to finish, with specific, dated benchmarks noted.
Marketing Plan	Delivery is often the greatest challenge for Web-based services—how will people learn about you? If you are bidding on a gross lot of food service supplies, this may not apply to you, but if an audience is required for success, you will need a marketing plan.
Finance	What are the initial costs, when can revenue be anticipated, when will there be a return on investment (if applicable)? Again, the proposal may involve a one-time fixed cost, but if the product or service is to be delivered more than once, and extended financial plan noting costs across time is required.
Conclusion	Like a speech or essay, restate your main points clearly. Tie them together with a common them and make your proposal memorable.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

Ethos refers to credibility, pathos to passion and enthusiasm, and logos to logic or reason. All three elements are integral parts of your business proposal that require your attention. Who are you and why should we do business with you? Your credibility may be unknown to the potential client and it is your job to reference previous clients, demonstrate order fulfillment, and clearly show that your product or service is offered by a credible organization. By association, if your organization is credible the product or service is often thought to be more credible.

In the same way, if you are not enthusiastic about the product or service, why should the potential client get excited? How does your solution stand out in the marketplace? Why should they consider you? Why should they continue reading? Passion and enthusiasm are not only communicated through "!" exclamation points. Your thorough understanding, and your demonstration of that understanding, communicates dedication and interest.

Each assertion requires substantiation, each point clear support. It is not enough to make baseless claims about your product or service—you have to show why the claims you make are true, relevant, and support your central assertion that your product or service is right for this client. Make sure you cite sources and indicate "according to" when you support your points. Be detailed and specific.

Professional

A professional document is a base requirement. If it is less than professional, you can count on its prompt dismissal. There should be no errors in spelling or grammar, and all information should be concise, accurate, and clearly referenced when appropriate. Information that pertains to credibility should be easy to find and clearly relevant, including contact information. If the document exists in a hard copy form, it should be printed on a letterhead. If the document is submitted in an electronic form, it should be in a file format that presents your document as you intended. Word processing files may have their formatting changed or adjusted based on factors you cannot control—like screen size—and information can shift out of place, making it difficult to understand. In this case, a portable document format (PDF)—a format for electronic documents—may be used to preserve content location and avoid any inadvertent format changes when it is displayed.

Effective, persuasive proposals are often brief, even limited to one page. "The one-page proposal has been one of the keys to my business success, and it can be invaluable to you too. Few decision-makers can ever afford to read more than one page when deciding if they are interested in a deal or not. This is even more true for people of a different culture or language," said Adnan Khashoggi, a successful multibillionaire. [4] Clear and concise proposals serve the audience well and limit the range of information to prevent confusion.

Two Types of Business Proposals

Solicited

If you have been asked to submit a proposal it is considered solicited. The solicitation may come in the form of a direct verbal or written request, but normally solicitations are indirect, open-bid to the public, and formally published for everyone to see. A request for proposal (RFP), request for quotation (RFQ), and invitation for bid (IFB) are common ways to solicit business proposals for business, industry, and the government.

RFPs typically specify the product or service, guidelines for submission, and evaluation criteria. RFQs emphasize cost, though service and maintenance may be part of the solicitation. IRBs are often job-specific in that they encompass a project that requires a timeline, labor, and materials. For example, if a local school district announces the construction of a new elementary school, they normally have the architect and engineering plans on file, but need a licensed contractor to build it.

Unsolicited

Unsolicited proposals are the "cold calls" of business writing. They require a thorough understanding of the market, product and/or service, and their presentation is typically general rather than customer-specific. They can, however, be tailored to specific businesses with time and effort, and the demonstrated knowledge of specific needs or requirement can transform an otherwise generic, brochure-like proposal into an effective sales message. Getting your tailored message to your target audience, however, is often a significant challenge if it has not been directly or indirectly solicited. Unsolicited proposals are often regarded as marketing materials, intended more to stimulate interest for a follow-up contact than make direct sales. Sue Baugh and Robert Hamper encourage you to resist the temptation to "shoot at every target and hope you hit at least one." [5] A targeted proposal is your most effective approach, but recognize the importance of gaining company, service, or brand awareness as well as its limitations.

Sample Business Proposal

The Writing Help Tools Center is a commercial enterprise, and offers a clear (and free) example of a business proposal here:

https://www.writinghelptools.com/proposal-sample.html

Key Takeaways

Business proposals need to target a specific audience.

---

4. Riley, P. G. (2002). The one-page proposal: How to get your business pitch onto one persuasive page (p. 2). New York, NY: HarperCollins.
5. Baugh, L. S., & Hamper, R. J. (1995). Handbook for writing proposals (p. 3). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Exercises

1. Click on this link to see a sample request for proposal from the American Institute of Public Accounts.

https://www.aicpa.org/interestareas/businessindustryandgovernment/resources/notforprofitresourcecenter/downloadabledocuments/16-samplerequest.dot

2. Prepare a business proposal in no more than two pages. Follow the guidelines provided in the sample letter for CPA services on the American Institute of Public Accountants Web site. Do not include actual contact information. Just as the example has employees named after colors, your (imaginary) company should have contact information that does not directly link to real businesses or you as an individual. Do not respond to point 12.
3. Search for an RFP (request for proposal) or similar call to bid, and post it to your class. Compare the results with your classmates, focusing on what is required to apply or bid.
4. Identify a product or service you would like to produce or offer. List three companies that you would like to sell your product or service to and learn more about them. Post your findings, making the link between your product or service and company needs.

7.3 VIDEO: BUSINESS PROPOSALS

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=49

7.4 MAKING AN ARGUMENT

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate how to form a clear argument with appropriate support to persuade your audience.
- Recognize and understand inherent weaknesses in fallacies.

According to the famous satirist Jonathan Swift, "Argument is the worst sort of conversation." You may be inclined to agree. When people argue, they are engaged in conflict and it's usually not pretty. It sometimes appears that way because people resort to fallacious arguments or false statements, or they simply do not treat each other with respect. They get defensive, try to prove their own points, and fail to listen to each other.

But this should not be what happens in written argument. Instead, when you make an argument in your writing, you will want to present your position with logical points, supporting each point with appropriate sources. You will want to give your audience every reason to perceive you as ethical and trustworthy. Your audience will expect you to treat them with respect, and to present your argument in a way that does not make them defensive. Contribute to your credibility by building sound arguments and using strategic arguments with skill and planning.

In this section we will briefly discuss the classic form of an argument, a more modern interpretation, and finally seven basic arguments you may choose to use. Imagine that these are tools in your toolbox and that you want to know how each is effectively used. Know that the people who try to persuade you—from telemarketers to politicians—usually have these tools at hand.

Let's start with a classical rhetorical strategy. It asks the rhetorician, speaker, or author to frame arguments in the following steps:

Table 7.7 Classical Rhetorical Strategy

1. Exordium	Prepares the audience to consider your argument
2. Narration	Provides the audience with the necessary background or context for your argument
3. Proposition	Introduces your claim being argued in the document
4. Confirmation	Offers the audience evidence to support your argument
5. Refutation	Introduces to the audience and then discounts or refutes the counterarguments or objections
6. Peroration	Your conclusion of your argument

This is a standard pattern in rhetoric and you will probably see it in both speech and English courses. The pattern is useful to guide you in preparing your document and can serve as a valuable checklist to insure you are prepared. While this formal pattern has distinct advantages, you may not see it used exactly as indicated here on a daily basis. What may be more familiar to you is Stephen Toulmin's rhetorical strategy (1958), which focuses on three main elements (see Table 11.8 "Toulmin's Three-Part Rhetorical Strategy").

Table 7.8 Toulmin's Three-Part Rhetorical Strategy

Element	Description	Example
1. Claim	Your statement of belief or truth	It is important to spay or neuter your pet.
2. Data	Your supporting reasons for the claim	Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized every year.
3. Warrant	You create the connection between the claim and the supporting reasons	Pets that are spayed or neutered do not reproduce, preventing the production of unwanted animals.

Toulmin's rhetorical strategy is useful in that it makes the claim explicit, clearly illustrates the relationship between the claim and the data, and allows the reader to follow the writer's reasoning. You may have a good idea or point, but your audience will want to know how you arrived at that claim or viewpoint. The warrant addresses the inherent and often unsaid question, "Why is this data so important to your topic?" In so doing, it helps you to illustrate relationships between information for your audience.

EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTATION STRATEGIES: GASCAP/T

Here is a useful way of organizing and remembering seven key argumentative strategies:

1. Argument by **G**eneralization
2. Argument by **A**nalogy
3. Argument by **S**ign
4. Argument by **C**onsequence
5. Argument by **A**uthority
6. Argument by **P**rinciple
7. Argument by **T**estimony

Richard Fulkerson notes that a single strategy is sufficient to make an argument some of the time, but it is often better to combine several strategies to make an effective argument (In Emmel, Resch, & Tenney, 1996). He organized the argumentative strategies in this way to compare the differences, highlight the similarities, and allow for their discussion. This model, often called by its acronym GASCAP, is a useful strategy to summarize six key arguments and is easy to remember. Here we have adapted it, adding one argument that is often used in today's speeches and presentations, the argument by testimony. Table 11.9 "GASCAP/T Strategies" presents each argument, provides a definition of the strategy and an example, and examines ways to evaluate each approach.

Table 7.9 GASCAP/T Strategies

	Argument by	**Claim**	**Example**	**Evaluation**
G	Generalization	Whatever is true of a good example or sample will be true of everything like it or the population it came from.	If you can vote, drive, and die for your country, you should also be allowed to buy alcohol.	STAR System: For it to be reliable, we need a (S) sufficient number of (T) typical, (A) accurate, and (R) reliable examples.
A	Analogy	Two situations, things or ideas are alike in observable ways and will tend to be alike in many other ways	Alcohol is a drug. So is tobacco. They alter perceptions, have an impact physiological and psychological systems, and are federally regulated substances.	Watch for adverbs that end in "ly," as they qualify, or lessen the relationship between the examples. Words like "probably," "maybe," "could, "may," or "usually" all weaken the relationship.
S	Sign	Statistics, facts, or cases indicate meaning, much like a stop sign means "stop."	Motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol occur at significant rates among adults of all ages in the United States.	Evaluate the relationship between the sign and look for correlation, where the presenter says what the facts "mean." Does the sign say that? Does it say more? What is not said? Is it relevant?
C	Cause	If two conditions always appear together, they are causally related.	The U.S. insurance industry has been significantly involved in state and national legislation requiring proof of insurance, changes in graduated driver's licenses, and the national change in the drinking age from age 18 to age 21.	Watch out for "after the fact, therefore because of the fact" (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*) thinking. There might not be a clear connection, and it might not be the whole picture. Mothers Against Drunk Driving might have also been involved with each example of legislation.
A	Authority	What a credible source indicates is probably true.	According to the National Transportation Safety Board, older drivers are increasingly involved in motor vehicle accidents.	Is the source legitimate and is their information trustworthy? Institutes, boards, and people often have agendas and distinct points of view.
P	Principle	An accepted or proper truth	The change in the drinking age was never put to a vote. It's not about alcohol, it's about our freedom of speech in a democratic society.	Is the principle being invoked generally accepted? Is the claim, data or warrant actually related to the principle stated? Are there common exceptions to the principle? What are the practical consequences of following the principle in this case?
T	Testimony	Personal experience	I've lost friends from age 18 to 67 to alcohol. It impacts all ages, and its effects are cumulative. Let me tell you about two friends in particular.	Is the testimony authentic? Is it relevant? Is it representative of other's experiences? Use the STAR system to help evaluate the use of testimony.

EVIDENCE

Now that we've clearly outlined several argument strategies, how do you support your position with evidence or warrants? If your premise or the background from which you start is valid, and your claim is clear and clearly related, the audience will naturally turn their attention to "prove it." This is where the relevance of evidence becomes particularly important. Here are three guidelines to consider in order to insure your evidence passes the "so what?" test of relevance in relation to your claim. Make sure your evidence has the following traits:

1. *Supportive*. Examples are clearly representative, statistics are accurate, testimony is authoritative, and information is reliable.
2. *Relevant*. Examples clearly relate to the claim or topic, and you are not comparing "apples to oranges."
3. *Effective*. Examples are clearly the best available to support the claim, quality is preferred to quantity, there are only a few well-chosen statistics, facts, or data.

APPEALING TO EMOTIONS

While we've highlighted several points to consider when selecting information to support your claim, know that Aristotle strongly preferred an argument based in logic over emotion. Can the same be said for your audience, and to what degree is emotion and your appeal to it in your audience a part of modern life?

Emotions are a psychological and physical reaction, such as fear or anger, to stimuli that we experience as a feeling. Our feelings or emotions directly impact our own point of view and readiness to communicate, but also influence how, why, and when we say things. Emotions influence not only how you say or what you say, but also how you hear or what you hear. At times, emotions can be challenging to control. Emotions will move your audience, and possibly even move you, to change or act in certain ways.

Aristotle thought the best and most preferable way to persuade an audience was through the use of logic, free of emotion. He also recognized that people are often motivated, even manipulated, by the exploitation of their emotions. In a business context, we still engage in this debate, demanding to know the facts separate from personal opinion or agenda, but see the use of emotional appeal to sell products.

Marketing experts are famous for creating a need or associating an emotion with a brand or label in order to sell it. You will speak the language of your audience in your document, and may choose to appeal to emotion, but you need to consider how the strategy works, as it may be considered a tool that has two edges.

If we think of the appeal to emotion as a knife, we can see it has two edges. One edge can cut your audience, and the other can cut you. If you advance an appeal to emotion in your document on spaying and neutering pets, and discuss the millions of unwanted pets that are killed each year, you may elicit an emotional response. If you use this approach repeatedly, your audience may grow weary of this approach, and it will lose its effectiveness. If you change your topic to the use of animals in research, the same strategy may apply, but repeated attempts to elicit an emotional response may backfire (i.e., in essence "cutting" you) and produce a negative response called "emotional resistance."

Emotional resistance involves getting tired, often to the point of rejection, of hearing messages that attempt to elicit an emotional response. Emotional appeals can wear out the audience's capacity to receive the message. As Aristotle outlined, ethos (credibility), logos (logic), and pathos (passion, enthusiasm, and emotional response) constitute the building blocks of any document. It's up to you to create a balanced document, where you may appeal to emotion, but choose to use it judiciously.

On a related point, the use of an emotional appeal may also impair your ability to write persuasively or effectively. For example, if you choose to present an article about suicide to persuade people against committing it and you start showing a photo of your brother or sister that you lost to suicide, your emotional response may cloud your judgment and get in the way of your thinking. Never use a personal story, or even a story of someone you do not know, if the inclusion of that story causes you to lose control. While it's important to discuss relevant topics, you need to assess your relationship to the message. Your documents should not be an exercise in therapy. Otherwise, you will sacrifice ethos and credibility, even your effectiveness, if you "lose it" because you are really not ready to discuss the issue.

RECOGNIZING FALLACIES

"Fallacy" is another way of saying false logic. Fallacies or rhetorical tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your document in terms of substance. They are best avoided because they can actually detract from your effectiveness. There are several techniques or "tricks" that allow the writer to rely on style without offering substantive argument, to obscure the central message, or twist the facts to their own gain. Table 11.10 "Fallacies" examines the eight classical fallacies. Learn to recognize them so they can't be used against you, and learn to avoid using them with your audience.

Table 7.10 Fallacies

Fallacy	Definition	Example
1. Red Herring	Any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue, particularly by relating the issue to a common fear.	It's not just about the death penalty; it's about the victims and their rights. You wouldn't want to be a victim, but if you were, you'd want justice.
2. Straw Man	A weak argument set up to easily refute and distract attention from stronger arguments.	Look at the idea that criminals who commit murder should be released after a few years of rehabilitation. Think of how unsafe our streets would be then!
3. Begging the Question	Claiming the truth of the very matter in question, as if it were already an obvious conclusion.	We know that they will be released and unleashed on society to repeat their crimes again and again.
4. Circular Argument	The proposition is used to prove itself. Assumes the very thing it aims to prove. Related to begging the question.	Once a killer, always a killer.
5. Ad Populum	Appeals to a common belief of some people, often prejudicial, and states everyone holds this belief. Also called the bandwagon fallacy, as people "jump on the bandwagon" of a perceived popular view.	Most people would prefer to get rid of a few "bad apples" and keep our streets safe.
6. Ad Hominem or "Argument against the Man"	Argument against the man instead of his message. Stating that someone's argument is wrong solely because of something about the person rather than about the argument itself.	Our representative is a drunk and philanderer. How can we trust him on the issues of safety and family?
7. Non Sequitur or "It Does Not Follow"	The conclusion does not follow from the premises. They are not related.	Since the liberal 1960s, we've seen an increase in convicts who got let off death row.
8. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc or "After This, Therefore because of This"	It is also called a coincidental correlation.	Violent death rates went down once they started publicizing executions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PERSUASION

In his book *Ethics in Human Communication*, Richard Johannesen (1996) offers eleven points to consider when communicating. Although they are related to public speaking, they are also useful in business writing. You may note that many of his cautions are clearly related to the fallacies we've discussed. His main points reiterate many of the points across this chapter and should be kept in mind as you prepare, and present, your persuasive message.

Do not

- use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted, or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims;
- intentionally use unsupported, misleading, or illogical reasoning;

- represent yourself as informed or an "expert" on a subject when you are not;
- use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand;
- ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it is actually not related;
- deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, your self-interest, the group you represent, or your position as an advocate of a viewpoint;
- distort, hide, or misrepresent the number, scope, intensity, or undesirable features of consequences or effects;
- use emotional appeals that lack a supporting basis of evidence or reasoning;
- oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic, two-valued, either-or, polar views or choices;
- pretend certainty where tentativeness and degrees of probability would be more accurate;
- advocate something that you yourself do not believe in.

Aristotle said the mark of a good person, well spoken, was a clear command of the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. He discussed the idea of perceiving the various points of view related to a topic and their thoughtful consideration. While it's important to be able to perceive the complexity of a case, you are not asked to be a lawyer and defend a client.

In your message to persuade, consider honesty and integrity as you assemble your arguments. Your audience will appreciate your thoughtful consideration of more than one view and your understanding of the complexity of the issue, thus building your ethos, or credibility, as you present your document. Be careful not to stretch the facts, or assemble them only to prove your point; instead, prove the argument on its own merits. Deception, coercion, intentional bias, manipulation and bribery should have no place in your message to persuade.

Key Takeaways

The art of argument in writing involves presenting supportive, relevant, effective evidence for each point and doing it in a respectful and ethical manner.

Exercises

1. Select a piece of persuasive writing such as a newspaper op-ed essay, a magazine article, or a blog post. Examine the argument, the main points, and how the writer supports them. Which strategies from the foregoing section does the writer use? Does the writer use any fallacies or violate any ethical principles? Discuss your results with your classmates.

2. Find one slogan or logo that you perceive as persuasive and share it with your classmates.

3. Find an example of a piece of writing that appears to want to be persuasive, but doesn't get the job done. Write a brief review and share it with classmates.

4. In what ways might the choice of how to organize a document involve ethics? Explain your response and discuss it with your class.

UNIT 8 REPORTS

8.1 Reports

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the main parts of a report.
- Understand the different types of reports.
- Write a basic report.

What Is a Report?

Reports are documents designed to record and convey information to the reader. Reports are part of any business or organization; from credit reports to police reports, they serve to document specific information for specific audiences, goals, or functions. The type of report is often identified by its primary purpose or function, as in an accident report, a laboratory report, a sales report, or even a book report. Reports are often analytical, or involve the rational analysis of information. Sometimes they simply "report the facts" with no analysis at all, but still need to communicate the information in a clear and concise format. Other reports summarize past events, present current data, and forecast future trends. While a report may have conclusions, propositions, or even a call to action, the demonstration of the analysis is the primary function. A sales report, for example, is not designed to make an individual sale. It is, however, supposed to report sales to date, and may forecast future sales based on previous trends. This chapter is designed to introduce you to the basics of report writing.

Types of Reports

Reports come in all sizes, but are typically longer than a page and somewhat shorter than a book. The type of report depends on its function. The function of the report is its essential purpose, often indicated in the thesis or purpose statement. The function will also influence the types of visual content or visual aids, representing words, numbers, and their relationships to the central purpose in graphic, representational ways that are easy for the reader to understand. The function may also contribute to parameters like report length (page or word count) or word choice and readability. "Focusing on the content of your longer business documents is not only natural but necessary because doing so helps ensure complete, correct information." [1]

Reports vary by function, and they also vary by style and tradition. Within your organization, there may be employer-specific

1. Bovee, C., & Thill, J. (2010). Business communication essentials: A skills-based approach to vital business English (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

expectations that need to be addressed to meet audience expectations. This chapter discusses reports in general terms, focusing on common elements and points of distinction, but reference to similar documents where you work or additional examination of specific sample reports may serve you well as you prepare your own report.

Informational or Analytical Report?

There are two main categories for reports, regardless of their specific function or type. An informational report informs or instructs and presents details of events, activities, individuals, or conditions without analysis. An example of this type of "just the facts" report is a police accident report. The report will note the time, date, place, contributing factors like weather, and identification information for the drivers involved in an automobile accident. It does not establish fault or include judgmental statements. You should not see "Driver was falling down drunk" in a police accident report. Instead, you would see "Driver failed sobriety tests and breathalyzer test and was transported to the station for a blood sample." The police officer is not a trained medical doctor and is therefore not licensed to make definitive diagnoses, but can collect and present relevant information that may contribute to that diagnosis.

The second type of report is called an analytical report. An analytical report presents information with a comprehensive analysis to solve problems, demonstrate relationships, or make recommendations. An example of this report may be a field report by a Center for Disease Control (CDC) physician from the site of an outbreak of the H1N1 virus, noting symptoms, disease progression, steps taken to arrest the spread of the disease, and to make recommendations on the treatment and quarantine of subjects.

Table 8.1 "Types of Reports and Their Functions" includes common reports that, depending on the audience needs, may be informational or analytical.

Table 8.1 Types of Reports and Their Functions

Type	Function
1. Laboratory Report	Communicate the procedures and results of laboratory activities
2. Research Report	Study problems scientifically by developing hypotheses, collecting data, analyzing data, and indicating findings or conclusions
3. Field Study Report	Describe one-time events, such as trips, conferences, seminars, as well as reports from branch offices, industrial and manufacturing plants
4. Progress Report	Monitor and control production, sales, shipping, service, or related business process
5. Technical Report	Communication process and product from a technical perspective
6. Financial Report	Communication status and trends from a finance perspective
7. Case Study	Represent, analyze, and present lessons learned from a specific case or example
8. Needs Assessment Report	Assess the need for a service or product
9. Comparative Advantage Report	Discuss competing products or services with an analysis of relative advantages and disadvantages
10. Feasibility Study	Analyze problems and predict whether current solutions or alternatives will be practical, advisable, or produced the desired outcome(s)
11. Instruction Manuals	Communicate step-by-step instructions on the use of a product or service
12. Compliance Report	Document and indicate the extent to which a product or service is within established compliance parameters or standards
13. Cost-Benefit Analysis Report	Communicate costs and benefits of products or services.
14. Decision Report	Make recommendations to management and become tools to solve problems and make decisions
15. Benchmark Report	Establish criteria and evaluate alternatives by measuring against the establish benchmark criteria
16. Examination Report	Report or record data obtained from an examination of an item or conditions, including accidents and natural disasters
17. Physical Description report	Describe the physical characteristics of a machine, a device, or object
18. Literature Review	Present summaries of the information available on a given subject

How Are Reports Organized?

Reports vary by size, format, and function. You need to be flexible and adjust to the needs of the audience while respecting customs and guidelines. Reports are typically organized around six key elements:

1. Whom the report is about and/or prepared for
2. What was done, what problems were addressed, and the results, including conclusions and/or recommendations
3. Where the subject studied occurred
4. When the subject studied occurred
5. Why the report was written (function), including under what authority, for what reason, or by whose request
6. How the subject operated, functioned, or was used

Pay attention to these essential elements when you consider your stakeholders, or those who have an interest in the report. That may include the person(s) the report is about, whom it is for, and the larger audience of the business, organization, or industry. Ask yourself who the key decision makers are who will read your report, who the experts or technicians will be, and how executives and workers may interpret your words and images. While there is no universal format for a report, there is a common order to the information. Each element supports the main purpose or function in its own way, playing an important role in the representation and transmission of information.

Here is a checklist for ensuring that a report fulfills its goals.

1. Report considers the audience's needs
2. Format follows function of report
3. Format reflects institutional norms and expectations
4. Information is accurate, complete, and documented
5. Information is easy to read
6. Terms are clearly defined
7. Figures, tables, and art support written content
8. Figures, tables, and art are clear and correctly labeled
9. Figures, tables, and art are easily understood without text support
10. Words are easy to read (font, arrangement, organization)
11. Results are clear and concise
12. Recommendations are reasonable and well-supported
13. Report represents your best effort
14. Report speaks for itself without your clarification or explanation

Key Takeaways

Informational and analytical reports require organization and a clear purpose.

Exercises

1. Find an annual report for a business you would like to learn more about. Review it with the previous reading in mind and provide examples. Share and compare with classmates.
2. Write a report on a trend in business that you've observed, and highlight at least the main finding. For example, from the rising cost of textbooks to the Flat World Knowledge approach to course content, textbooks are a significant issue for students. Draw from your experience as you bring together sources of information to illustrate a trend. Share and compare with classmates.

8.2 Front Matter Components

You may wish to review the other parts of this textbook including:

- Audience Analysis in Reports
- The Body of the Report
- The Back Matter

Title Page

The title page provides the audience with the:

- Name of the report
  - This should appear 2 inches from the top margin in uppercase letters.
- Name, title, and organization of the individual receiving the report
  - Type "Prepared for" on one line, followed by two separate lines that provide the receiving organization's name and then the city and state. Some reports may include an additional line that presents the name of a specific person.
- Name of the author and any necessary identifying information
  - Type "prepared by" on one line, followed by the name(s) of the author(s) and their organization, all on separate lines.
- Date of submission
  - This date may differ from the date the report was written. It should appear 2 inches above the bottom margin.

The items on the title page should be equally spaced apart from each other.

A note on page numbers:

The title page should not include a page number, but this page is counted as page "i." Use software features to create two sections for your report. You can then utilize two different types of numbering schemes. When numbering the pages (i.e., i, ii, iii, etc.) for a formal report, use lowercase roman numerals for all front matter components. Utilize arabic numbers for the other pages that follow. Additionally, if you intend to bind the report on the left, move the left margin and center 0.25 inches to the right.

A note on font:

If there is no specific preference for serif vs. sans serif font, choose one and use it consistently throughout the report. Do not utilize anything besides a traditional serif (e.g., Times New Roman) or sans serif (e.g., Arial or Calibri) font.

Letter of Transmittal

A letter of transmittal announces the report topic to the recipient(s).

If applicable, the first paragraph should identify who authorized the report and why the report is significant. Provide the purpose of the report in the first paragraph as well. The next paragraph should briefly identify, categorize, and describe the primary and secondary research of the report. Use the concluding paragraph to offer to discuss the report; it is also customary to conclude by thanking the reader for their time and consideration.

The letter of transmittal should be formatted as a business letter. Some report writers prefer to send a memo of transmittal instead.

When considering your audience for the letter or memo of transmittal, make sure that you use a level of formality appropriate for your relationship with the reader. While all letters should contain professional and respectful language, a letter to someone you do not know should pay closer attention to the formality of the word choice and tone.

Table of Contents

The table of contents page features the headings and secondary headings of the report and their page numbers, enabling audience members to quickly locate specific parts of the report. Leaders (i.e. spaced or unspaced dots) are used to guide the reader's eye from the headings to their page numbers.

The words "TABLE OF CONTENTS" should appear at the top of the page in all uppercase and bolded letters. Type the titles of major report parts in all uppercase letters as well, double spacing between them. Secondary headings should be indented and single spaced, using a combination of upper- and lowercase letters.

Executive Summary

An executive summary presents an overview of the report that can be used as a time-saving device by recipients who do not have time to read the entire report.

The executive summary should include a:

- Summary of purpose
- Overview of key findings
- Identification of conclusions
- Overview of recommendations

To begin, type "EXECUTIVE SUMMARY" in all uppercase letters and centered. Follow this functional head with paragraphs that include the above information, but do not use first-level headings to separate each item. Each paragraph of information should be single-spaced with double spacing between paragraphs. Everything except for the title should be left-aligned.

An executive summary is usually ten percent of the length of the report. For example, a ten-page report should offer a one-page summary. A 100-page report should feature a summary that is approximately ten pages.

8.3 Body of Report

Introduction

The body of a formal report begins with an introduction. The introduction sets the stage for the report, clarifies what need(s) motivated it, and orients the reader to its structure.

Most report introductions address the following elements: background information, problem or purpose, significance, scope, methods, organization, and sources. As you may have noticed, some parts of a formal report fulfill similar purposes. Information from the letter of transmittal and the executive summary may be repeated in the introduction. Reword the information in order to avoid sounding repetitive.

To begin this section, type "BACKGROUND" or "INTRODUCTION" in all uppercase letters. This functional head should be followed by the information specified above (i.e., background information, problem or purpose, etc.). You do not need to utilize any first-level headings in this section.

Because this section includes background information, it would be the appropriate place to address the needs of audiences that may need additional knowledge about the topic. Provide definitions of technical terms and instruction about the overall project if necessary. If you are uncertain if your audience needs a particular piece of information, go ahead and include it; it's better to give your reader a little bit too much background than not enough.

Discussion of Findings

The Discussion of Findings section presents the evidence for your conclusions.

This key section should be carefully organized to enhance readability.

To begin, type "DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS" in all uppercase letters. Center this and all other functional heads. Follow "DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS" with a brief paragraph that previews the organization of the report.

Useful organizational patterns for report findings include but are not limited to:

- Best Case/Worst Case
- Compare/Contrast
- Chronology
- Geography
- Importance
- Journalism Pattern

Use a Best Case/Worst Case organizational pattern when you think that the audience may lack interest in the topic. When examining a topic with clear alternatives to your proposed solution, consider using a Compare/Contrast pattern. Geographical patterns work effectively for topics that are discussed by location.

When describing the organization of the report in the first paragraph, broadly identify how the material in the report is organized rather than state that the report uses a specific pattern (e.g. Chronology, Geography). For example, write, "The research findings address curriculum trends in three states: (a) Florida, (b) Georgia, and (c) North Carolina," not, "This report uses a geographical organizational pattern."

Follow the first paragraph with a first-level heading. Use first-level headings for all other major parts of this section. First-level headings should appear in bold, uppercase letters. Center first-level headings, but align any second-level headings with the left margin. Type any second-level headings in bold, upper- and lowercase letters.

As you present, interpret, and analyze evidence, consider using both text and graphics. Take into account what will be easiest for your audience to understand.

Include citations for all quoted or paraphrased material from sources as well; check with your organization as to whether they prefer parenthetical citations or footnotes.

Integrating Graphics

Formal report authors use graphics to present data in different forms. Paragraphs of text and complex or numerical data tend to bog readers down, making graphics a beneficial enhancement. Graphics also make data easier to understand, so they sometimes make a stronger impact on the audience.

Knowing when—and how—to effectively employ graphics is the key to successfully integrating them. Keeping the audience in mind is also critical.

Figure 1 summarizes uses and audience benefits for the most frequently employed types of graphics. The types of graphics are presented alphabetically to make them easier to remember.

The audience can . . .

GRAPHIC (Graphic Type)	USE / This type . . .	BENEFITS / The Audience can
Bar Chart	Represents data with the height or length of rectangular bars	Compare items Grasp a series of numbers
Flowchart	Illustrates a sequence of events with shapes connected by arrows	Grasp a series of steps
Line Chart	Shows changes in quantitative data over time or plots the relationship between two variables with one or more lines	Compare variables Visualize change over time
Map	Illustrates activities or trends on a map that represents geographically organized parts of a region, country, or the world	Compare geographical trends Grasp geographical relationships
Pie Chart	Depicts distribution of parts in a whole with wedges in a circle graph	Compare significance of parts and parts-to-whole relationship(s)
Table	Presents data or values in rows and columns	Compare data or values Grasp relationships between data or values

Computers have made it easier for professionals to create effective graphics. Most of the graphics in Figure 1 can be created in Microsoft Office Word and Excel.

There may also be some occasions in which a formal report includes graphics from a particular print or online source. In these instances, it is critical to include a caption that presents the source of the graphic.

8.4 Back Matter Components

Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations section conveys the key results from the analysis in the discussion of findings section. Up to this point, readers have carefully reviewed the data in the report; they are now logically prepared to read the report's conclusions and recommendations.

Type "CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS" in all uppercase letters. Follow this functional head with the conclusions of the report. The conclusions should answer any research questions that were posed earlier in the report. Present the conclusions in an enumerated or bulleted list to enhance readability.

Recommendations offer a course of action, and they should answer any problem or research questions as well. Think back to the expectations of your audience. Have all of their requirements been addressed?

Works Cited

All formal reports should include a works cited page; his page documents the sources cited within the report. The recipient(s) of the report can also refer to this page to locate sources for further research.

It is acceptable to follow MLA (Modern Language Association), CMS (Chicago Manual of Style), or APA (American Psychological Association) documentation style for entries on this page. Arrange all sources alphabetically. Refer to the latest edition of the appropriate style handbook for more information about how to format entries for print and electronic sources on the Works Cited page.

Conclusion

While some of the formatting rules may seem tedious at first, they are necessary in order for your audience to better understand the report. Using a regulated format allows for a more universal organization that everyone will understand. Being aware of your audience's needs and expectations will allow for a strong report that will satisfy your employee and demonstrate your competence in your field.

8.5 FUNCTIONS AND CONTENTS OF PROGRESS REPORTS

In the progress report, you explain any or all of the following:

- How much of the work is complete
- What part of the work is currently in progress
- What work remains to be done
- What problems or unexpected things, if any, have arisen
- How the project is going in general

Progress reports have several important functions:

- Reassure recipients that you are making progress, that the project is going smoothly, and that it will be complete by the expected date.
- Provide recipients with a brief look at some of the findings or some of the work of the project.
- Give recipients a chance to evaluate your work on the project and to request changes.
- Give you a chance to discuss problems in the project and thus to forewarn recipients.
- Force you to establish a work schedule so that you'll complete the project on time.
- Project a sense of professionalism to your work and your organization.

8.6 TIMING AND FORMAT OF PROGRESS REPORTS

In a year-long project, there are customarily three progress reports, one after three, six, and nine months. Depending on the size of the progress report, the length and importance of the project, and the recipient, the progress report can take the following forms:

- Memo—A short, informal report to someone within your organization
- Letter—A short, informal report sent to someone outside your organization
- Formal report—A formal report sent to someone outside your organization

In our course, you will write a progress report in the form of a thorough memo, and you will attach an outline to that memo to give your recipient an idea of the content in your final report. (See the chapter on Outlines for more information.)

8.7 ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS OR SECTIONS FOR PROGRESS REPORTS

The recipient of a progress report wants to see what you've accomplished on the project, what you are working on now, what you plan to work on next, and how the project is going in general. In other words, the following three sections are key in any progress memo or progress report:

- Work accomplished in the preceding period(s)
- Work currently being performed
- Work planned for the next period(s)

8.8 OTHER PARTS OF PROGRESS REPORTS

In your progress memo or report, you also need to include the following sections: (a) an introduction that reviews the purpose and scope of the project, (b) a detailed description of your project and its history, and (c) an overall appraisal of the project to date, which usually acts as the conclusion.

- Opening paragraph introducing the purpose of the memo and a reminder about the project topic
- Summary of the project
- Specific objectives of the project
- Scope, or limits, of the project
- Research gathered
- Overall assessment or appraisal of the project at this time

UNIT 9 WRITING CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

9.1 Creating Rhetorically Effective Instruction Manuals

Instruction Manuals

Many people associate instruction manuals with appliances, computer accessories, and products that require assembly (e.g., furniture). Because we don't find ourselves using them regularly or we come to expect them only in certain contexts, it is easy to forget how important they are. The quality of a well-designed instruction manual may go unnoticed. Yet, when we encounter frustration with putting together a bookshelf or toy, or with trying to figure out how to change or activate a particular appliance setting, the significance of a well-designed instruction manual becomes clear.

Understanding the Rhetorical Situation of Instruction Manuals

Instruction manuals, like other types of texts, are shaped by a rhetorical situation. The choices technical writers make in regards to content and form depend on the purpose of the instruction manual, the intended audience, and the context in which the manual is used. When writing your own instruction manual, consider the following ideas and questions regarding the rhetorical situation.

Purpose

In general, the purpose of an instruction manual is to familiarize the user with the product and/or to guide the user through a series of steps that lead to the completion of a task. However, each instruction manual will also have a more specific outcome. Identifying what that specific outcome is will help you make more effective rhetorical decisions about content and design. Ask yourself:

- What are the specific intended outcome(s) of the instructions? (e.g., baking a cake from scratch, installing an air conditioner, etc.)
- In addition to helping users reach the main desired outcome(s), are there other purposes that the manual serves? (e.g., offering troubleshooting advice, teaching users how to accomplish additional, simple tasks necessary for reaching the main objective)

Audience

Creating a profile of your audience (i.e. the primary intended user of the document) is integral for making thoughtful choices about scope, content, and design. Consider these questions about audience before writing:

- What is the audience's familiarity or expertise regarding the topic of the instruction manual?
- What is the audience's general comfort level with learning new skills related to the software, apps, recipes, etc.?
- What is your audience's "typical" approach to learning? How will your instruction manual address the audience's learning style, goals, and task-related needs?

Context

Think of context as the temporal, social, technological, and cultural situation surrounding the creation and use of the instruction manual. The following questions will help you identify the context:

- How much time will you have to complete this instruction manual?
- Are there time constraints on the user?
- What technological constraints must you consider in creating the instruction manual? Consider your skills with technology and level of access.
- How will your audience gain access to the manual? (e.g., audience can access manual online via a company website)
- What additional tools or materials are you assuming the audience already has? Will they have access to the technology or materials needed to follow the instructions? (e.g., to successfully build a bookshelf, the user will need a hammer, screwdriver, and open work area)
- From what cultural perspective are you writing the instruction manual? Will the audience share this same cultural context? (e.g., a German recipe that calls for vanilla sugar, an ingredient not readily available in the United States, may need to be modified for American users)

Using Knowledge of Rhetorical Situation to Make Effective Rhetorical Choices

Though most instruction manuals rely upon some standard conventions, each instruction manual should be tailored to achieve a specific purpose for a particular audience within a given context. The following section introduces some common characteristics of instruction manuals, while also taking into consideration the rhetorical situation and how it may require deviation from certain conventions.

Scope

The rhetorical situation helps determine the amount of detail to include in an instruction manual. For example, the scope of an instruction manual for assembling a desk is easy to determine because it has only one outcome: putting together the desk. However, an instruction manual for a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) Camera may be written for both amateur and more experienced camera users and may need to include instructions for completing basic tasks (e.g., installing the battery and memory card) as well as more advanced tasks (e.g., adjusting settings for specific shooting environments).

Content

Some standard sections of instruction manuals include front matter, an introduction, a series of steps, a conclusion, and back matter, though some manuals may not use all of these sections or label them in this way. Extensive front and back matter, for example, are often found in longer, more complex manuals. Most sets of instructions, however, contain an introduction that provides information necessary for completing the steps safely and efficiently. The introduction may include an explanation of who should carry out the task (maybe the user needs to have proficiency in a certain skill), the materials needed, any precautions that the user should take (safety tips or other warnings), and in some cases, an estimate for how long the process will take (a common feature of recipes). In some cases, it is necessary to include an explanation of why the user should follow the instructions. For example, instructions for changing the oil in a car may explain why the task is necessary for the proper functioning of the vehicle.

Following this introductory material is the sequence of step-by-step instructions. See the following section on "Language" for how to draft clear and effective steps. Lastly, an instruction manual may include a "Troubleshooting Guide" or a section for "Tips" to help users address common problems that they may encounter while following the instructions or after completing the process.

Language

The questions about "Audience" and "Context" above can help guide you in making effective language choices. The following subsections include explanations of common linguistic features of instruction manuals along with tips for writing clearly and concisely in this genre.

Imperative mood

Instructions, like commands, often utilize the imperative mood. To write in this way, address the audience directly using active voice and specific verbs. Which of the following provides the clearest instructional step?

- "Press the red button to begin playing the game"
- "When the red button is pressed, the game will begin"
- "The operator should press the button"

Though a user could probably make sense of any of these sentences, the first one provides the clearest explanation of what action should be performed by the user. The second, passive construction does not specify who should press the button. The third example refers to a vague subject, the "operator," which may confuse the user.

Word Choice

When writing instructions, a careful consideration of word choice is important because in some cases, the user's safety is at risk. For this reason, strive for clarity and conciseness. To make effective decisions about word choice, consider your primary audience's level of expertise and cultural background. You may find it necessary to

- define complex terms.
- spell out acronyms the first time they are introduced (e.g., digital single-lens reflex camera, DSLR).
- avoid using similes, metaphors, slang, or substitutions that may confuse users.
- use plain language, for in some cases, serious legal consequences can arise when a set of instructions is unclear. For more on plain language, see https://www.plainlanguage.gov/index.cfm
- include translations of the instructions into multiple languages.
- use brief and informative headings and subheadings

Consistency and Parallelism

Parallel structure, or parallelism, means using the same grammatical structure to present information or ideas. Parallelism is often used to improve readability and create consistency.

This numerical list of instructions contains a step that breaks parallel structure. Which of these steps seems different from the others?

1. Remove the screw to open the battery compartment.
2. Insert batteries by following the image on the battery compartment.
3. Now you may close the compartment, and screw it closed.

Step three breaks the parallel structure of the list because it does not start with a directive verb.

Do the following headings use parallel structure? Why or why not?

- "Installing batteries"
- "Turning device off/on"
- "How to charge your device"

Design

Document design refers to the way information is organized and presented. Because visuals require less time to process, users will typically notice—and respond to—quality of design before quality of content. Even if you choose not to include images or graphics, you will need consider design. Minimally, this includes making choices about layout, order of information, font size, typeface, headings, color, and white space. Design elements should guide the user through the manual smoothly. This means making the document scannable; a scannable document allows users to navigate through the content to locate specific information. As with any document, decisions regarding design should consider the audience, purpose, and overall ease of use.

Consistency/Repetition

Using a design element in a uniform way throughout the entire document guides users by giving them a sense of what to expect (e.g., the same typeface and size for all headings; the same layout from page to page).

Contrast

Using a design element to highlight specific information or features of the manual (e.g., capitalizing a word for emphasis; placing a box or border around an item; changing colors for emphasis). Contrast is primarily effective when a document uses consistency overall. If there is a lack of consistency, it is more difficult to create contrast.

Alignment

Organizing items on a page with horizontal and/or vertical alignment creates hierarchy and structure, and can be used to help achieve balance, contrast, or consistency. For example, this document uses vertical alignment to create a hierarchy between the name of a design element, which is left aligned, and its description, which is indented.

Balance

Distributing items evenly across a given space. To achieve this, each item's weight–that is, the tendency of the eye to gravitate toward an item–should be considered. For example, since an image weighs more than text, decisions about image placement should consider how to balance its weight against other items in order to prevent visual confusion.

White Space

Using white space to create a professional, balanced document. Rather than indicating the color of the space, this design element refers to an absence of images and text. White space helps distinguish between individual items and groups of items (i.e., sections of the manual) and makes scanning documents easier.

Grouping/Proximity

Placing related images or content close to one another. For example, grouping together images of all the materials needed to complete the given task.

Color

Selecting colors to create contrast and emphasis, to guide readers across space, and to design a visually pleasing document. You should consider the document overall in order to create a consistent color scheme. For example, if you want to use blue in your document, you will want to ensure that it is used consistently and complements other document colors. This is particularly important when integrating color graphics and/or images.

Images

Choosing appropriate images for the given context and purpose of the manual. You should consider whether the images are intended to stand alone or to supplement written instructions. Consider types of images, such as drawings, photos, and graphic illustrations and whether any additional callouts or annotations are needed to highlight specific parts of the image. Images should be chosen to complement other design elements in the manual.

Conclusion

A good instruction manual begins with careful consideration of the rhetorical situation–purpose, audience, and context. This information is key for making both appropriate and effective choices about content, language, and design. In an ideal timeline, technical writers have the opportunity to conduct usability tests, which are designed to assess how well a document fulfills its purpose. Once your instruction manual is tested, you'll incorporate the feedback received to finalize its design and content.

Exercise 1 – Familiarize yourself with instruction manuals

The following website contains several examples of open-source instruction manuals. Follow this link, browse through the list, and choose one manual to look at in depth. Skim through the manual to familiarize yourself with its content and design. Then, in a memo to your instructor or classmates, address the following.

Identify the rhetorical situation

- Who is the audience? How do you know who the audience is? What can you assume about the audience based on the content and design choices in the manual?
- What is the purpose of the document? How do you know this is the primary purpose (i.e., what content and design choices signal the purpose)?
- What context informs the written content and design of this manual?

Examine composition choices

- Describe the overall scope and organization of the manual. How detailed is the manual? What does it cover? How is the information organized?
- Are all the "standard features" of content covered in this manual? Why or why not? Are there additional features? What are they and what are their purpose(s)?

- Locate and describe examples of effective language choice. Explain why you find them effective.
- Locate and describe examples of effective design. Explain why you find them effective.
- If you were the author of this manual, what would you have done differently and why?

Exercise 2 – Planning an instruction manual

Imagine you are writing an instruction manual for a process or product you are familiar with and address the following prompts.

Identify the rhetorical situation

- Select an audience and create a 2-3 sentence profile statement
- identify the specific purpose of your instruction manual
- List any important contextual information to consider

Create a plan

- List the sections you will include
- Identify the most important factors to consider for your audience and purpose (e.g., language use, incorporation of images, text size, etc.)
- Create a sketch that shows the document layout, identifies location of written sections, and shows where images would be incorporated.

9.2 Instructions & Process Reports

"How is this done? How can I do this?"– These questions guide authors as they describe processes. Learn how to write instructions and processes so that readers know how to do something or understand how something is done. By viewing sample process texts, note the focus on the objective voice, numbered steps, visual rhetoric, and clever animations or video. Write a descriptive or prescriptive process report.

There are three types of process texts:

1. Descriptive processes answer "How is this done?" These texts describe how a process occurs so that readers can understand it better.
2. Prescriptive processes are instructions; they explain "How can I do this?" In other words, they prescribe how something should be done so that readers can do it.
3. Blended descriptive and prescriptive processes make the main thrust of the document a descriptive process while having a few call-out boxes summarizing how the readers can perform the process. In other words, writers may address both "How can I do this?" and "How is this done?" in different parts of one text. Alternatively, they might develop different versions of the same document for two audiences–an audience of users and an audience of interested parties.

Why Write About Processes?

Process texts are extremely common in school and professions. In school, teachers frequently assign process assignments. For example, humanities professors may ask for a description of how an artistic or literary period evolved; history professors, the contributions of a culture's leaders over time; social science professors, the chronology of inventions; engineering professors, explanations of how sound is changed into electrical signals; business professors, how the Federal Reserve works or how to sell a product.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=57

On a daily basis, we read descriptive processes. Intelligent people are inquisitive; they want to understand how things work. Last year, for example, over three million readers a month accessed How Stuff Works, a Web site containing thousands of process essays. We routinely read processes, including recipes, user manuals for new software, or advice columns on how to lose weight or how to succeed in school or a profession. People are always wondering about things, wondering how computers work, how grass grows, how heart disease occurs, how far the human eye can see, and so on.

Instructions: Use the sections below, as directed by your instructor, to learn about writing processes. Read sample process reports and write your own process-driven project.

Writers of process texts are practicing what specialists call "expository writing" or "explanatory writing." These texts focus on answering one of the following questions: "How is this done? How can I do this?"

Diverse Rhetorical Situations

Most prescriptive and descriptive processes are written to explain how something works. Most processes are written in chronological order and most rely extensively on visuals. To promote clarity, writers often number particular steps in a process. When the topic is learning a software program, writers use screenshots and call-outs and screen movies to walk a user through the tutorial.

Nonetheless, other purposes and organizational schemes are available. Writers may speculate about whether a process exists; they may argue a process exists with the intention of selling the reader something.

While the topics of process reports may be diverse, the rhetorical stance of most process reports tends to be more uniform than the rhetorical stance of other projects, as illustrated below.

Process Texts Purposes Audiences Voices Media

Descriptive Process Analysis

- Explain, speculate, or argue about "How is this done?"
- Students
- Researchers
- Curious people

- Objective
- Imperative
- Authoritative

- Essays
- Newspapers
- Magazines

- Web sites
- Video

Prescriptive Process Analysis

- Explain "How can I do this?"
- Technicians
- Users
- Decision makers

- Objective
- Imperative
- Authoritative

- Essays
- User manuals
- Policy manuals
- Tutorials
- Web sites
- Videos

Rhetorical Analysis of Online Readings

Analyze the Web sites annotated below. Consider the context, audience, purpose, and media invoked by the following readings. Also examine how ideas are developed in these texts. Are assertions grounded in personal experience, interviews with authorities, questionnaires, Internet and library research, or empirical research?

1. **Instruction Processes: Recipes and Physical Processes**

- How Pencils Are Made:Using an objective voice and extensive graphics, this piece is written to explain how pencils are made–not for future pencil makers but for interested readers.
- Yoga Postures Step-by-Step: Santosha.com provides a searchable database of yoga postures. The description of each posture is supplemented by animations that show a figure doing the postures correctly. Presumably, readers will do more than read about the postures: they will try them!

2. **Instruction Processes: Software Tutorials**

Do you have a question about how to use a software tool, such as Microsoft Word, FrontPage, DreamWeaver, or HTML? As you can imagine, given the growth of the Internet and information technologies, tutorials and user manuals are exceedingly commonplace on the Internet. Below are links to several worthwhile sites.

- ToolsforWriters: Authored by writing students at the University of South Florida, this e-zine includes many tutorials on using software tools, including Microsoft Word, FrontPage, and Excel. Most of these tutorials have screen shots and call-outs, highlighting important steps.
- Catalyst: How To Documents. Authored by Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology at the University of Washington, "Catalyst is an integrated collection of resources, training, tools, templates, and support to help educators make effective use of technology in teaching."

3. **Instruction Processes: Personal Development**

Do you ever have difficulties finding balance in your life–eating well, exercising regularly, balancing school with work? The Internet provides many "development" Web sites that are designed to help you change your life:

- Zen: The Seat of Enlightenment. The Zen Mountain Monastery provides a description of Zen meditation, including photographs and animated examples of breathing postures. From this site, readers can learn about The Zen Mountain Monastery, perhaps becoming sufficiently interested to enroll in some of the institute's seminars.
- Ten Steps to Attract a Life Partner. Using a list form to organize her text, Katherin Scott, a personal development coach, outlines strategies for finding a life partner. From this site, readers can purchase coaching documents or inquire about workshops, so you could argue this text is written–in part–to sell the author's expertise.
- Don't Ask Me Where I'm Going. I'm Busy Driving. Steve Kaye writes this six-step guide to asserting control over your life for readers of Fluid Power Journal, a journal for engineers.

4. **Instruction Processes: Academic Processes**

Choosing majors, getting good grades, securing internships, researching topics–these topics are commonly addressed on university Web sites. You can go to your college's home page and search for career resources, search the Internet, or consider the following examples to help you choose a career or do well in school:

- Undergraduate Advising at the University of Washington presents "How to Choose a Major and Investigate a Career." Written for students, this site provides links to University of Washington resources as well as national resources.
- As a service to its students, Cornell University publishes " The Seven Steps of the Research Process,"employing a hypertextual format.
- Using a hypertextual format, Duke University provides a guide similar to Cornell's guide to the research process, also outlining seven steps: Guide to Library Research. In addition, the Duke guide provides a drop-down menu that addresses specific questions students pose when facing research assignments.
- Using internal hyperlinks, Athabasca University, a Canadian distance education university, provides The AU Library Guide to the Research Process.

5. **Theoretical Processes: Psychological or Educational Development**

Educators and psychologists have propounded many models of cognitive, moral, social, and intellectual development. Below are some links to some major theorists whose models of development have captured the imagination of others.

- Lawrence Kholberg's model of ethical development is well presented on the Internet.
- The University of Illinois at Chicago presents a brief introduction to Kholberg and other developmental psychologists: Moral Development and Moral Education: An Overview.
- Kohlberg's Moral Dilemmas (at Haverford College)
- William Perry's Scheme of Intellectual and Ethical Development.
- Meet Your Students by Richard M. Felder.

UNIT 10 COLLABORATIVE WRITING AND WORKING IN TEAMS

10.1 The Team and the Organization

Learning Objectives

- Define a *team* and describe its key characteristics.
- Explain why organizations use teams, and describe different types of teams.

What Is a Team? How Does Teamwork Work?

A team (or a *work team*) is a group of people with complementary skills who work together to achieve a specific goal (Thompson, 2008). In the case of Motorola's RAZR team, the specific goal was to develop (and ultimately bring to market) an ultrathin cell phone that would help restore the company's reputation as a designer of stylistically appealing, high-function phones. The team achieved its goal by integrating specialized but complementary skills in engineering and design and by making the most of its authority to make its own decisions and manage its own operations.

Teams versus Groups

"A group," suggests Bonnie Edelstein, a consultant in organizational development, "is a bunch of people in an elevator. A team is also a bunch of people in an elevator, but the elevator is broken." This distinction may be a little oversimplified, but as our tale of teamwork at Motorola reminds us, a *team* is clearly something more than a mere *group* of individuals. In particular, members of a group—or, more accurately, a *working group*—go about their jobs independently and meet primarily to share information. A group of department-store managers, for example, might meet monthly to discuss their progress in cutting plant costs, but each manager is focused on the goals of his or her department because each is held accountable for meeting only those goals. Teams, by contrast, are responsible for achieving specific common goals, and they're generally empowered to make the decisions needed to complete their authorized tasks.

Some Key Characteristics of Teams

To keep matters in perspective, let's identify five key characteristics of work teams[1]:

1. *Teams are accountable for achieving specific common goals*. Members are collectively responsible for achieving team goals, and if they succeed, they're rewarded collectively.
2. *Teams function interdependently*. Members cannot achieve goals independently and must rely on each other for information, input, and expertise.
3. *Teams are stable*. Teams remain intact long enough to finish their assigned tasks, and each member remains on board long enough to get to know every other member.
4. *Teams have authority*. Teams possess the decision-making power to pursue their goals and to manage the activities through which they complete their assignments.
5. *Teams operate in a social context*. Teams are assembled to do specific work for larger organizations and have the advantage of access to resources available from other areas of their organizations.

Why Organizations Build Teams

Why do major organizations now rely more and more on teams to improve operations? Executives at Xerox have reported that team-based operations are 30 percent more productive than conventional operations. General Mills says that factories organized around team activities are 40 percent more productive than traditionally organized factories. According to in-house studies at Shenandoah Life Insurance, teams have cut case-handling time from twenty-seven to two days and virtually eliminated service complaints. FedEx says that teams reduced service errors (lost packages, incorrect bills) by 13 percent in the first year (Fisher, 1999; Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

Today it seems obvious that teams can address a variety of challenges in the world of corporate activity. Before we go any further, however, we should remind ourselves that data like those we've just cited aren't necessarily definitive. For one thing, they may not be objective—companies are more likely to report successes than failures. As a matter of fact, teams *don't*always work. Indeed, according to one study, team-based projects fail 50 to 70 percent of the time (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Thompson, 2008).

The Effect of Teams on Performance

Research shows that companies build and support teams because of their effect on overall workplace performance, both organizational and individual. If we examine the impact of team-based operations according to a wide range of relevant criteria—including product quality, worker satisfaction, and quality of work life, among others—we find that overall organizational performance improves. Table 10.1 "Effect of Teams on Workplace Performance" lists several areas in which we can analyze workplace performance and indicates the percentage of companies that have reported improvements in each area.

Table 10.1 Effect of Teams on Workplace Performance[2]

---

1. (Thompson, 2008; Alderfer, et. al., 1977)
2. Source: Adapted from Edward E. Lawler, S. A. Mohman, and G. E. Ledford, Creating High Performance Organizations: Practices and Results of Employee Involvement and Total Quality in Fortune 1000 Companies(San Francisco: Wiley, 1992). Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Area of Performance	Percent of Firms Reporting Improvement
Product and service quality	70
Customer service	67
Worker satisfaction	66
Quality of work life	63
Productivity	61
Competitiveness	50
Profitability	45
Absenteeism/turnover	23

Types of Teams

Teams, then, can improve company and individual performance in a number of areas. Not all teams, however, are formed to achieve the same goals or charged with the same responsibilities. Nor are they organized in the same way. Some, for instance, are more *autonomous* than others—less accountable to those higher up in the organization. Some depend on a team leader who's responsible for defining the team's goals and making sure that its activities are performed effectively. Others are more or less self-governing: though a leader lays out overall goals and strategies, the team itself chooses and manages the methods by which it pursues its goals and implements its strategies (Thompson, 2008). Teams also vary according to their membership. Let's look at several categories of teams.

Manager-Led Teams

As its name implies, in the manager-led team the manager is the team leader and is in charge of setting team goals, assigning tasks, and monitoring the team's performance. The individual team members have relatively little autonomy. For example, the key employees of a professional football team (a manager-led team) are highly trained (and highly paid) athletes, but their activities on the field are tightly controlled by a head coach. As team manager, the coach is responsible both for developing the strategies by which the team pursues its goal of winning games and for the final outcome of each game (not to mention the season). He's also solely responsible for interacting with managers above him in the organization. The players are responsible only for executing plays[3].

Self-Managing Teams

Self-managing teams (also known as *self-directed* or *self-regulating teams*) have considerable autonomy. They are usually small and often absorb activities that were once performed by traditional supervisors. A manager or team leader may determine overall goals, but the members of the self-managing team control the activities needed to achieve the goals, such as planning and scheduling work, sharing tasks, meeting quality standards, and handling day-to-day operations.

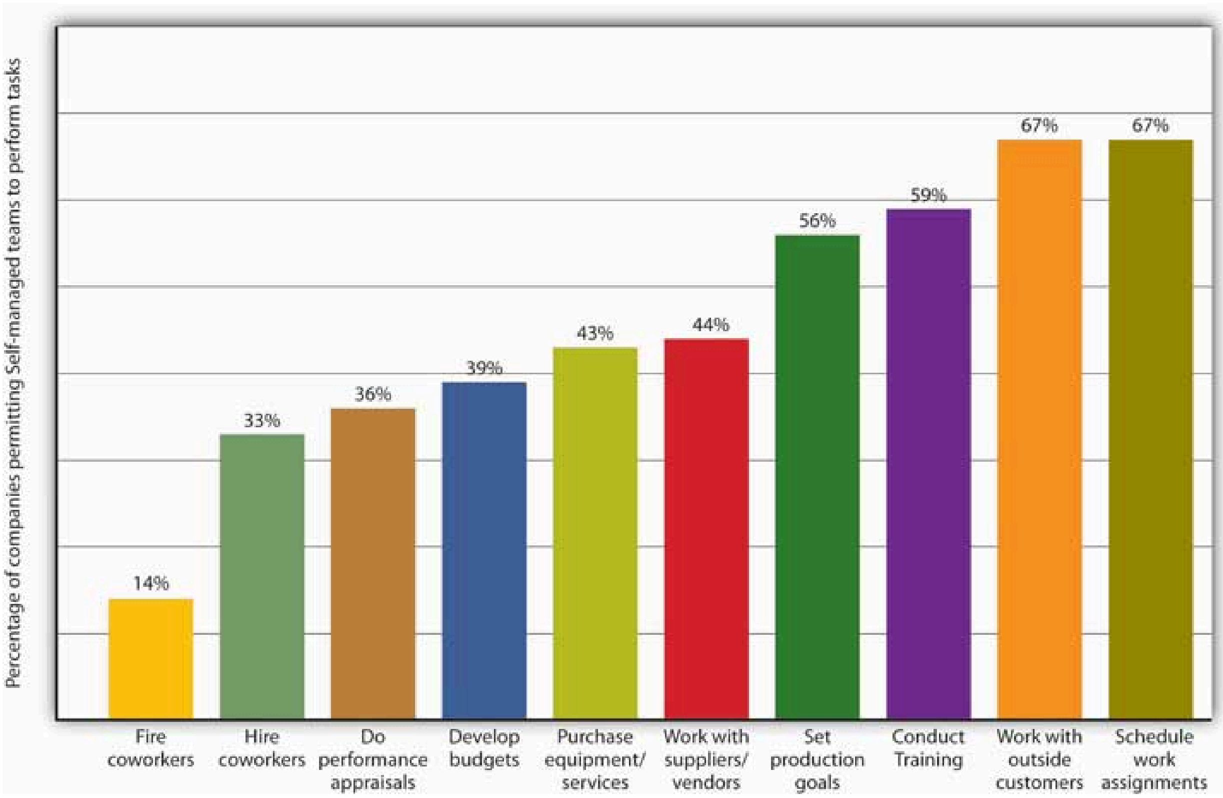
Self-managing teams are the organizational hallmark of Whole Foods Market, the largest natural-foods grocer in the United States. Each store is run by ten teams (produce, prepared foods, and so forth), and virtually every store employee is a member of a team. Each team has a designated leader and its own performance targets. (Team leaders also belong to a store team, and store-team leaders belong

3. (Thompson, 2008)

to a regional team.) To do its job, every team has access to the kind of information—including sales and even salary figures—that most companies reserve for the eyes of traditional managers [4].

Needless to say, not every self-managed team enjoys the same degree of autonomy. Companies vary widely in choosing which tasks teams are allowed to manage and which ones are best left to upper-level management only. As you can see in Figure 10.1 "What Teams Do (and Don't) Manage", for example, self-managing teams are often allowed to schedule assignments, but they are rarely allowed to fire coworkers.

Figure 10.1 What Teams Do (and Don't) Manage



Cross-Functional Teams

Many companies use cross-functional teams—teams that, as the name suggests, cut across an organization's *functional areas* (operations, marketing, finance, and so on). A cross-functional team is designed to take advantage of the special expertise of members drawn from different functional areas of the company. When the Internal Revenue Service, for example, wanted to study the effects on employees of a major change in information systems, it created a cross-functional team composed of people from a wide range of departments. The final study reflected expertise in such areas as job analysis, training, change management, industrial psychology, and even ergonomics (Human Technology Inc., 2011).

Cross-functional teams figure prominently in the product-development process at Nike, where they take advantage of expertise from both inside and outside the company. Typically, team members include not only product designers, marketing specialists, and accountants but also sports-research experts, coaches, athletes, and even consumers. Likewise, Motorola's RAZR team was a cross-functional team: Responsibility for developing the new product wasn't passed along from the design team to the engineering team but rather was entrusted to a special team composed of both designers and engineers.

4. (Fishman, 2007)

We can also classify the RAZR team as a *product-development* or *project team* (a topic we'll discuss in more detail in Chapter 10 "Product Design and Development"). *Committees* and *task forces*, both of which are dedicated to specific issues or tasks, are often cross-functional teams. *Problem-solving teams*, which are created to study such issues as improving quality or reducing waste, may be either intradepartmental or cross-functional[5].

Virtual Teams

"Teamwork," said someone (we're not sure who), "doesn't tolerate the inconvenience of distance." Indeed, technology now makes it possible for teams to function not only across such organizational boundaries as functional areas, departments, and divisions but also across time and space, as well. Working in virtual teams, geographically dispersed members interact electronically in the process of pursuing a common goal. Such technologies as videoconferencing, instant messaging, and electronic meetings, which allow people to interact simultaneously and in real time, offer a number of advantages in conducting the business of a virtual team [6]. Among other things, members can participate from any location or at any time of day, and teams can "meet" for as long as it takes to achieve a goal or solve a problem—a few days, a few weeks, or a few months.

Nor does team size seem to be an obstacle when it comes to calling virtual-team meetings: In building the F-35 Strike Fighter, U.S. defense contractor Lockheed Martin staked the $225 billion project on a virtual product-team of unprecedented global dimension, drawing on designers and engineers from the ranks of eight international partners ranging from Canada and the United Kingdom to Norway and Turkey[7]

Key Takeaways

- Teamwork brings diverse areas of expertise to bear on organizational problems and projects.
- Reaching teamwork goals requires skills in negotiating trade-offs, and teamwork brings these skills into play at almost every step in the process.
- To be successful, teams need a certain amount of autonomy and authority in making and implementing their decisions.
- A team (or a *work team*) is a group of people with complementary skills who work together to achieve a specific goal. Members of a *working group* work independently and meet primarily to share information.
- Work teams have five key characteristics:

  1. They are accountable for achieving specific common goals.
  2. They function interdependently.
  3. They are stable.
  4. They have authority.

---

5. (Robbins & Judge, 2009)
6. (George & Jones, 2008)
7. (Adept Science, 2003).

5. They operate in a social context.

- Companies build and support teams because of their effect on overall workplace performance, both organizational and individual.
- Work teams may be of several types:

1. In the traditional manager-led team, the leader defines the team's goals and activities and is responsible for its achieving its assigned goals.
2. The leader of a self-managing team may determine overall goals, but employees control the activities needed to meet them.
3. A cross-functional team is designed to take advantage of the special expertise of members drawn from different functional areas of the company.
4. On virtual teams, geographically dispersed members interact electronically in the process of pursuing a common goal.

Exercise

(AACSB) Analysis

You're a marketing researcher for a multinational food-products corporation, and for the past two years, you've been able to work at home. The international division of the company has asked you to join a virtual team assigned to assess the prospects for a new sandwich planned for the Indian market.

List a few of the challenges that you're likely to encounter as a member of the virtual team. Explain the steps you'd take to deal with each of the challenges that you've listed.

10.2 Why Teamwork Works

Learning Objectives

1. Explain why teams may be effective or ineffective.
2. Identify factors that contribute to team cohesiveness.

Now that we know a little bit about *how* teams work, we need to ask ourselves *why* they work. Not surprisingly, this is a fairly complex issue. In this section, we'll answer these closely related questions: Why are teams often effective? Why are they sometimes *in*effective?

Factors in Effective Teamwork

First, let's begin by identifying several factors that, in practice, tend to contribute to effective teamwork. Generally speaking, teams are effective when the following factors are met (Whetten & Cameron, 2007):

- *Members depend on each other*. When team members rely on each other to get the job done, team productivity and efficiency are high.
- *Members trust one another*. Teamwork is more effective when members trust each other.
- *Members work better together than individually*. When team members perform better as a group than alone, collective performance exceeds individual performance.
- *Members become boosters*. When each member is encouraged by other team members to do his or her best, collective results improve.
- *Team members enjoy being on the team*. The more that team members derive satisfaction from being on the team, the more committed they become.
- *Leadership rotates*. Teams function effectively when leadership responsibility is shared over time.

Most of these explanations probably make pretty clear intuitive sense. Unfortunately, because such issues are rarely as clear-cut as they may seem at first glance, we need to examine the issue of group effectiveness from another perspective—one that considers the effects of factors that aren't quite so straightforward.

Group Cohesiveness

The idea of group cohesiveness refers to the *attractiveness* of a team to its members. If a group is high in cohesiveness, membership is quite satisfying to its members; if it's low in cohesiveness, members are unhappy with it and may even try to leave it. The principle of group cohesiveness, in other words, is based on the simple idea that groups are most effective when their members like being members of the group (George & Jones, 2008; Festinger, 1950).

What Makes a Team Cohesive?

Numerous factors may contribute to team cohesiveness, but in this section, we'll focus on five of the most important:

1. *Size*. The bigger the team, the less satisfied members tend to be. When teams get too large, members find it harder to interact closely with other members; a few members tend to dominate team activities, and conflict becomes more likely.
2. *Similarity*. People usually get along better with people like themselves, and teams are generally more cohesive when members perceive fellow members as people who share their own attitudes and experience.
3. *Success*. When teams are successful, members are satisfied, and other people are more likely to be attracted to their teams.
4. *Exclusiveness*. The harder it is to get into a group, the happier the people who are already in it. Status (the extent to which outsiders look up to a team, as well as the perks that come with membership) also increases members' satisfaction.
5. *Competition*. Members value membership more highly when they're motivated to achieve common goals—especially when those goals mean outperforming other teams.

Figure 10.2. A cohesive team with goals that are aligned with the goals of the organization is most likely to succeed. Teamwork and team spirit – CC BY-ND 2.0.

There's such a thing as too much cohesiveness. When, for instance, members are highly motivated to collaborate in performing the team's activities, the team is more likely to be effective in achieving its goals. Clearly, when those goals are aligned with the goals of the larger organization, the organization, too, will be happy. If, however, its members get too wrapped up in more immediate team goals, the whole team may lose sight of the larger organizational goals toward which it's supposed to be working.

Groupthink

Likewise, it's easier for leaders to direct members toward team goals when members are all on the same page—when there's a basic willingness to conform to the team's rules and guidelines. When there's too much conformity, however, the group can become ineffective: It may resist change and fresh ideas and, what's worse, may end up adopting its own dysfunctional tendencies as its way of doing things. Such tendencies may also encourage a phenomenon known as groupthink—the tendency to conform to group pressure in making decisions, while failing to think critically or to consider outside influences.

Groupthink is often cited as a factor in the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* in January 1986: Engineers from a supplier of components for the rocket booster warned that the launch might be risky because of the weather but were persuaded to reverse their recommendation by NASA officials who wanted the launch to proceed as scheduled (Griffin, 2011).

Why Teams Fail

Teams don't always work. To learn why, let's take a quick look at four common obstacles to success in introducing teams into an organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2008):

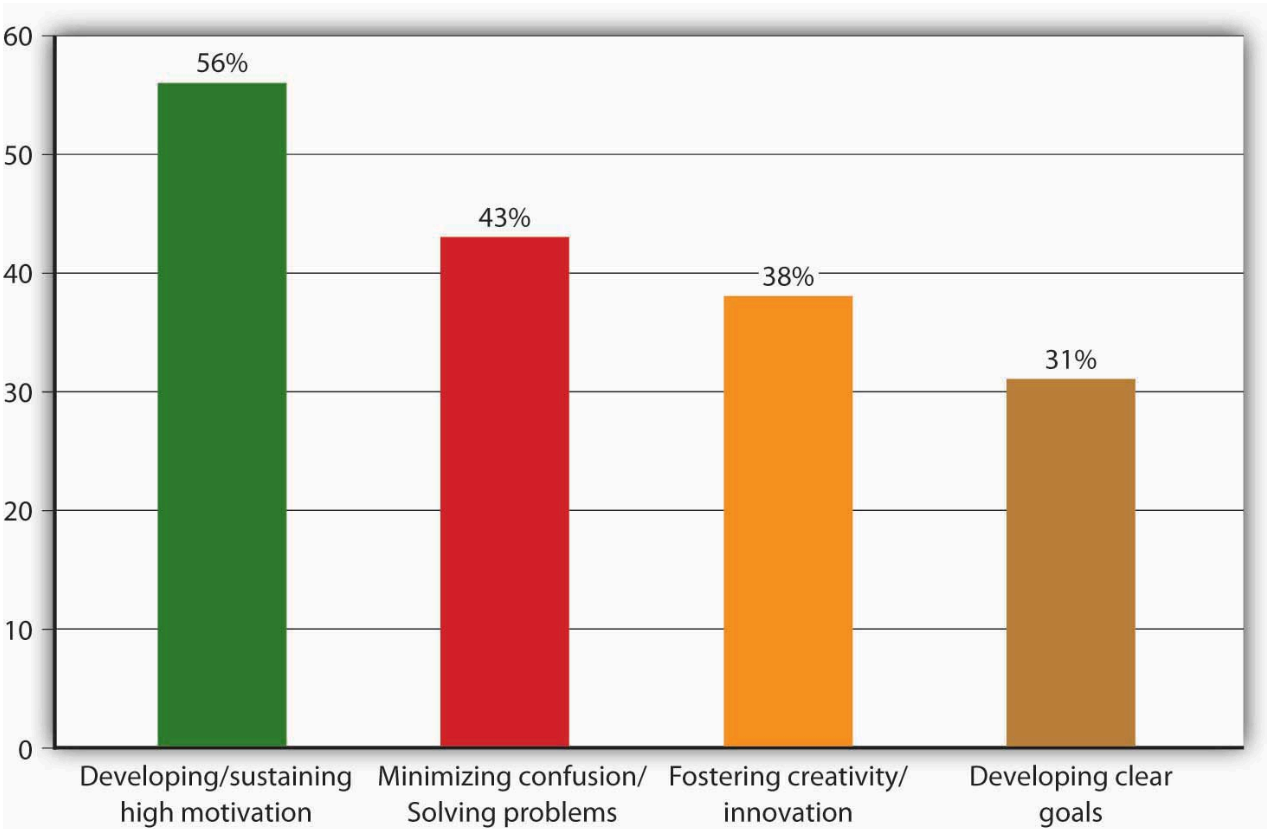
- *Unwillingness to cooperate*. Failure to cooperate can occur when members don't or won't commit to a common goal or set of activities. What if, for example, half the members of a product-development team want to create a brand-new product and half want to improve an existing product? The entire team may get stuck on this point of contention for weeks or even months.

- *Lack of managerial support*. Every team requires organizational resources to achieve its goals, and if management isn't willing to commit the needed resources—say, funding or key personnel—a team will probably fall short of those goals.
- *Failure of managers to delegate authority*. Team leaders are often chosen from the ranks of successful supervisors—first-line managers who, as we saw in Chapter 6 "Managing for Business Success", give instructions on a day-to-day basis and expect to have them carried out. This approach to workplace activities may not work very well in leading a team—a position in which success depends on building a consensus and letting people make their own decisions.
- *Failure of teams to cooperate*. If you're on a workplace team, your employer probably depends on teams to perform much of the organization's work and meet many of its goals. In other words, it is, to some extent, a team-based organization, and as such, reaching its overall goals requires a high level of cooperation *among teams* (Thompson, 2008). When teams can't agree on mutual goals (or when they duplicate efforts), neither the teams nor the organization is likely to meet with much success.

Motivation and Frustration

Finally, remember that teams are composed of people, and whatever the roles they happen to be playing at a given time, people are subject to psychological ups and downs. As members of workplace teams, they need motivation, and as we observed in Chapter 7 "Recruiting, Motivating, and Keeping Quality Employees", when motivation is down, so are effectiveness and productivity. As you can see in Figure 10.3 "Sources of Frustration", the difficulty of maintaining a high level of motivation is the chief cause of frustration among members of teams. As such, it's also a chief cause of ineffective teamwork, and that's one reason why more employers now look for the ability to develop and sustain motivation when they're hiring new managers (Thompson, 2008).

Figure 10.3 Sources of Frustration



Key Takeaways

- Generally speaking, teams are effective when the following are true:

    1. Members are interdependent.
    2. Members work better together than individually.
    3. Teams work well enough to satisfy members.
    4. Leadership rotates.
    5. Members help one another.
    6. Members become boosters.
    7. Members trust one another.

- Group cohesiveness refers to the *attractiveness* of a team to its members. If a group is high in cohesiveness, membership is quite satisfying to its members; if it's low in cohesiveness, members are unhappy with it and may even try to leave it.
- Common obstacles to team success include the following:

    1. Unwillingness to cooperate
    2. Lack of managerial support
    3. Failure of managers to delegate authority

4. Failure of teams to cooperate

Exercise

(AACSB) Analysis

At some point in the coming week, while you're working on an assignment for any one of your classes, ask at least one other member of the class to help you with it or to collaborate with you in studying for it. After you've completed your assignment, make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of working on the assignment with another person.

10.3 The Team and Its Members

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of learning to participate in team-based activities.
2. Identify the skills needed by team members and the roles that members of a team might play.
3. Learn how to survive team projects in college (and actually enjoy yourself).
4. Explain the skills and behaviors that foster effective team leadership.

"Life Is All about Group Work"

"I'll work extra hard and do it myself, but please don't make me have to work in a group."

Like it or not, you'll probably be given some teamwork assignments while you're in college. More than two-thirds of all students report having participated in the work of an organized team, and if you're in business school, you will almost certainly find yourself engaged in team-based activities (Whetten & Cameron, 2007; Wellins et. al., 1991).

Why do we put so much emphasis on something that, reportedly, makes many students feel anxious and academically drained? Here's one college student's practical-minded answer to this question:

> In the real world, you have to work with people. You don't always know the people you work with, and you don't always get along with them. Your boss won't particularly care, and if you can't get the job done, your job may end up on the line. Life is all about group work, whether we like it or not. And school, in many ways, prepares us for life, including working with others" (Nichols, 2003).

She's right. In placing so much emphasis on teamwork skills and experience, college business departments are doing the responsible thing—preparing students for the business world that awaits them. A survey of *Fortune* 1000 companies reveals that 79 percent already rely on self-managing teams and 91 percent on various forms of employee work groups. Another survey found that the skill that most employers value in new employees is the ability to work in teams (Whetten & Cameron, 2007; Lawler, 2003). If you're already trying to work your way up an organizational ladder, consider the advice of former Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca: "A major reason that capable people fail to advance is that they don't work well with their colleagues" (Paulson, 1990). The importance of the ability to work in teams was confirmed in a survey of leadership practices of more than sixty of the world's top organizations (Fortune Magazine, 1999). When top executives in these organizations were asked, "What causes high-potential leadership candidates to derail? (stop moving up in the organization)," 60 percent of the organizations cited "inability to work in teams." Interestingly, only 9 percent attributed the failure of these executives to advance to "lack of technical ability." While technical skills will be essential in your getting hired into an organization, your team skills will play a significant role in your ability to advance.

To be team-ready or not to be team-ready—that is the question. Or, to put it in plainer terms, the question is not whether you'll find yourself working as part of a team. You will. The question is whether you'll know how to participate successfully in team-based activities.

Will You Make a Good Team Member?

What if your instructor in this course decides to divide the class into several three-, four-, or five-member teams and assigns each team to develop a new product plus a business plan to get it into production and out on the market? What teamwork skills could you bring to the table? What teamwork skills do you need to work on? What qualities do you possess that might make you a good team leader?

What Skills Does the Team Need?

Sometimes we hear about a sports team made up of mostly average players who win a championship because of coaching genius, flawless teamwork, and superhuman determination [8]. But not terribly often. In fact, we usually hear about such teams simply because they're newsworthy—exceptions to the rule. Typically a team performs well because its members possess some level of talent. This doesn't mean, however, that we should reduce team performance to the mere sum of its individual contributions: Members' talents aren't very useful if they're not managed in a collective effort to achieve a common goal.

In the final analysis, of course, a team can succeed only if its members provide the skills that need managing. In particular, every team requires some mixture of three sets of skills:

- *Technical skills*. Because teams must perform certain tasks, they need people with the skills to perform them. For example, if your project calls for a lot of math work, it's good to have someone with the necessary quantitative skills.
- *Decision-making and problem-solving skills*. Because every task is subject to problems, and because handling every problem means deciding on the best solution, it's good to have members who are skilled in identifying problems, evaluating alternative solutions, and deciding on the best options.
- *Interpersonal skills*. Because teams are composed of people, and because people need direction and motivation and depend on communication, every group benefits from members who know how to listen, provide feedback, and smooth ruffled feathers. The same people are usually good at communicating the team's goals and needs to outsiders.

8. (Robbins & Judge, 2009)

The key to success is ultimately the right mix of these skills. Remember, too, that no team needs to possess all these skills—never mind the right balance of them—from day one. In many cases, a team gains certain skills only when members volunteer for certain tasks and perfect their skills in the process of performing them. For the same reason, effective teamwork develops over time as team members learn how to handle various team-based tasks. In a sense, teamwork is always work in progress.

What Roles Do Team Members Play?

Like your teamwork skills, expect your role on a team to develop over time. Also remember that, both as a student and as a member of the workforce, you'll be a *member* of a team more often than a *leader* (a subject that we'll take up in the next section). Team members, however, can have as much impact on a team's success as its leaders. The key is the quality of the contributions they make in performing nonleadership roles[9].

What, exactly, are those roles? At this point, you've probably concluded that every team faces two basic challenges:

1. Accomplishing its assigned task
2. Maintaining or improving group cohesiveness

Whether you affect the team's work positively or negatively depends on the extent to which you help it or hinder it in meeting these two challenges [10]. We can thus divide teamwork roles into two categories, depending on which of these two challenges each role addresses. These two categories (task-facilitating roles and relationship-building roles) are summarized in Table 10.2 "Roles that Team Members Play".[11]

---

9. (Whetten & Cameron, 2007)
10. (Whetten & Cameron, 2007)
11. Source: Adapted from David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron, Developing Management Skills, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 517, 519.

Table 10.2 Roles that Team Members Play

Task-facilitating Roles	Example	Relationship-building Roles	Example
Direction giving	"Jot down a few ideas and we'll see what everyone has come up with."	Supporting	"Now, that's what I mean by a practical application."
Information seeking	"Does anyone know if this is the latest data we have?"	Harmonizing	"Actually, I think you're both saying pretty much the same thing."
Information giving	"Here are latest numbers from…."	Tension relieving	"Before we go on to the next section, how many people would like a pillow?"
Elaborating	"I think a good example of what you're talking about is…."	Confronting	"How does that suggestion relate to the topic that we're discussing?"
Urging	"Let's try to finish this proposal before we adjourn."	Energizing	"It's been a long time since I've had this many laughs at a meeting in *this*department."
Monitoring	"If you'll take care of the first section, I'll make sure that we have the second by next week."	Developing	"If you need some help pulling the data together, let me know."
Process analyzing	"What happened to the energy level in this room?"	Consensus building	"Do we agree on the first four points even if number five needs a little more work?"
Reality testing	"Can we make this work and stay within budget?"	Empathizing	"It's not you. The numbers *are* confusing."
Enforcing	"We're getting off track. Let's try to stay on topic."		
Summarizing	"Before we jump ahead, here's what we've decided so far."		

Task-Facilitating Roles

Task-facilitating roles address challenge number one—accomplishing the team goals. As you can see from Table 10.2 "Roles that Team Members Play", such roles include not only providing information when someone else needs it but also asking for it when you need it. In addition, it includes *monitoring* (checking on progress) and *enforcing* (making sure that team decisions are carried out). Task facilitators are especially valuable when assignments aren't clear or when progress is too slow. Moreover, every team needs people who recognize when a little task facilitation is called for.

Relationship-Building Roles

When you challenge unmotivated behavior or help other team members understand their roles, you're performing a relationship-building role and addressing challenge number two—maintaining or improving group cohesiveness. This type of role includes just about every activity that improves team "chemistry," from *confronting* to *empathizing*.

Bear in mind three points about this model of team-membership roles: (1) Teams are most effective when there's a good balance between task facilitation and relationship building; (2) it's hard for any given member to perform both types of roles, as some people are better at focusing on tasks and others on relationships; and (3) overplaying any facet of any role can easily become counterproductive. For example, *elaborating* on something may not be the best strategy when the team needs to make a quick decision; and *consensus building* may cause the team to overlook an important difference of opinion.

Blocking Roles

Finally, review Table 10.3 "How to Block Teamwork", which summarizes a few characteristics of another kind of team-membership role. So-called blocking roles consist of behavior that inhibits either team performance or that of individual members. Every member of the team should know how to recognize blocking behavior. If teams don't confront dysfunctional members, they can destroy morale, hamper consensus building, create conflict, and hinder progress.

Table 10.3 How to Block Teamwork[12]

Blocking Strategy	**Tactics**
Dominate	Talk as much as possible; interrupt and interject
Overanalyze	Split hairs and belabor every detail
Stall	Frustrate efforts to come to conclusions: decline to agree, sidetrack the discussion, rehash old ideas
Remain passive	Stay on the fringe; keep interaction to a minimum; wait for others to take on work
Overgeneralize	Blow things out of proportion; float unfounded conclusions
Find fault	Criticize and withhold credit whenever possible
Make premature decisions	Rush to conclusions before goals are set, information is shared, or problems are clarified
Present opinions as facts	Refuse to seek factual support for ideas that you personally favor
Reject	Object to ideas offered by people who tend to disagree with you
Pull rank	Use status or title to push through ideas, rather than seek consensus on their value
Resist	Throw up roadblocks to progress; look on the negative side
Deflect	Refuse to stay on topic; focus on minor points rather than main points

Class Team Projects

As we highlighted earlier, throughout your academic career you'll likely participate in a number of team projects. Not only will you make lasting friends by being a member of a team, but in addition you'll produce a better product. To get insider advice on how to survive team projects in college (and perhaps really enjoy yourself in the process), let's look at some suggestions offered by two students who have gone through this experience (Nichols, 2003; Feenstra, 2002).

- *Draw up a team charter*. At the beginning of the project, draw up a team charter (or contract) that includes the goals of the group; ways to ensure that each team member's ideas are considered and respected; when and where your group will meet; what happens if a team member skips meetings or doesn't do his or her share of the work; how conflicts will be resolved.
- *Contribute your ideas*. Share your ideas with your group; they might be valuable to the group. The worst that could happen is that they won't be used (which is what would happen if you kept quiet).
- *Never miss a meeting*. Pick a weekly meeting time and write it into your schedule as if it were a class. Never skip it. And make your meetings productive.
- *Be considerate of each other*. Be patient, listen to everyone, communicate frequently, involve everyone in decision making, don't

12. Source: Adapted from David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron, Developing Management Skills, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 519–20.

think you're always right, be positive, avoid infighting, build trust.

- *Create a process for resolving conflict*. Do this before conflict arises. Set up rules to help the group decide whether the conflict is constructive, whether it's personal, or whether it arises because someone won't pull his or her weight. Decide, as a group, how conflict will be handled.
- *Use the strengths of each team member*. Some students are good researchers, others are good writers, others have strong problem-solving or computer skills, while others are good at generating ideas. Don't have your writer do the research and your researcher do the writing. Not only would the team not be using its resources wisely, but two team members will be frustrated because they're not using their strengths.
- *Don't do all the work yourself*. Work with your team to get the work done. The project output is not as important as the experience of working in a team.
- *Set deadlines*. Don't leave everything to the end; divide up tasks, hold team members accountable, and set intermediary deadlines for each team member to get his or her work done. Work together to be sure the project is in on time and in good shape.

What Does It Take to Lead a Team?

"Some people are born leaders, some achieve leadership, and some have leadership thrust upon them." Or so Shakespeare might have said if he were managing a twenty-first-century work team instead of a sixteenth-century theater troupe. At some point in a successful career, whether in business, school, or any other form of organizational work, you may be asked (or assigned) to lead a team. The more successful you are, the more likely you are to receive such an invitation. So, what will you have to do as a leader? What skills will you need?

Like so many of the questions that we ask in this book, these questions don't have any simple answers. As for the first question—what does a leader have to do?—we can provide one broad answer: A leader must help members develop the attitudes and behavior that contribute to team success: interdependence, collective responsibility, shared commitment, and so forth.

Influence Team Members and Gain their Trust

Team leaders must be able to influence their team members. And notice that we say *influence*: except in unusual circumstances, giving commands and controlling everything directly doesn't work very well (Whetten & Cameron, 2007). As one team of researchers puts it, team leaders are more effective when they work *with* members rather than *on* them (Whetten & Cameron, 2007). Hand in hand with the ability to influence is the ability to gain and keep the *trust* of team members. People aren't likely to be influenced by a leader whom they perceive as dishonest or selfishly motivated.

Figure 10.4. Team leaders are most effective when they can not only influence members but also gain their trust. Pixabay – CC0 Public Domain

Assuming you were asked to lead a team, there are certain leadership skills and behaviors that would help you influence your team members and build trust. Let's look at seven of these:

- *Demonstrate integrity*. Do what you say you'll do, and act in accordance with your stated values. Be honest in communicating with members, and follow through on promises.
- *Be clear and consistent*. Let members know that you're certain about what you want, and remember that being clear and consistent reinforces your credibility.
- *Generate positive energy*. Be optimistic and compliment team members. Recognize their progress and success.
- *Acknowledge common points of view*. Even if you're about to propose some kind of change, before embarking on a new stage of a project recognize the value of the views that members already hold in common.
- *Manage agreement and disagreement*. When members agree with you, focus on your point of view and present it reasonably. When they disagree with you, acknowledge both sides of the issue and support your own with strong, clearly presented evidence.
- *Encourage and coach*. Buoy up members when they run into new and uncertain situations and when success depends on their performing at a high level. Give them the information they need and otherwise help them to perform tasks.
- *Share information*. Let members know that you're knowledgeable about team tasks and individual talents. Check with team members regularly to find out what they're doing and how the job is progressing. Collect information from outside sources, and make sure that it gets to the team members who need it.

Key Takeaways

- As the business world depends more and more on teamwork, it's increasingly important for incoming members of the workforce to develop skills and experience in team-based activities.
- Every team requires some mixture of three skill sets:
  1. *Technical skills*: skills needed to perform specific tasks
  2. *Decision-making and problem-solving skills*: skills needed to identify problems, evaluate alternative solutions, and decide on the best options
  3. *Interpersonal skills*: skills in listening, providing feedback, and resolving conflict
- Team members deal with two basic challenges: (1) accomplishing the team's assigned task and (2) maintaining or improving group cohesiveness.
- Task-facilitating roles address challenge number one—accomplishing team tasks. Relationship-building roles address challenge number two—maintaining or improving group cohesiveness. Blocking roles consist of behavior that inhibits either team performance or that of individual members.
- The following are eight ways to add value to and survive team projects in college:
  1. Draw up a team charter.
  2. Contribute your ideas.
  3. Never miss a meeting.
  4. Be considerate of each other.
  5. Create a process for resolving conflict.
  6. Use the strengths of each team member.
  7. Don't do all the work yourself.
  8. Set deadlines.
- The following are seven types of skills and behaviors that help team leaders influence their members and gain their trust:
  1. Demonstrating integrity
  2. Being clear and consistent
  3. Generating positive energy
  4. Acknowledging common points of view
  5. Managing agreement and disagreement
  6. Encouraging and coaching
  7. Sharing information

Exercise

(AACSB) Analysis

One student, a veteran of team-based assignments, has some good advice to offer students who are following in her footsteps. Don't start, she advises, until you've drawn up a *team charter*. This charter (or contract) should include the following: the goals of the group; information on meeting times and places; ways to ensure that each member's ideas are considered and respected; methods for resolving conflicts; a "kick-out" clause—a statement of what will happen if a team member skips meetings or fails to do his or her share of the work [13]

Now assume that you've just been assigned to a team in one of your classes. Prepare a first-draft charter in which you spell out rules of conduct for the team and its members.

10.4 The Business of Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the role of communication in the design of the RAZR cell phone.
2. Define *communication* and discuss the ways in which organizations benefit from effective communication.

Communication by Design

As the chief designer assigned to the "thin-clam" team at Motorola, Chris Arnholt was responsible for some of the phone's distinctive physical features, including its sleek aluminum finish and backlit keyboard. In fact, it was he who pushed the company's engineers and marketers to buck an industry trend toward phones that were getting fatter because of many add-ons such as cameras and stereo speakers. For Arnholt had a vision. He called it "rich minimalism," and his goal was to help the Motorola cell phone team realize a product that embodied that profile.

But what exactly did Arnholt mean by rich minimalism? "Sometimes," he admits, "my ideas are tough to communicate," but as a veteran in his field, he also understands that "design is really about communication" (Lashinsky, 2006; Anthony, 2011). His chief (and ongoing) task, then, was communicating to the cell phone team what he meant by rich minimalism. Ultimately, of course, he had to show them what rich minimalism looked like when it appeared in tangible form in a fashionable new cell phone. In the process, he also had to be sure that the cell phone included certain key benefits that prospective consumers would want. As always, the physical design of the finished product had to be right for its intended market.

We'll have much more to say about the process of developing new products in Chapter 10 "Product Design and Development". Here, however, let's simply highlight two points about the way successful companies approach the challenges of new-product design and development (which you will likely recognize from reading the first part of this chapter):

1. In contributing to the new-product design and development process, industrial designers like Chris Arnholt must effectively

13. (Feenstra, 2002).

communicate both ideas and practical specifications.

2. The design and development process usually succeeds only when the assigned team integrates input from every relevant area of the organization (Urban & Hauser, 1993).

The common denominator in both facets of the process is effective communication. The designer, for example, must communicate not only his vision of the product but also certain specifications for turning it into something concrete. Chris Arnholt sculpted models out of cornstarch and then took them home at night to refashion them according to suggestions made by the product team. Then he'd put his newest ideas on paper and hand the drawings over to another member of his design team, who'd turn them into 3D computer graphics from which other specialists would build plastic models. Without effective communication at every step in this process, it isn't likely that a group of people with different skills would produce plastic models bearing a practical resemblance to Arnholt's original drawings. On top of everything else, Arnholt's responsibility as chief designer required him to communicate his ideas not only about the product's visual and physical features but also about the production processes and manufacturing requirements for building it (ISDA, 2008).

Thus Arnholt's job—which is to say, his responsibility on the cell phone team—meant that he had to do a lot more than merely design the product. Strictly speaking, the designer's function is to understand a product from the consumer's point of view; develop this understanding into a set of ideas and specifications that will satisfy not only consumer needs but producer requirements; and make recommendations through drawings, models, and verbal communications (IDSA, 2008). Even our condensed version of the RAZR story, however, indicates that Arnholt's job was far broader. Why? Because new-product design is an integrative process: contributions must come from all functions within an organization, including *operations* (which includes research and development, engineering and manufacturing), *marketing*, *management*, *finance*, and *accounting* (Urban & Hauser, 1993).

Our version of the RAZR story has emphasized operations (which includes research and development, engineering, and manufacturing) and touched on the role of marketing (which collects data about consumer needs). Remember, though, that members from several areas of management were recruited for the team. Because the project required considerable investment of Motorola's capital, finance was certainly involved, and the decision to increase production in late 2004 was based on numbers crunched by the accounting department. At every step, Arnholt's drawings, specs, and recommendations reflected his collaboration with people from all these functional areas.

As we'll see in Section 10.4.2 "What Is Communication?", what all this interactivity amounts to is *communication* (Urban & Hauser, 1993). As for what Arnholt meant by rich minimalism, you'll need to take a look at the picture of the RAZR at the beginning of the chapter. Among other things, it means a blue electroluminescent panel and a 22 kHz polyphonic speaker.

Figure 10.5. The explosion of text messaging has changed the way people use their cell phones and created new design needs for manufacturers like Motorola. Adrian Black – Motorola V3i Open – CC BY-NC 2.0.

What Is Communication?

Let's start with a basic (and quite practical) definition of communication as the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver. When you call up a classmate to inform him that your Introduction to Financial Accounting class has been canceled, you're sending information and your classmate is receiving it. When you go to your professor's Web site to find out the assignment for the next class, your professor is sending information and you're receiving it. When your boss e-mails you the data you need to complete a sales report and tells you to e-mail the report back to her by 4 o'clock, your boss is sending information and, once again, you're receiving it; later in the day, the situation will be reversed.

Your Ticket In (or Out)

Obviously, you participate in dozens of "informational transfers" every day. (In fact, they take up about 70 percent of your waking hours—80 percent if you have some sort of managerial position (Robbins & Judge, 2009; Whetten & Cameron, 2007). In any case, it wouldn't make much sense for us to pursue the topic much further without assuming that you've gained *some*experience and mastered *some* skills in the task of communicating. At the same time, though, we'll also venture to guess that you're much more comfortable having casual conversations with friends than writing class assignments or giving speeches in front of classmates. That's why we're going to resort to the same plain terms that we used when we discussed the likelihood of your needing teamwork skills in an organizational setting: The question is not whether you'll need communication skills (both written and verbal). You will. The question is whether you'll develop the skills to communicate effectively in a variety of organizational situations.

Once again, the numbers back us up. In a recent survey by the Association of Colleges and Employers, the ability to communicate well topped the list of skills that business recruiters want in potential hires (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2007). A College Board survey of 120 major U.S. companies concludes that writing is a "threshold skill" for both employment and promotion. "In most cases," volunteered one human resources director, "writing ability could be your ticket in—or your ticket out."

Applicants and employees who can't write and communicate clearly, says the final report, "will not be hired and are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion" [14].

Why Are Communication Skills Important?

They're important to you because they're important to prospective employers. And why do employers consider communication skills so important? Because they're good for business. Research shows that businesses benefit in several ways when they're able to foster effective communication among employees (Thill & Bovée, 2008; Carr, 2006):

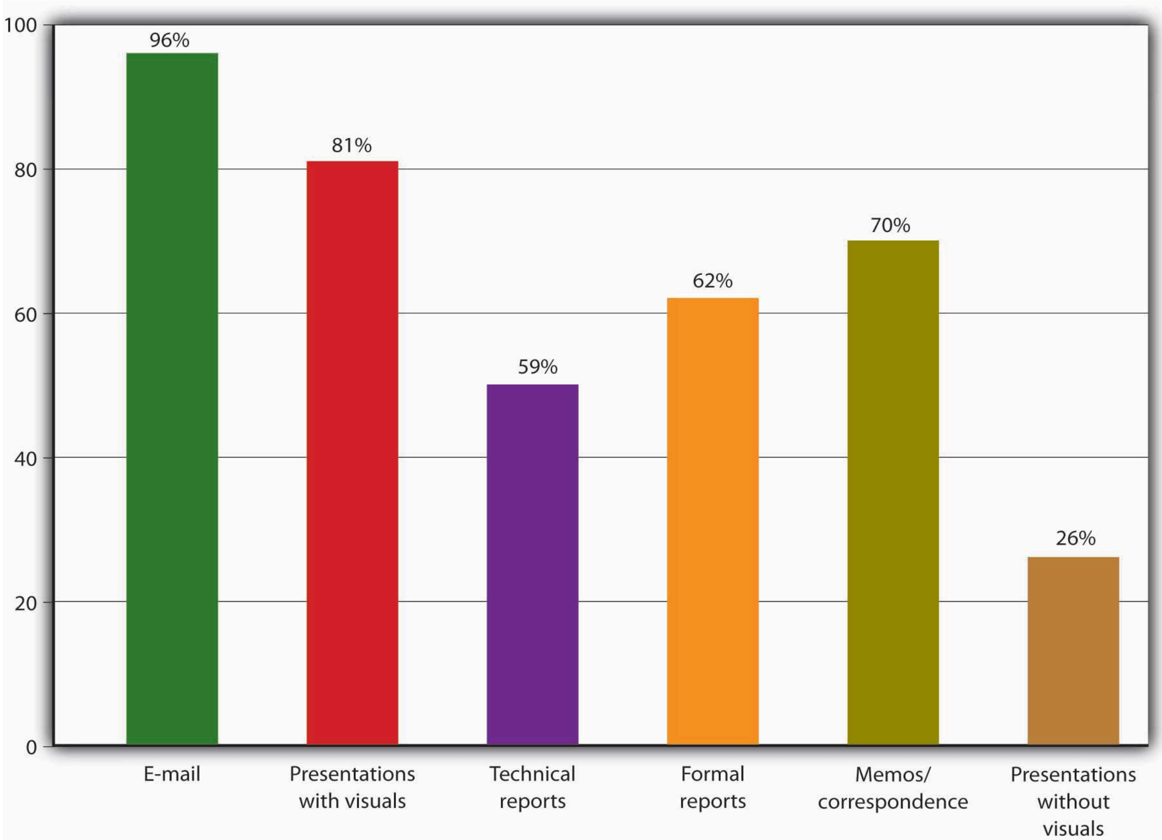
- Decisions are more convincing and certain, and problem solving is faster.
- Warning signs of potential problems appear earlier.
- Workflow moves more smoothly and productivity increases.
- Business relationships are stronger.
- Marketing messages are more persuasive.
- The company's professional image is enhanced.
- Employee satisfaction goes up and turnover goes down.
- The firm and its investors enjoy better financial results.

What Skills Are Important?

Figure 10.6 "Required Skills" reveals some further findings of the College Board survey that we mentioned previously—namely, the percentage of companies that identified certain communication skills as being "frequently" or "almost always" necessary in their workplaces. As you can see, ability in using e-mail is a nearly universal requirement (and in many cases this includes the ability to adapt messages to different receivers or compose persuasive messages when necessary). The ability to make presentations (with visuals) also ranks highly.

Figure 10.6 Required Skills

14. (College Board, 2004)



Key Takeaways

- Effective communication is needed in several facets of the new-product design and development process:

    1. Designers must effectively communicate both ideas and practical specifications.
    2. The process usually succeeds only when the assigned team integrates input from every relevant area of the organization.

- Communication is the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver.
- Businesses benefit in several ways when they're able to foster effective communication among employees:

    1. Decisions are more assured and cogent, and problem solving is faster.
    2. Warning signs of potential problems appear earlier.
    3. Workflow moves more smoothly and productivity increases.
    4. Business relationships are stronger.
    5. Marketing messages are more persuasive.
    6. The company's professional image is enhanced.
    7. Employee satisfaction goes up and turnover goes down.
    8. The firm and its investors enjoy better financial results.

Exercise

(AACSB) Analysis

Pick a company you're interested in working for when you graduate from college. For this company, identify the following:

1. A starting position you'd like to obtain on graduation
2. A higher-level position you'd like to be promoted to in five years.

For each of these positions, describe the skills needed to get the job and those needed to be successful in the position.

10.5 Communication Channels

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the nature of communications in an organizational setting, including communication flows, channels, and networks.
2. Explain barriers to communication, and discuss the most common types of barriers to group communication.

What Is Organizational Communication?

Clearly, the task of preparing and submitting a finished sales report doesn't require the same kinds of communication skills as talking on the phone with a classmate. No matter what your "workstation" happens to be—whether your workplace office or your kitchen table—you're performing the task of preparing that sales report in an *organizational setting*. You're still a sender transferring information to a receiver, but the organizational context of the task requires you to consider different factors for success in communicating effectively (including barriers to success). A report, for example, must be targeted for someone in a specific position and must contain the information necessary to make a specific set of decisions (Netzley & Snow, 2002).

Communication Flows

Here's another way of thinking about communication in an organizational setting. Let's assume that you and the classmate you called on the phone are on roughly equal footing—you're both juniors, your grades in the class are about the same, and so forth. Your phone conversation, therefore, is "lateral": You belong to the same group (your accounting class), and your group activities take place on the same level.

Communication may also flow laterally in organizational settings (as it does between you and your classmate), but more often it flows up or down. Take a look at Figure 10.7 "Formal Communication Flows". If it looks familiar, that's because we've borrowed it from Chapter 6 "Managing for Business Success", where it appeared as the *organization chart* for the fictional company Notes-4-You. As you can see, we've added a few lines to show the three directions in which communications can flow in a typical organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2008):

- As the term suggests, downward communication flows from higher organizational levels (supervisors) to lower organizational levels (subordinates).
- Upward communication flows from lower to higher organizational levels.
- Lateral (or horizontal) communication flows across the organization, among personnel on the same level.

Your boss's request for a sales report is an instance of downward communication, and when you've finished and submitted it, you will have completed a task of upward communication.

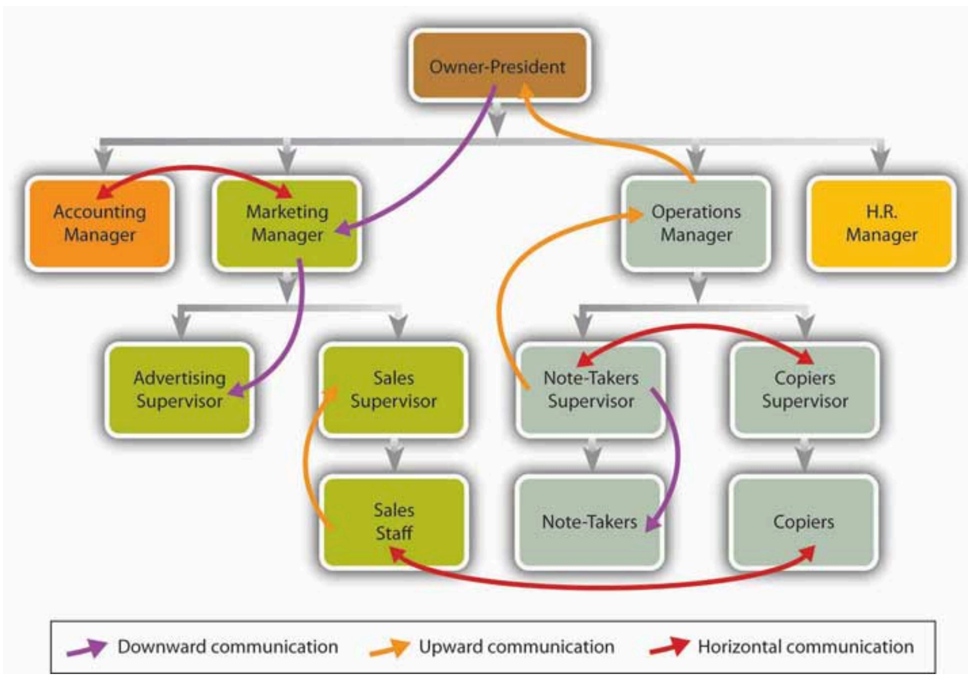


Figure 10.7 Formal Communication Flows

Advantages of Communication Flows

Naturally, each of these different directional flows has its functions and advantages. Downward communication, for example, is appropriate for giving instructions or directions—telling people what to do. (As a goal of communication, by the way, giving orders isn't as one-sided as it may seem. One of the things that employees—the receivers—most want to know is: What, exactly, does my job entail?) (Greenberg & Baron, 2002) Like a sales report, upward communication usually provides managers with information that they need for making decisions, but it's also the vehicle for new ideas, suggestions, and complaints. Horizontal communication supports efforts to coordinate tasks and otherwise help people work together.

Disadvantages of Communication Flows

And, of course, each type of flow has its disadvantages. As information seeps downward, for instance, it tends to lose some of its original clarity and often becomes distorted or downright wrong. (This is especially true when it's delivered orally.) In addition, unlike Donald Trump, most people who are responsible for using downward communication don't like delivering bad news (such as "You're fired" or, more commonly, "Your job is being phased out"); as a result, bad news—including bad news that happens to be important news—is often ignored or disguised. The same thing may happen when bad news—say, a negative status report—must be sent upward.

Finally, while horizontal flows are valuable for promoting cooperation, they can also be used to engage in conflict—for instance, between two departments competing for the same organizational resources. The problem is especially bad when such horizontal communications breach official upward or downward lines of communication, thus bypassing managers who might be able to resolve the conflict.

Channels of Communication

Figure 10.8 "Channels of Communication" summarizes two additional sets of characteristics of organizational communication—*internal and external channels* and *formal and informal channels* (Thill & Bovée, 2008). Internal communication is shared by people at all levels within a company. External communication occurs between parties inside a company and parties outside the company, such as suppliers, customers, and investors. Both internal and external forms of communication include everything from formal e-mail and official reports to face-to-face conversations and casual phone calls. External communication also takes such forms as customer and supplier Web sites, news releases, and advertising.

FORMAL	Planned communications following the company's chain of command among people inside the organization — *e-mail, memos, conference calls, reports, presentations, executive blogs*	Planned communications with people outside the organization — *letters, instant messages, reports, speeches, news releases, advertising, Web sites executive blogs*
INFORMAL	Casual communications among employees that do not follow the company's chain of command — *e-mail, instant messages, phone calls, face-to-face conversations, team blogs*	Casual communications with outsiders (e.g., suppliers, customers, investors) — *e-mail, instant messages, phone calls, face-to-face conversations, customer-support blogs*

Note that Figure 10.8 "Channels of Communication" takes the form of a grid, thus creating four dimensions in which communication can take place. Informal communication, for example, can take place either among people within the company (internally) or between insiders and outsiders (externally). By and large, though you can use the same set of tools (memos, reports, phone calls) to communicate in any of these four situations, some tools (team blogs, news releases, supplier Web sites) are useful only in one or two.

The Formal Communication Network

An organization's formal communication network consists of all communications that flow along its official lines of authority. Look again at Figure 10.7 "Formal Communication Flows". Because it incorporates the *organization chart* for Notes-4-You, it shows the company's lines of authority—what, in Chapter 6 "Managing for Business Success", we called its *reporting relationships*. Here we can see that the reporting relationships in question consist of *upward communication* from subordinates to superiors. In reporting to the operations manager, for example, the notetakers' supervisor communicates upward. Conversely, when the notetakers' manager needs to give direction to notetakers, she will use *downward communication*. If the notetakers' manager and the copiers' manager must get together to prepare a joint report for the operations manager, they'll engage in *lateral communication*. In short, an organization's formal communication network is basically the same thing as its network of reporting relationships and lines of authority (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

The Informal Communication Network

Every company also has an informal communication network (or grapevine), which goes to work whenever two or more employees get together and start talking about the company and their jobs. Informal communication can take place just about anywhere (in one person's cubicle, in the cafeteria, on the golf course) and by just about any means (phone, e-mail, instant messaging, face-to-face conversation).

Though it's sometimes called the *grapevine*, an informal network is an extremely important communication channel. Why? For the simple reason that it's typically widespread and can rarely be prevented, even if it's not officially sanctioned by the company—indeed, even when the company tries to discourage or bypass it. Unofficial information crosses virtually every boundary drawn by a firm's organization chart, reaching out and touching everyone in the organization, and what's more, it travels a lot faster than official information.

Problems with the Flow of Information through Informal Channels

The downside of "unofficial" information should be obvious. Because much of it is communicated orally, it's likely to get distorted and often degenerates into outright misinformation. Say, for example, that a rumor about layoffs gets started in your workplace. As more than one manager will verify, such rumors can do more damage than the reality. Morale may plummet and productivity won't be far behind. Valuable employees may abandon ship (needlessly, if the rumors are false) (Watson, 2003).

And imagine what can happen if informal information gets outside the organization. In the 1970s, Chicago-area McDonald's outlets found themselves fighting rumors about worms in their hamburgers. Over the years, Coca-Cola has had to fight rumors about terrorists joining its organization, subversive messages concealed in its label, and hyperacidity (false rumors that Coke causes osteoporosis and makes a good pesticide and an equally good spermicide) (Kimmel, 2004; Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

What to Do about Informal Information Flows

On the upside, savvy managers can tap into the informal network, either to find out what sort of information is influencing employee activities or to circulate more meaningful information, including new ideas as well as corrective information. In any case, managers have to deal with the grapevine, and one manager has compiled a list of suggestions for doing so effectively (McConnell, 2008):

- *Learn to live with it*. It's here to stay.
- *Tune into it*. Pay attention to the information that's circulating and try to learn something from it. Remember: The more you know about grapevine information, the better you can interact with employees (who, in turn, will probably come to regard you as someone who keeps in touch with the things that concern them).
- *Don't participate in rumors*. Resist the temptation to add your two cents' worth, and don't make matters worse.
- *Check out what you hear*. Because it's your job to replace bad information with good information, you need to find out what's really going on.
- *Take advantage of the grapevine*. Its only function is to carry information, so there's no reason why you can't pump some useful information through it.

Perhaps most importantly, when alert managers notice that the grapevine is particularly active, they tend to reach a sensible twofold conclusion:

1. The organization's formal lines of communication aren't working as well as they should be.
2. The best way to minimize informal communication and its potential damage is to provide better formal communication from the outset—or, failing that, to provide whatever formal communication will counteract misinformation as thoroughly as possible.

Let's go back to our example of a workplace overwhelmed by layoff rumors. In a practical sense, what can a manager—say, the leader of a long-term product-development team—do to provide better communication? One manager suggests at least three specific responses (Watson, 2003):

1. Go to your supervisor or another senior manager and try to find out as much as you can about the organization's real plans.
2. Ask a senior manager or a human resources representative to meet with your team and address members' concerns with accurate feedback.
3. Make it a priority to keep channels open—both between yourself and your team members and between team members and the human resources department.

Because actions of this sort send a message, they can legitimately be characterized as a form of formal communication. They also reflect good leadership: Even though the information in this case relates only indirectly to immediate team tasks, you're sharing information with people who need it, and you're demonstrating integrity (you're being honest, and you're following through on a commitment to the team).

Overcoming Barriers to Communication

What Are Barriers to Communication?

By *barriers* we mean anything that prevents people from communicating as effectively as possible. Noise, for example, can be a barrier to communication; if you and other team members are mumbling among yourselves while your team leader is trying to explain task assignments, you're putting up a barrier to group communication. As a matter of fact, you're putting up two barriers: In addition to *creating noise*, you're *failing to listen*. About 80 percent of top executives say that learning to listen is the most important skill in getting things done in the workplace (Thill & Bovée, 2008; Brownell, 2002), and as President Calvin Coolidge once remarked, "No man ever listened himself out of a job." Business people who don't listen risk offending others or misinterpreting what they're saying.

Two Types of Barriers

As for creating unnecessary verbal noise and failing to listen, we can probably chalk them up to poor communication habits (or maybe the *same* habit, for as legendary management expert Peter Drucker argues, "Listening is not a skill; it is a discipline. All you have to do is keep your mouth shut"). In the rest of this section, we'll overlook personal barriers to communication and concentrate instead on two types of barriers that are encountered by groups of people, sometimes large and sometimes small, working toward organizational goals.

Figure 10.9. Though developed to improve communication, in some cases cell phones can create a barrier. Artotem – IHOP Cell Phone Meal Family – CC BY 2.0.

Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers, which are sometimes called cultural filters, are the barriers that result from differences among people of different cultures (Kramer, 2001). As we point out in Chapter 7 "Recruiting, Motivating, and Keeping Quality Employees", experts and managers agree that cultural diversity in the workplace can and should be a significant asset: It broadens the perspectives from which groups approach problems, gives them fresh ideas, and sparks their creativity; it also gives organizations an advantage in connecting with diverse customer bases. None of these advantages, though, magically appears simply because workplace diversity increases. To the contrary: As diversity increases, so does the possibility that a group will be composed of people who have different attitudes and different ways of expressing them.

If it hasn't happened already, for example, one of these days you'll find yourself having a work-related conversation with a member of the opposite sex. If the conversation doesn't go as smoothly as you'd expected, there's a good reason: Men and women in the workplace don't communicate the same way. According to American linguist Deborah Tannen, men tend to assert their status, to exert confidence, and to regard asking questions as a sign of weakness. Women, in contrast, tend to foster positive interrelationships, to restrain expressions of confidence, and to ask questions with no trouble [15]

It really doesn't matter which "style" (if either) is better suited to making a conversation more productive. Two points, however, are clear:

1. Even if two people of the opposite sex enter a conversation with virtually identical viewpoints, their different styles of expressing themselves might very well present a barrier to their reaching an agreement. Much the same can be said of differences in style arising from other cultural filters, such as ethnicity, education, age, and experience.
2. Workplace conversations can be tricky to negotiate, yet there's no escaping them. Like life in the outside world, observes Tannen, life in the workplace "is a matter of dealing with people…and that means a series of conversations." That's also why surveys continue to show that managers regard the ability to communicate face to face as a key factor in an employee's promotability [16].

15. (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Tannen, 1995).
16. (Whetten & Cameron, 2007)

Functional Barriers

Let's return for a moment to Figure 10.7 "Formal Communication Flows". Recall that when we introduced the organizational structure of Notes-4-You in Chapter 6 "Managing for Business Success", we characterized it as a *functional organization*—one that groups together people who have comparable skills and perform similar tasks. Note, however, that in setting up this form of organization for our hypothetical company, we found it necessary to insert two layers of management (four functional managers and two job supervisors) between our owner/president and our lowest-level employees. In this respect, our structure shares certain characteristics with another form of organization—*divisional*, which groups people into units that are more or less self-contained and that are largely accountable for their own performance.

What does all this have to do with barriers to communication? Simply this: The more "divisionalized" an organization becomes, the more likely it will be to encounter communication barriers. Not surprisingly, communication gets more complicated, for the same reason that an organization comes to rely on more levels of management (George & Jones, 2008). Notes-4-You, for instance, needs two supervisors because its notetakers don't do the same work as its copiers. In addition, because their groups don't perform the same work, the two supervisors don't call on the same resources from the company's four functional managers. (Likewise, Notes-4-You also has four functional-area managers because none of them does the same work as any of the others.)

Officially, then, the operations of the two work groups remain distinct or specialized. At the same time, each group must contribute to the company-wide effort to achieve common goals. Moreover, certain organizational projects, like Motorola's cell phone project, may require the two groups to work together more closely than usual. When that happens, employees from each of the two groups may find themselves working together on the same team, but even so, one crucial fact remains: Information that one group possesses and the other doesn't must still be exchanged among team members. It may not be quite as apparent as the *cultural diversity*among men and women in many workplace situations, but there is in fact a *functional diversity*at Notes-4-You among notetakers and copiers (Tsui & Gutek, 1999).

Figure 10.10 "Functional Barriers to Communication" illustrates the location of barriers that may be present when a team-based project must deal with a certain degree of functional diversity. As you can see, we've modeled our process on the process of the Motorola ultratrim phone project (Russell & Taylor, 2005). We don't need to describe the entire process in detail, but we will focus on two aspects of it that we've highlighted in the drawing:

1. The company has assigned team members from different functional areas, notably marketing and operations (which, as at Motorola, includes design, engineering, and production).
2. Information (which we've characterized as different types of "specs") must be transferred from function to function, and at the key points where this occurs, we've built in communication barriers (symbolized by brick walls).

If, for example, marketing specs called for the new Motorola phone to change colors with the user's mood, someone in engineering might have to explain the difficulties in designing the software. If design specs called for quadraphonic sound, production might have to explain the difficulties in procuring sufficiently lightweight speaker components.

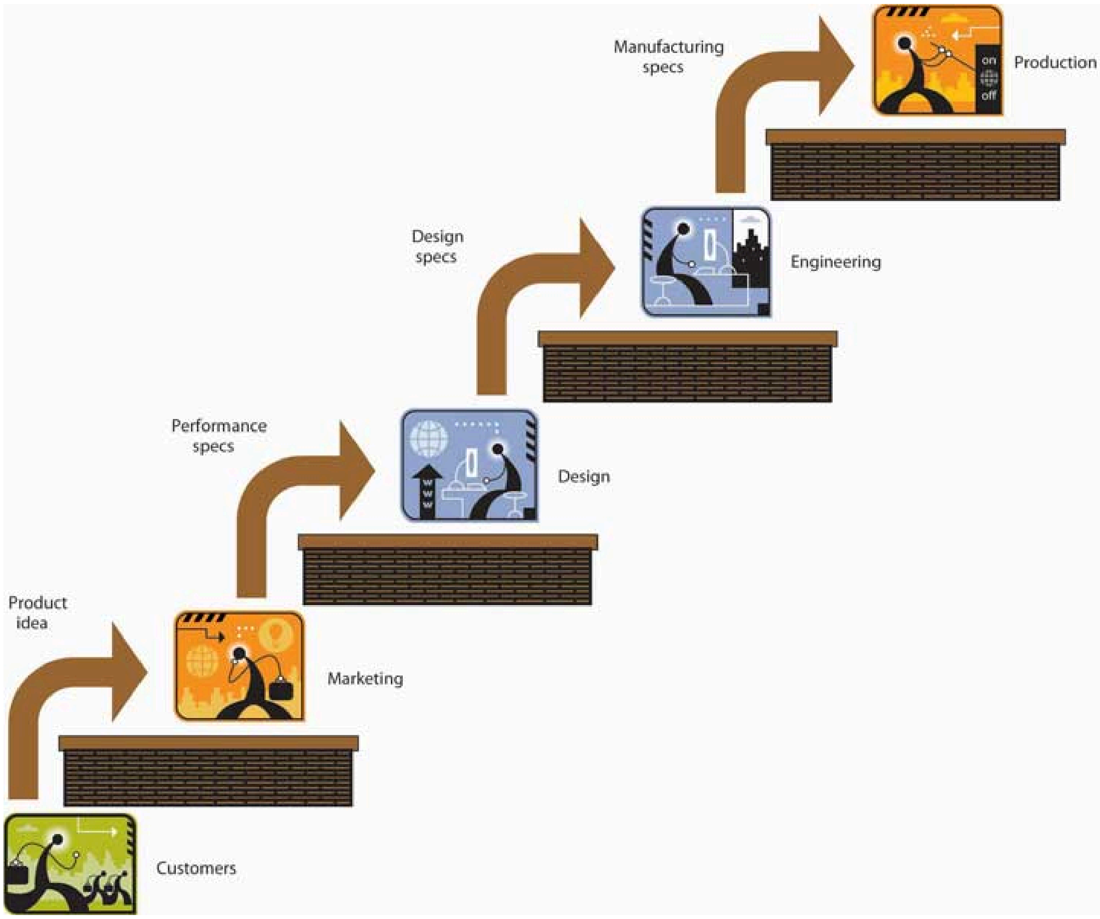


Figure 10.10 Functional Barriers to Communication

Each technical problem—each problem that arises because of differences in team members' knowledge and expertise—becomes a problem in communication. In addition, communicating as a member of a team obviously requires much more than explaining the limitations of someone else's professional expertise. Once they've surfaced, technical and other problems have to be resolved—a process that will inevitably require even more communication. As we've seen in this part of the chapter, improving communication is a top priority for most organizations (for one thing, developing a team-based environment is otherwise impossible), and the ongoing task of improving communication is pretty much the same thing as the ongoing task of overcoming barriers to it.

Key Takeaways

- In a typical organizational setting, *communication flows* may take three directions:
  1. Downward communication flows from higher organizational levels (supervisors) to lower organizational levels (subordinates).
  2. Upward communication flows from lower to higher organizational levels.
  3. Lateral (or horizontal) communication flows across the organization, among personnel on the same level.

- Organizational communication flows through two different *channels*. Internal communication is shared by people at all levels within a company. External communication occurs between parties inside a company and parties outside the company, such as suppliers, customers, and investors.
- Organizational communication also flows through two different *networks*. Its formal communication network consists of all communications that flow along an organization's official lines of authority. The informal communication network, sometimes called the *grapevine*, goes to work whenever two or more employees get together and start talking about the company and their jobs.
- *Barriers to communication* include anything that prevents people from communicating as effectively as possible. Among groups, two types of barriers are common. *Cultural barriers*, sometimes called *cultural filters*, are the barriers that result from differences among people of different cultures. *Functional barriers*arise when communication must flow among individuals or groups who work in different functional areas of an organization.

Exercise

(AACSB) Analysis

Write three messages (you decide which communication channel to use):

1. To a coworker asking her for a report on this quarter's sales for your division
2. To your manager telling him what the sales were for the quarter and whether sales improved (or got worse), and why
3. To the vice president of the company recommending a new system for tracking sales in your division.

10.6 Forms of Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the do's and don'ts of business e-mails.
2. Describe the process followed to create and deliver successful presentations.
3. Learn how to write clear, concise memos.

As mentioned previously, the College Board identified these communication skills as "frequently" or "almost always" necessary in the workplace (College Board, 2004): e-mail, presentation with visuals, technical reports, formal reports, memos, and presentations without visuals. The skill ranked highest in importance was the use of e-mails, including the ability to adapt messages to different receivers or compose persuasive messages when necessary. The ability to make presentations (with visuals) ranked second in importance. Report writing came next. Given the complexity of report writing, we will not cover this topic here. Instead, we will look at the remaining three forms of communication: e-mail, presentations with visuals, and memos.

Tips for Writing Business E-Mails

Dennis Jerz and Jessica Bauer created the following list of the top 10 tips for writing effective e-mail messages (Jerz & Bauer, 2011):

1. *Write a meaningful subject line.* Recipients use the subject line to decide whether to open or delete a message and sometimes where to store it. Write a subject line that describes the content.
2. *Keep the message focused.* Avoid including multiple messages or requests in one e-mail. Try to focus on only one topic. Use standard capitalization and spelling; none of this "thx 4 ur help 2day ur gr8."
3. *Avoid attachments.* Extract the relevant text from a large file and ask the recipient if he or she wants to see the full document.
4. *Identify yourself clearly. Identify yourself in the first few lines*—otherwise your message might be deleted quickly.
5. *Be kind. Don't flame.* Avoid writing e-mails when you are upset. Always think before you hit the "send" button. Once it's gone, you can't get it back. If you're mad, write the e-mail, but don't send it. Keep it in your "save" or "draft" folder and reread it the next day.
6. *Proofread.* Use spell check and read the memo carefully before sending it.
7. *Don't assume privacy.* Don't send anything you wouldn't want posted on the office bulletin board (with your name on it). Remember, employers can read your e-mails!
8. *Distinguish between formal and informal situations*. When writing to a coworker with whom you are friends, you can be less formal than when you are writing to your manager or a client.
9. *Respond promptly*. Get back quickly to the person who sent you the e-mail. If you're too busy to answer, let the person know you got the message and will respond as soon as you can.
10. *Show respect and restraint*. Watch out: Don't use the "reply to all" button in error. Don't forward an e-mail before getting permission from the sender.

Planning, Preparing, Practicing, and Presenting

For some, the thought of making a presentation is traumatic. If you're one of those people, the best way to get over your fear is to get up and make a presentation. With time, it will get easier, and you might even start enjoying it. As you progress through college, you will have a number of opportunities to make presentations. This is good news—it gives you practice, lets you make your mistakes in a protected environment (before you hit the business world), and allows you to get fairly good at it. Your opportunities to talk in front of a group will multiply once you enter the business world. Throughout your business career, you'll likely be called on to present reports, address groups at all levels in the organization, represent your company at various events, run committee meetings, lead teams, or make a sales pitch (Barada, 2011). In preparing and delivering your presentation, you can follow a four-step process (plan, prepare, practice, and present) designed by Dale Carnegie, a global training company named after its famed founder (Carnegie, 2011).

Plan

Plan your presentation based on your purpose and the knowledge level and interest of your audience. Use words and concepts your audience can understand, and stay focused. If your audience is knowledgeable about your topic, you can skim over the generalities and delve into the details. On the other hand, if the topic is new to them, you need to move through it slowly. As you plan your presentation, ask yourself these questions: What am I trying to accomplish? Am I trying to educate, inform, motivate, or persuade my audience? What does my audience know about the topic? What do I want them to know? How can I best convey this information to them?

Prepare

Once you have planned your presentation, you're ready to prepare. It might be easier to write your presentation if you divide it into three sections: opening, body, close. Your opening should grab your audience's attention. You can do this by asking a question, telling a relevant story, or even announcing a surprising piece of information. About 5 to 10 percent of your time can be spent on the opening. The body covers the bulk of the material and consumes about 80 to 85 percent of your time. Cover your key points, stay focused, but do not overload your audience. It has been found that an audience can absorb only about four to six points. Your close, which uses about 5 to 10 percent of your time, should leave the audience with a positive impression of you and your presentation. You have lots of choices for your close: You can either summarize your message or relate your closing remarks to your opening remarks or do both.

Practice

This section should really be called "Practice, Practice, Practice" (and maybe another Practice for emphasis). The saying "practice makes perfect" is definitely true with presentations, especially for beginners. You might want to start off practicing your presentation by yourself, perhaps in front of a mirror. You could even videotape yourself and play it back (that should be fun). As you get the hang of it, ask a friend or a group of friends to listen to and critique your talk. When you rehearse, check your time to see whether it's what you want. Avoid memorizing your talk, but know it well.

Present

Figure 10.11. Preparation is key to a successful presentation. NASA Goddard Space Flight Center – Earth Day Presentation – CC BY 2.0.

Now you're ready for the big day—it's time to present. Dress for the part—if it's a professional talk, dress like a professional. Go early to the location where you'll present, check out the room, and be sure any equipment you'll need is there and works. Try to connect with your audience as soon as you start your presentation. Take your time delivering your opening. Act as natural as you can, and try to relax. Slow your speech down, as you'll likely have a tendency to speed up if you get nervous. Pause before and after your main point for emphasis. If you put brief notes on index cards, avoid reading from the cards. Glance down at them when needed, but then look up at your audience as you speak. Involve your audience in your presentation by asking them questions. Not only will they feel included, but it will help you relax. When you're close to finishing, let your audience know this (but don't announce it too early in the talk or your audience might start packing up prematurely). Remember to leave some time for questions and answers.

Visual Aids

It's very common to use visual aids (generally PowerPoint slides) in business presentations. The use of visual aids helps your audience remember your main points and keeps you focused. If you do use PowerPoint slides, follow some simple (but important) rules (Iasted, 2011):

- Avoid wordiness: use key words and phrases only.
- Don't crowd your slide: include at most four to five points per slide.
- Use at least an eighteen-point font (so that it can be seen from the back of the room).
- Use a color font that contrasts with the background (for example, blue font on white background).
- Use graphs rather than just words.
- Proof your slides and use spell check.

And most important: The PowerPoint slides are background, but you are the show. Avoid turning around and reading the slides. The audience wants to see *you* talk; they are not interested in seeing the back of your head.

How to Write an Effective Memo

Memos are effective at conveying fairly detailed information. To help you understand how to write a memo, read the following sample memorandum.

Memorandum

TO
FROM
DATE
RE

As college students, you'll be expected to analyze real-world situations, research issues, form opinions, and provide support for the conclusions that you reach. In addition to engaging in classroom discussions of business issues, you'll be asked to complete a number of written assignments. For these assignments, we'll give you a business situation and ask you to analyze the issues, form conclusions, and provide support for your opinions.

In each assignment, you'll use the *memo format*, which is the typical form of written communication used in business. Writing in memo format means providing a *complete but concise response* to the issues at hand. Good memo writing demands time and effort. Because the business world expects you to possess this skill, we want to give you an opportunity to learn it now.

Guidelines

Here are a few helpful hints to get you started on the right track:

- The format should follow the format of this memo. Note the guide headings—"TO," "FROM," "DATE," and "RE" (which, by the way, stands for "regarding" or "reference"). We also include a line across the page to signal the beginning of the body of the memo.

- Keep paragraphs short and to the point. The trick is being concise yet complete—summarizing effectively. Paragraphs should be single-spaced, flush against the left margin, and separated by a single blank line.
- Accent or highlight major points. Use underlining, bullets, or bold type for desired effect (taking care not to overdo it).
- Use *short* headings to distinguish and highlight vital information. Headings keep things organized, provide structure, and make for smooth reading. Headings (and, as appropriate, subheadings) are an absolute *must*.
- Your title (the "Re" line) should reflect the contents of your memo: It should let the reader know why he or she should read it. Keep the title short—a phrase of a few words, not a sentence.
- Be persuasive and convincing in your narrative. You have limited space in which to get your key points across. State your positions clearly. And again, be concise (a memo is not a term paper).
- If you have any additional information in the form of exhibits—charts, tables, illustrations, and so forth—put them in an attachment. Label each item "Exhibit 1," "Exhibit 2," and the like. Give each one a title, and be sure to reference them in your narrative ("As shown in Exhibit 1, the annual growth rate in sales has dropped from double-digit to single-digit levels").
- Finally, *staple* multiple pages for submission. Needless to say, be sure to proofread for correct spelling and punctuation. Don't scribble in changes by hand: They're sloppy and leave a bad impression.

Final Comment

Now that you've read our memo, we expect you to follow the simple guidelines presented in it. This form of communication is widely practiced in business, so take advantage of this opportunity to practice your memo-writing skills.

Nonverbal Communication

Sometimes it's not what you say or how you say it that matters, but what your body language communicates about you and how you feel. When a good friend who's in a bad mood walks into a room, you don't need to hear a word from her to know she's having an awful day. You can read her expression. In doing this, you're picking up on her nonverbal communication—"nonword" messages communicated through facial expressions, posture, gestures, and tone of voice. People give off nonverbal cues all the time. So what effect do these cues have in the business setting? Quite a bit—these cues are often better at telling you what's on a person's mind than what the person actually says. If an employee is meeting with his supervisor and frowns when she makes a statement, the supervisor will conclude that he disapproved of the statement (regardless of what he claims). If two employees are discussing a work-related problem and one starts to fidget, the other will pick this up as disinterest.

Given the possible negative effect that nonverbal cues can have in business situations, how can you improve your body language? The best approach is to become aware of any nonverbal cues you give out, and then work to eliminate them. For example, if you have a habit of frowning when you disapprove of something, recognize this and stop doing it. If the tone of your voice changes when you are angry, try to maintain your voice at a lower pitch.

Key Takeaways

Here are ten tips for writing an e-mail:

1. Write a meaningful subject line.

2. Keep the message focused and readable.
3. Avoid attachments.
4. Identify yourself clearly in the first few lines.
5. Be kind. Don't flame. Always think before hitting the "send" button.
6. Proofread.
7. Don't assume privacy.
8. Distinguish between formal and informal situations.
9. Respond promptly.
10. Show respect and restraint.

- In preparing and delivering your presentation, you can follow a four-step process: plan, prepare, practice and present.
- You should plan your presentation based on your purpose and the knowledge level and interest of your audience.
- In preparing your presentation, it helps to divide it into three sections: opening, body and close.

1. Your opening, which uses about 5–10 percent of your time, should grab your audience's attention.
2. The body covers your main points and uses about 80 to 85 percent of your time.
3. Your close, which uses about 5 to 10 percent of your time, should leave the audience with a positive impression of you and your presentation.

- The saying "practice makes perfect" is definitely true when giving presentations (especially for beginners).
- When you present, dress professionally, connect with your audience, try to relax and pause before and after your main points for emphasis.

1. Visual aids, such as PowerPoint slides, can aid your presentation if they are used properly.

- Memos are effective at conveying fairly detailed information. Here are some tips:

1. Keep paragraphs short and to the point.
2. Accent or highlight major points.
3. Use short headings.
4. Your title should reflect the contents of your memo.
5. Be persuasive and convincing in your narrative.

Exercise

(AACSB) Reflection

1. Ask a friend or a family member to tell you which nonverbal cues you frequently transmit. Identify those that would be detrimental to you in a business situation. Indicate how you could eliminate or reduce the impact of these cues. Ask the same person (or someone else) whether you are a good listener. If the answer is no, indicate how you could improve your listening skills.
2. Prepare a presentation on "planning, preparing, practicing, and presenting." Divide your presentation into three parts: opening, body, and closing. Prepare visual aids. Pretend that your audience is made up of recent college graduates hired by Nike.

10.7 Cases and Problems

Learning on the Web (AACSB)

Factors Contributing to Nike's Success

This writing assignment solicits your opinion on factors contributing to Nike's success. To complete it, you should go to http://www.nikebiz.com/company_overview/timeline to learn about Nike's history by reviewing the company's time line.

Memo Format

Use the memo format described in the chapter for this assignment. Your memo should not exceed two pages. It should be single spaced (with an extra space between paragraphs and bulleted items).

Scenario

You're one of the fortunate college students selected to participate in Nike's summer internship program. The program is quite competitive, and you still can't believe that you were chosen. You arrived in Beaverton, Oregon, yesterday morning and have been busy ever since. Last night, you attended a dinner for new interns where you were welcomed to Nike by CEO Mark Parker.

You were lucky to be sitting next to a personable, well-informed Nike veteran named Simon Pestridge. Pestridge joined Nike about twelve years ago. He was telling you about a past assignment he had as director of marketing for Australia. (You were impressed with his status at Nike, not just because he doesn't look much older than you, but also because you've always wanted to travel to Australia.) The dinner conversation turned to a discussion of the reasons for Nike's success. Others at the table were giving their opinions on the subject when Pestridge turned to you and said, "As a new intern, give us an outsider's point of view. Why do you think Nike's been so successful?" You were about to venture an opinion when Pestridge was called away for a phone call. As he got up, however, he quickly said, "Send me a memo telling me what factors you think have contributed to Nike's success. Keep it simple. Three factors are plenty." Though you were relieved to have a little time to think about your answer, you were also a bit nervous about the prospect of writing your first official memo.

As everyone else headed for the Bo Jackson gym, you went back to your room to think about Pestridge's question and to figure out how to go about writing your memo. You want to be sure to start by telling him that you enjoyed talking with him. You also need to remind him that you're responding to his question about three factors in Nike's success, and must be sure to explain why you believe they're important. You'll end by saying that you hope the information is helpful and that he can contact you if he has any further questions.

So far, so good, but you're still faced with the toughest part of your task—identifying the three factors that you deem important to Nike's success. Fortunately, even at Nike there's always tomorrow to get something done, so you decide to sleep on it and write your memo in the morning.

Ethics Angle (AACSB)

The Goof-Off

You and three other students have been working on a group project all semester in your Introduction to Business class. One of the members of the team did very little work; he failed to attend almost all the meetings, took no responsibility for any of the tasks, didn't attend the practice session before your presentation, and in general was a real goof-off. But he happens to be friends with two of the team members. You and your other team members have been asked to complete the attached team member evaluation. You want to give the student what he deserves—almost no credit. But your other two team members don't agree. They argue that it is "unsocial and mean" to tell the truth about this student's lack of contribution. Instead, they want to report that everyone shared the work equally. The evaluation will be used in determining grades for each team member. Those who contributed more will get a higher grade than those who did not. Prepare an argument that you can advance to the other team members on the ethics of covering for this student. Assuming that your two teammates won't change their minds, what would you do?

Attachment to Ethics Angle Problem

Introduction to Business

Team Member Evaluation

(To be given to your faculty member during the last week of class)

TEAM ____________________

You have a total of $100,000. You can use this to reward your team members (including yourself) for their contributions to the team project.

Fill in each team member's name below (including your own), and show beside each name how much of the $100,000 you would give that member for his or her contributions to the preparation and presentation of the team project. Do not share your recommendations with your team members.

Your recommendations will be confidential.

Team Members (including yourself)	**Amount to be given for efforts on team project**
___________________________________	$________________________
___________________________________	$________________________
___________________________________	$________________________
___________________________________	$________________________
___________________________________	$________________________
___________________________________	$________________________
TOTAL (MUST EQUAL $100,000)	$________________________

YOUR NAME ____

Team-Building Skills (AACSB)

Team Skills and Talents

Team projects involve a number of tasks that are handled by individual team members. These tasks should be assigned to team members based on their particular skills and talents. The next time you work on a team project, you should use the following table to help your team organize its tasks and hold its members responsible for their completion.

Here is how you should use this document:

1. Identify all tasks to be completed.
2. Assign each task to a member (or members) of your team based on their skills, talents, and time available.
3. Determine a due date for each task.
4. As a task is completed, indicate its completion date and the team member (or members) who completed the task. If more than one team member works on the assignment, indicate the percentage of time each devoted to the task. You can add tasks that surface as your team works its way through the project.
5. If the assigned person fails to complete the task, or submits poor quality work, add a note to the report explaining what happened and how the situation was corrected (for example, another team member had to redo the task).
6. Submit the completed form (with all columns completed) to your faculty member at the class after your team project is due. Include a cover sheet with your team's name (or number) and the name of each team member.

Tasks to Be Completed	Initials of Team Member(s) Who Will Complete Task	Date to Be Completed	Date Completed	Initials of Team Member(s) Who Completed Task (Add a Note Below the Table Explaining Any Problems with Completion or Quality of Work)
________	________	________	________	________
________	________	________	________	________
________	________	________	________	________
________	________	________	________	________
________	________	________	________	________

The Global View (AACSB)

A Multicultural Virtual Team

You work for Nike, a global company. You just learned that you were assigned to a virtual team whose mission is to assess the feasibility of Nike's making an inexpensive shoe that can be sold in Brazil. The team consists of twelve members. Three of the members work in the United States (two in Beaverton, Oregon, and one in New York City). Two work in England, two in China, two in India, and three in Brazil. All are Nike employees and all were born in the country in which they work. All speak English, though some speak it better than others. What challenges do you anticipate the team will face because of its multicultural makeup?. How could these challenges be overcome?

UNIT 11 THE PRESENTATION

11.1 Nonverbal Delivery

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

But behavior in the human being is sometimes a defense, a way of concealing motives and thoughts. –Abraham Maslow

Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true.–Charles Dickens

Getting Started

Introductory Exercises

- It's not just what you say but how you say it. Choose a speech to watch. Examples may include famous speeches by historical figures like Martin Luther King Jr. or Winston Churchill, current elected officials, or perhaps candidates for local and state office that may be televised. Other examples could be from a poetry slam, a rap performance, or a movie. Watch the presentation without sound and see what you observe. Does the speaker seem comfortable and confident? Aggressive or timid? If possible, repeat the speech a second time with the sound on. Do your perceptions change? What patterns do you observe?
- Invasion of space. When someone "invades" your space, how do you feel? Threatened, surprised, interested, or repulsed? We can learn a lot from each other as we come to be more aware of the normative space expectations and boundaries. Set aside ten minutes where you can "people watch" in a public setting. Make a conscious effort to notice how far apart they stand from people they communicate. Record your results. Your best estimate is fine and there is no need to interrupt people, just watch and record. Consider noting if they are male or female, or focus only on same-sex conversations. When you have approximate distances for at least twenty conversations or ten minutes have passed, add up the results and look for a pattern. Compare your findings with those of a classmate.

In the first of the Note 11.1 "Introductory Exercises" for this chapter, we focus on how a speaker presents ideas, not the ideas themselves. Have you ever been in class and found it hard to listen to the professor, not because he or she wasn't well informed or the topic wasn't interesting or important to you, but because the style of presentation didn't engage you as a listener? If your answer is yes, then you know that you want to avoid making the same mistake when you give a presentation. It's not always what you say, but how you say it that makes a difference. We sometimes call this "body language," or "nonverbal communication," and it is a key aspect of effective business communication.

How do you know when your boss or instructors are pleased with your progress (or not)? You might know from the smiles on their faces, from the time and attention they give you, or perhaps in other nonverbal ways, like a raise, a bonus, or a good grade. Whether the interaction takes place face-to-face, or at a distance, you can still experience and interpret nonverbal responses.

Sometimes we place more emphasis on nonverbal aspects of communication that they warrant. Suppose you have just gotten home from your first date with Amanda and you feel it went very well. How soon should afterward should you call Amanda? There are lots of advice columns, informal rules and customs, and friends with opinions to offer you suggestions, but you know what is right for you. You also know that texting her at five o'clock the next morning might be a bit early. You may choose to wait until a coffee break around 10 a.m. to send a short text message, and realize that you might not get a response until later that afternoon.

Does the lack of an immediate response have any meaning? Does it mean Amanda is less interested in you than you are in her? While you might give it more attention than it deserves, and maybe let it weigh on your mind and distract you from other tasks, the time interval for responding may not have as much intentional meaning as you think. It might mean that Amanda has a different sense of time urgency than you do, or that she simply didn't receive your message until later.

Timing is an important aspect of nonverbal communication, but trying to understand what a single example of timing means is challenging. Context may make a difference. For example, if you have known someone for years who has always responded promptly to your e-mails or texts, but now that person hasn't responded in over a day, you may have reason for concern. That person's behavior doesn't match what you are familiar with, and this sudden, unexplained change in the established pattern may mean that you need to follow up.

11.2 Principles of Nonverbal Communication

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate nonverbal communication and describe its role in the communication process.
- Understand and explain the principles of nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal Communication Is Fluid

Chances are you have had many experiences where words were misunderstood, or where the meaning of words was unclear. When it comes to nonverbal communication, meaning is even harder to discern. We can sometimes tell what people are communicating through their nonverbal communication, but there is no foolproof "dictionary" of how to interpret nonverbal messages. Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without the use of words. It can include gestures and facial expressions, tone of voice, timing, posture and where you stand as you communicate. It can help or hinder the clear understanding of your message, but it doesn't reveal (and can even mask) what you are really thinking. Nonverbal communication is far from simple, and its complexity makes our study and our understanding a worthy but challenging goal.

Where does a wink start and a nod end? Nonverbal communication involves the entire body, the space it occupies and dominates, the time it interacts, and not only what is not said, but how it is not said. Confused? Try to focus on just one element of nonverbal communication and it will soon get lost among all the other stimuli. Let's consider eye contact. What does it mean by itself without context, chin position, or eyebrows to flag interest or signal a threat? Nonverbal action flows almost seamlessly from one to the next, making it a challenge to interpret one element, or even a series of elements.

We perceive time as linear, flowing along in a straight line. We did one task, we're doing another task now, and we are planning on doing something else all the time. Sometimes we place more emphasis on the future, or the past, forgetting that we are actually living in the present moment whether we focus on "the now" or not. Nonverbal communication is always in motion, as long as we are, and is never the same twice.

Nonverbal communication is irreversible. In written communication, you can write a clarification, correction, or retraction. While it never makes the original statement go completely away, it does allow for correction. Unlike written communication, oral communication may allow "do-overs" on the spot: you can explain and restate, hoping to clarify your point. You can also dig the hole you are in just a little bit deeper. The old sayings "when you find yourself in a hole, stop digging" and "open mouth, insert foot" can sometimes apply to oral communications. We've all said something we would give anything to take back, but we all know we can't. Oral communication, like written communication, allows for some correction, but it still doesn't erase the original message or its impact. Nonverbal communication takes it one step further. You can't separate one nonverbal action from the context of all the other verbal and nonverbal communication acts, and you can't take it back.

In a speech, nonverbal communication is continuous in the sense that it is always occurring, and because it is so fluid, it can be hard to determine where one nonverbal message starts and another stops. Words can be easily identified and isolated, but if we try to single out a speaker's gestures, smile, or stance without looking at how they all come together in context, we may miss the point and draw the wrong conclusion. You need to be conscious of this aspect of public speaking because, to quote another old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." This is true in the sense that people often pay more attention to your nonverbal expressions more than your words. As a result, nonverbal communication is a powerful way to contribute to (or detract from) your success in communicating your message to the audience.

Nonverbal Communication Is Fast

Let's pretend you are at your computer at work. You see that an e-mail has arrived, but you are right in the middle of tallying a spreadsheet whose numbers just don't add up. You see that the e-mail is from a coworker and you click on it. The subject line reads "pink slips." You could interpret this to mean a suggestion for a Halloween costume, or a challenge to race for each other's car ownership, but in the context of the workplace you may assume it means layoffs.

Your emotional response is immediate. If the author of the e-mail could see your face, they would know that your response was one of disbelief and frustration, even anger, all via your nonverbal communication. Yes, when a tree falls in the forest it makes a sound, even if no one is there to hear it. In the same way, you express yourself via nonverbal communication all the time without much conscious thought at all. You may think about how to share the news with your partner, and try to display a smile and a sense of calm when you feel like anything but smiling.

Nonverbal communication gives our thoughts and feelings away before we are even aware of what we are thinking or how we feel. People may see and hear more than you ever anticipated. Your nonverbal communication includes both intentional and unintentional messages, but since it all happens so fast, the unintentional ones can contradict what you know you are supposed to say or how you are supposed to react.

Nonverbal Communication Can Add to or Replace Verbal Communication

People tend to pay more attention to how you say it than what you actually say. In presenting a speech this is particularly true. We communicate nonverbally more than we engage in verbal communication, and often use nonverbal expressions to add to, or even replace, words we might otherwise say. We use a nonverbal gesture called an illustrator to communicate our message effectively and reinforce our point. Your coworker Andrew may ask you, "Barney's Bar after work?" as he walks by, and you simply nod and say "yeah." Andrew may respond with a nonverbal gesture, called an emblem, by signaling with the "OK" sign as he walks away.

In addition to illustrators or emblematic nonverbal communication, we also use regulators. "Regulators are nonverbal messages which control, maintain or discourage interaction" [1]. For example, if someone is telling you a message that is confusing or upsetting, you may hold up your hand, a commonly recognized regulator that asks the speaker to stop talking.

Let's say you are in a meeting presenting a speech that introduces your company's latest product. If your audience members nod their heads in agreement on important points and maintain good eye contact, it is a good sign. Nonverbally, they are using regulators encouraging you to continue with your presentation. In contrast, if they look away, tap their feet, and begin drawing in the margins of their notebook, these are regulators suggesting that you better think of a way to regain their interest or else wrap up your presentation quickly.

"Affect displays are nonverbal communication that express emotions or feelings" [2]. An affect display that might accompany holding up your hand for silence would be to frown and shake your head from side to side. When you and Andrew are at Barney's Bar, smiling and waving at coworkers who arrive lets them know where you are seated and welcomes them.

Combing your hair would be an example of a purposeful action, unlike a self-adaptive behavior.

Figure 11.1. Matthew – I Hate Bad Hair Days – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

"Adaptors are displays of nonverbal communication that help you adapt to your environment and each context, helping you feel comfortable and secure"[3]. A self-adaptor involves you meeting your need for security, by playing with your hair for example, by adapting something about yourself in way for which it was not designed or for no apparent purpose. Combing your hair would be an example of a purposeful action, unlike a self-adaptive behavior. An object-adaptor involves the use of an object in a way for which it was not designed. You may see audience members tapping their pencils, chewing on them, or playing with them, while ignoring you and your presentation. Or perhaps someone pulls out a comb and repeatedly rubs a thumbnail against the comb's teeth. They are using the comb or the pencil in a way other than its intended design, an object-adaptor that communicates a lack of engagement or enthusiasm in your speech.

Intentional nonverbal communication can complement, repeat, replace, mask, or contradict what we say. When Andrew invited you to Barney's, you said, "Yeah" and nodded, complementing and repeating the message. You could have simply nodded, effectively replacing the "yes" with a nonverbal response. You could also have decided to say no, but did not want to hurt Andrew's feelings. Shaking your head "no" while pointing to your watch, communicating work and time issues, may mask your real thoughts or feelings. Masking involves the substitution of appropriate nonverbal communication for nonverbal communication you may want to display[4]. Finally, nonverbal messages that conflict with verbal communication can confuse the listener. Table 11.1 "Some Nonverbal Expressions" summarizes these concepts.

1. (McLean, S., 2003)
2. (McLean, S., 2003)
3. (McLean, S., 2003)
4. (McLean, S., 2003)

Table 11.1 Some Nonverbal Expressions

Term	Definition
Adaptors	Help us feel comfortable or indicate emotions or moods
Affect Displays	Express emotions or feelings
Complementing	Reinforcing verbal communication
Contradicting	Contradicting verbal communication
Emblems	Nonverbal gestures that carry a specific meaning, and can replace or reinforce words
Illustrators	Reinforce a verbal message
Masking	Substituting more appropriate displays for less appropriate displays
Object-Adaptors	Using an object for a purpose other than its intended design
Regulators	Control, encourage or discourage interaction
Repeating	Repeating verbal communication
Replacing	Replacing verbal communication
Self-Adaptors	Adapting something about yourself in a way for which it was not designed or for no apparent purpose

Nonverbal Communication Is Universal

Consider the many contexts in which interaction occurs during your day. In the morning, at work, after work, at home, with friends, with family, and our list could go on for quite awhile. Now consider the differences in nonverbal communication across these many contexts. When you are at work, do you jump up and down and say whatever you want? Why or why not? You may not engage in that behavior because of expectations at work, but the fact remains that from the moment you wake until you sleep, you are surrounded by nonverbal communication.

If you had been born in a different country, to different parents, and perhaps as a member of the opposite sex, your whole world would be quite different. Yet nonverbal communication would remain a universal constant. It may not look the same, or get used in the same way, but it will still be nonverbal communication in its many functions and displays.

Nonverbal Communication Is Confusing and Contextual

Nonverbal communication can be confusing. We need contextual clues to help us understand, or begin to understand, what a movement, gesture, or lack of display means. Then we have to figure it all out based on our prior knowledge (or lack thereof) of the person and hope to get it right. Talk about a challenge. Nonverbal communication is everywhere, and we all use it, but that doesn't make it simple or independent of when, where, why, or how we communicate.

Nonverbal Communication Can Be Intentional or Unintentional

Suppose you are working as a salesclerk in a retail store, and a customer communicated frustration to you. Would the nonverbal aspects of your response be intentional or unintentional? Your job is to be pleasant and courteous at all times, yet your wrinkled eyebrows or wide eyes may have been unintentional. They clearly communicate your negative feelings at that moment. Restating your wish to be helpful and displaying nonverbal gestures may communicate "no big deal," but the stress of the moment is still "written" on your face.

Can we tell when people are intentionally or unintentionally communicating nonverbally? Ask ten people this question and compare their responses. You may be surprised. It is clearly a challenge to understand nonverbal communication in action. We often assign intentional motives to nonverbal communication when in fact their display is unintentional, and often hard to interpret.

Nonverbal Messages Communicate Feelings and Attitudes

Steven Beebe, Susan Beebe, and Mark Redmond offer us three additional principals of interpersonal nonverbal communication that serve our discussion. One is that you often react faster than you think. Your nonverbal responses communicate your initial reaction before you can process it through language or formulate an appropriate response. If your appropriate, spoken response doesn't match your nonverbal reaction, you may give away your true feelings and attitudes (Beebe, S., Beebe, S., and Redmond, M., 2002).

Albert Mehrabian asserts that we rarely communicate emotional messages through the spoken word. According to Mehrabian, 93 percent of the time we communicate our emotions nonverbally, with at least 55 percent associated with facial gestures. Vocal cues, body position and movement, and normative space between speaker and receiver can also be clues to feelings and attitudes (Mehrabian, A., 1972).

Is your first emotional response always an accurate and true representation of your feelings and attitudes, or does your emotional response change across time? We are all changing all the time, and sometimes a moment of frustration or a flash of anger can signal to the receiver a feeling or emotion that existed for a moment, but has since passed. Their response to your communication will be based on that perception, even though you might already be over the issue. This is where the spoken word serves us well. You may need to articulate clearly that you were frustrated, but not anymore. The words spoken out loud can serve to clarify and invite additional discussion.

We Believe Nonverbal Communication More than Verbal

Building on the example of responding to a situation with facial gestures associated with frustration before you even have time to think of an appropriate verbal response, let's ask the question: what would you believe, someone's actions or their words? According to William Seiler and Melissa Beall, most people tend to believe the nonverbal message over the verbal message. People will often answer that "actions speak louder than words" and place a disproportionate emphasis on the nonverbal response (Seiler W., and Beall, M., 2000). Humans aren't logical all the time, and they do experience feelings and attitudes that change. Still, we place more confidence in nonverbal communication, particularly when it comes to lying behaviors. According to Miron Zuckerman, Bella DePaulo, and Robert Rosenthal, there are several behaviors people often display when they are being deceptive [5]:

- Reduction in eye contact while engaged in a conversation
- Awkward pauses in conversation
- Higher pitch in voice
- Deliberate pronunciation and articulation of words
- Increased delay in response time to a question
- Increased body movements like changes in posture
- Decreased smiling

5. (Zuckerman, M., DePaulo, B., and Rosenthal, R., 1981)

- Decreased rate of speech

If you notice one of more of the behaviors, you may want to take a closer look. Over time we learn people's patterns of speech and behavior, and form a set of expectations. Variation from their established patterns, combined with the clues above, can serve to alert you to the possibility that something deserves closer attention.

Our nonverbal responses have a connection to our physiological responses to stress, such as heart rate, blood pressure, and skin conductivity. Polygraph machines (popularly referred to as "lie detectors") focus on these physiological responses and demonstrate anomalies, or variations. While movies and TV crime shows may make polygraphs look foolproof, there is significant debate about whether they measure dishonesty with any degree of accuracy.

Can you train yourself to detect lies? It is unlikely. Our purpose in studying nonverbal communication is not to uncover dishonesty in others, but rather to help you understand how to use the nonverbal aspects of communication to increase understanding.

Nonverbal Communication Is Key in the Speaker/Audience Relationship

When we first see each other, before anyone says a word, we are already sizing each other up. Within the first few seconds we have made judgments about each other based on what we wear, our physical characteristics, even our posture. Are these judgments accurate? That is hard to know without context, but we can say that nonverbal communication certainly affects first impressions, for better or worse. When a speaker and the audience first meet, nonverbal communication in terms of space, dress, and even personal characteristics can contribute to assumed expectations. The expectations might not be accurate or even fair, but it is important to recognize that they will be present. There is truth in the saying, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Since beginnings are fragile times, your attention to aspects you can control, both verbal and nonverbal, will help contribute to the first step of forming a relationship with your audience. Your eye contact with audience members, use of space, and degree of formality will continue to contribute to that relationship.

As a speaker, your nonverbal communication is part of the message and can contribute to, or detract from, your overall goals. By being aware of them, and practicing with a live audience, you can learn to be more aware and in control.

Key Takeaways

- Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without the use of words; it relates to the dynamic process of communication, the perception process and listening, and verbal communication.
- Nonverbal communication is fluid and fast, universal, confusing, and contextual. It can add to or replace verbal communication and can be intentional or unintentional.
- Nonverbal communication communicates feelings and attitudes, and people tend to believe nonverbal messages more than verbal ones.

Exercises

- Does it limit or enhance our understanding of communication to view nonverbal communication as that which is not verbal communication? Explain your answer and discuss with the class.
- Choose a television personality you admire. What do you like about this person? Watch several minutes of this person with the sound turned off, and make notes of the nonverbal expressions you observe. Turn the sound back on and make notes of their tone of voice, timing, and other audible expressions. Discuss your results with a classmate.
- Find a program that focuses on microexpressions and write a brief summary of how they play a role in the program. Share and compare with classmates.
- Create a survey that addresses the issue of which people trust more, nonverbal or verbal messages. Ask an equal number of men and women and compare your results with those of your classmates.
- Search for information on the reliability and admissibility of results from polygraph (lie detector) tests. Share your findings with classmates.
- See how long and how much you can get done during the day without the use of verbal messages.

11.3 Types of Nonverbal Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the similarities and differences among eight general types of nonverbal communication.

Now that we have discussed the general principles that apply to nonverbal communication, let's examine eight types of nonverbal communication to further understand this challenging aspect of communication:

1. Space
2. Time
3. Physical characteristics
4. Body movements
5. Touch
6. Paralanguage
7. Artifacts
8. Environment

Space

When we discuss space in a nonverbal context, we mean the space between objects and people. Space is often associated with social rank and is an important part of business communication. Who gets the corner office? Why is the head of the table important and who gets to sit there?

People from diverse cultures may have different normative space expectations. If you are from a large urban area, having people stand close to you may be normal. If you are from a rural area or a culture where people expect more space, someone may be standing "too close" for comfort and not know it.

Edward T. Hall, serving in the European and South Pacific Regions in the Corps of Engineers during World War II, traveled around the globe. As he moved from one place to another, he noticed that people in different countries kept different distances from each other. In France, they stood closer to each other than they did in England. Hall wondered why that was and began to study what he called proxemics, or the study of the human use of space and distance in communication (Hall, E. T., 1963).

In *The Hidden Dimension*, he indicated there are two main aspects of space: territory and personal space. Hall drew on anthropology to address the concepts of dominance and submission, and noted that the more powerful person often claims more space. This plays an important role in modern society, from who gets the corner office to how we negotiate space between vehicles. Road rage is increasingly common where overcrowding occurs, and as more vehicles occupy the same roads, tensions over space are predictable.

Territory is related to control. As a way of establishing control over your own room, maybe you painted it your favorite color, or put up posters that represent your interests or things you consider unique about yourself. Families or households often mark their space by putting up fences or walls around their houses. This sense of a right to control your space is implicit in territory. Territory means the space you claim as your own, are responsible for, or are willing to defend.

The second aspect Hall highlights is personal space, or the "bubble" of space surrounding each individual. As you walk down a flight of stairs, which side do you choose? We may choose the right side because we've learned that is what is expected, and people coming up the same stair choose their right. The right choice insures that personal space is not compromised. But what happens when some comes up the wrong side? They violate the understood rules of movement and often correct themselves. But what happens if they don't change lanes as people move up and down the stairs? They may get dirty looks or even get bumped as people in the crowd handle the invasion of "their" space. There are no lane markers, and bubbles of space around each person move with them, allowing for the possibility of collision.

We recognize the basic need for personal space, but the normative expectations for space vary greatly by culture. You may perceive that in your home people sleep one to each bed, but in many cultures people sleep two or more to a bed and it is considered normal. If you were to share that bed, you might feel uncomfortable, while someone raised with group sleeping norms might feel uncomfortable sleeping alone. From where you stand in an aerobics class in relation to others, to where you place your book bag in class, your personal expectations of space are often at variance with others.

As the context of a staircase has norms for nonverbal behavior, so does the public speaking context. In North America, eye contact with the audience is expected. Big movements and gestures are not generally expected and can be distracting. The speaker occupies a space on the "stage," even if it's in front of the class. When you occupy that space, the audience will expect to behave in certain ways. If you talk to the screen behind you while displaying a PowerPoint presentation, the audience may perceive that you are not paying attention to them. Speakers are expected to pay attention to, and interact with, the audience, even if in the feedback is primarily nonverbal. Your movements should coordinate with the tone, rhythm, and content of your speech. Pacing back and forth, keeping your hands in your pockets, or crossing your arms may communicate nervousness, or even defensiveness, and detract from your speech.

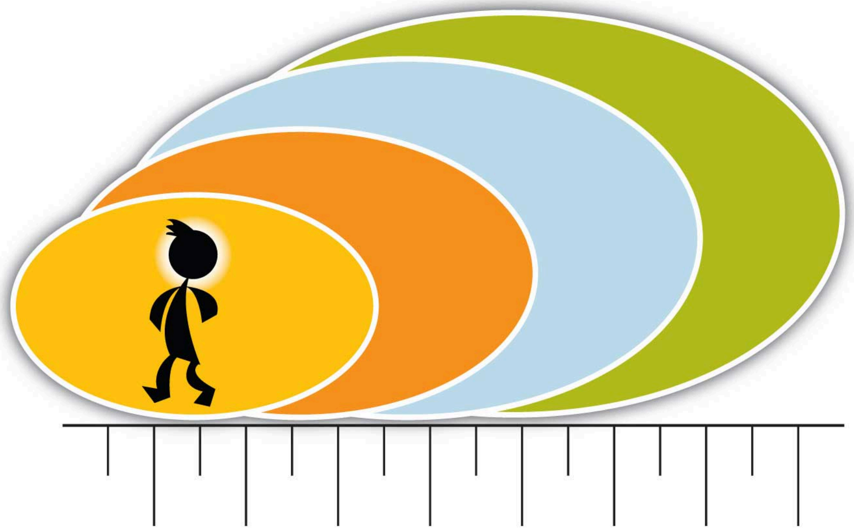


Figure 11.2 Space: Four Main Categories of Distance

As a general rule, try to act naturally, as if you were telling a friend a story, so that your body will relax and your nonverbal gestures will come more naturally. Practice is key to your level of comfort; the more practice you get, the more comfortable and less intimidating it will seem to you.

Hall articulated four main categories of distance used in communication as shown in Figure 11.2 "Space: Four Main Categories of Distance" [6].

Time

Do you know what time it is? How aware you are of time varies by culture and normative expectations of adherence (or ignorance) of time. Some people, and the communities and cultures they represent, are very time-oriented. The Euro Railways trains in Germany are famous for departing and arriving according to the schedule. In contrast, if you take the train in Argentina, you'll find that the schedule is more of an approximation of when the train will leave or arrive.

"Time is money" is a common saying across many cultures, and reveals a high value for time. In social contexts, it often reveals social status and power. Who are you willing to wait for? A doctor for an office visit when you are sick? A potential employer for a job interview? Your significant other or children? Sometimes we get impatient, and our impatience underscores our value for time.

When you give a presentation, does your audience have to wait for you? Time is a relevant factor of the communication process in your speech. The best way to show your audience respect is to honor the time expectation associated with your speech. Always try to stop speaking before the audience stops listening; if the audience perceives that you have "gone over time," they will be less willing to listen. This in turn will have a negative impact on your ability to communicate your message.

Suppose you are presenting a speech that has three main points. Your audience expects you to regulate the time and attention to each point, but if you spend all your time on the first two points and rush through the third, your speech won't be balanced and will lose rhythm. The speaker occupies a position of some power, but it is the audience that gives them that position. By displaying respect and maintaining balance, you will move through your points more effectively.

6. (Hall, E., 1966)

Chronemics is the study of how we refer to and perceive time. Tom Bruneau at Radford University has spent a lifetime investigating how time interacts in communication and culture [7] As he notes, across Western society, time is often considered the equivalent of money. The value of speed is highly prized in some societies (Schwartz, T., 1989). In others, there is a great respect for slowing down and taking a long-term view of time.

When you order a meal at a fast food restaurant, what are your expectations for how long you will have to wait? When you order a pizza online for delivery, when do you expect it will arrive? If you order cable service for your home, when do you expect it might be delivered? In the first case, you might measure the delivery of a hamburger in a matter of seconds or minutes, and perhaps thirty minutes for pizza delivery, but you may measure the time from your order to working cable in days or even weeks. You may even have to be at your home from 8 a.m. to noon, waiting for its installation. The expectations vary by context, and we often grow frustrated in a time-sensitive culture when the delivery does not match our expectations.

In the same way, how long should it take to respond to a customer's request for assistance or information? If they call on the phone, how long should they be on hold? How soon should they expect a response to an e-mail? As a skilled business communicator, you will know to anticipate normative expectations and do your best to meet those expectations more quickly than anticipated. Your prompt reply or offer of help in response to a request, even if you cannot solve the issue on the spot, is often regarded positively, contributing to the formation of positive communication interactions.

Across cultures the value of time may vary. Some Mexican American friends may invite you to a barbecue at 8 p.m., but when you arrive you are the first guest, because it is understood that the gathering actually doesn't start until after 9 p.m. Similarly in France, an 8 p.m. party invitation would be understood to indicate you should arrive around 8:30, but in Sweden 8 p.m. means 8 p.m., and latecomers may not be welcome. Some Native Americans, particularly elders, speak in well-measured phrases and take long pauses between phrases. They do not hurry their speech or compete for their turn, knowing no one will interrupt them (McLean, S., 1998). Some Orthodox Jews observe religious days when they do not work, cook, drive, or use electricity. People around the world have different ways of expressing value for time.

Physical Characteristics

You didn't choose your birth, your eye color, the natural color of your hair, or your height, but people spend millions every year trying to change their physical characteristics. You can get colored contacts; dye your hair; and if you are shorter than you'd like to be, buy shoes to raise your stature a couple of inches. You won't be able to change your birth, and no matter how much you stoop to appear shorter, you won't change your height until time and age gradually makes itself apparent. If you are tall, you might find the correct shoe size, pant length, or even the length of mattress a challenge, but there are rewards. Have you ever heard that taller people get paid more[8]? There is some truth to that idea. There is also some truth to the notion that people prefer symmetrical faces (where both sides are equal) over asymmetrical faces (with unequal sides; like a crooked nose or having one eye or ear slightly higher than the other) [9].

We often make judgments about a person's personality or behavior based on physical characteristics, and researchers are quick to note that those judgments are often inaccurate[10]. Regardless of your eye or hair color, or even how tall you are, being comfortable with yourself is an important part of your presentation. Act naturally and consider aspects of your presentation you can control in order to maximize a positive image for the audience.

7. (Bruneau, T., 1974; Bruneau, T., 1990; Bruneau, T., and Ishii S., 1988).
8. (Burnham, T., and Phelan, J., 2000)
9. (Burnham, T., and Phelan, J., 2000)
10. (Wells, W., and Siegel, B., 1961; Cash, T., and Kilcullen, R., 1985)

Body Movements

The study of body movements, called kinesics, is key to understanding nonverbal communication. Since your actions will significantly contribute to the effectiveness of your business interactions, let's examine four distinct ways body movements that complement, repeat, regulate, or replace your verbal messages.

Body movements can complement the verbal message by reinforcing the main idea. For example, you may be providing an orientation presentation to a customer about a software program. As you say, "Click on this tab," you may also initiate that action. Your verbal and nonverbal messages reinforce each other. You can also reinforce the message by repeating it. If you first say, "Click on the tab," and then motion with your hand to the right, indicating that the customer should move the cursor arrow with the mouse to the tab, your repetition can help the listener understand the message.

In addition to repeating your message, body movements can also regulate conversations. Nodding your head to indicate that you are listening may encourage the customer to continue asking questions. Holding your hand up, palm out, may signal them to stop and provide a pause where you can start to answer.

Body movements also substitute or replace verbal messages. Ekman and Friesen found that facial features communicate to others our feelings, but our body movements often reveal how intensely we experience those feelings[11]. For example, if the customer makes a face of frustration while trying to use the software program, they may need assistance. If they push away from the computer and separate themselves physically from interacting with it, they may be extremely frustrated. Learning to gauge feelings and their intensity as expressed by customers takes time and patience, and your attention to them will improve your ability to facilitate positive interactions.

Touch

Touch in communication interaction is called haptics, and William Seiler and Meliss Beall identify five distinct types of touch, from impersonal to intimate, as listed in Table 11.2 "Types of Touch".

Table 11.2 Types of Touch

Term	Definition
1. Functional-Professional Touch	Medical examination, physical therapy, sports coach, music teacher
2. Social-Polite Touch	Handshake
3. Friendship-Warmth Touch	Hug
4. Love-Intimacy Touch	Kiss between family members or romantic partners
5. Sexual-Arousal Touch	Sexual caressing and intercourse

Before giving your presentation, you may interact with people by shaking hands and making casual conversation. This interaction can help establish trust before you take the stage. While speaking in public we do not often touch people in the audience, but we do interact with visual aids, our note cards, and other objects. How we handle them can communicate our comfort level. It's always a good idea to practice using the technology, visual aids, or note cards you will use in a speech during a practice session. Using the technology correctly by clicking the right button on the mouse or pressing the right switch on the overhead projector can contribute to your credibility.

11. (Ekman, P., and Friesen, W., 1967)

Paralanguage

Paralanguage is the exception to the definition of nonverbal communication. You may recall that we defined nonverbal communication as not involving words, but paralanguage exists when we are speaking, using words. Paralanguage involves verbal and nonverbal aspects of speech that influence meaning, including tone, intensity, pausing, and even silence.

Perhaps you've also heard of a pregnant pause, a silence between verbal messages that is full of meaning. The meaning itself may be hard to understand or decipher, but it is there nonetheless. For example, your coworker Jan comes back from a sales meeting speechless and with a ghost-white complexion. You may ask if the meeting went all right. "Well, ahh…" may be the only response you get. The pause speaks volumes. Something happened, though you may not know what. It could be personal if Jan's report was not well received, or it could be more systemic, like the news that sales figures are off by 40 percent and pink slips may not be far behind.

Silence or vocal pauses can communicate hesitation, indicate the need to gather thought, or serve as a sign of respect. Keith Basso quotes an anonymous source as stating, "It is not the case that a man who is silent says nothing" (Basso, K. A., 1970). Sometimes we learn just as much, or even more, from what a person does not say as what they do say. In addition, both Basso and Susan Philips found that traditional speech among Native Americans places a special emphasis on silence[12].

Artifacts

Do you cover your tattoos when you are at work? Do you know someone who does? Or perhaps you know someone who has a tattoo and does not need to cover it up on their job? Expectations vary a great deal, but body art or tattoos are still controversial in the workplace. According to the *San Diego Union-Tribune* [13],

- 20 percent of workers indicated their body art had been held against them on the job.
- 42 percent of employers said the presence of visible body art lowered their opinion of workers.
- 44 percent of managers surveyed have body art.
- 52 percent of workers surveyed have body art.
- 67 percent of workers who have body art or piercings cover or remove them during work hours.

In your line of work, a tattoo might be an important visual aid, or it might detract from your effectiveness as a business communicator. Body piercings may express individuality, but you need to consider how they will be interpreted by employers and customers.

Artifacts are forms of decorative ornamentation that are chosen to represent self-concept. They can include rings and tattoos, but may also include brand names and logos. From clothes to cars, watches, briefcases, purses, and even eyeglasses, what we choose to surround ourselves with communicates something about our sense of self. They may project gender, role or position, class or status, personality, and group membership or affiliation. Paying attention to a customer's artifacts can give you a sense of the self they want to communicate, and may allow you to more accurately adapt your message to meet their needs.

Environment

Environment involves the physical and psychological aspects of the communication context. More than the tables and chairs in an

12. (Philips, S., 1983)
13. (Kinsman, M., 2001)

office, environment is an important part of the dynamic communication process. The perception of one's environment influences one's reaction to it. For example, Google is famous for its work environment, with spaces created for physical activity and even in-house food service around the clock. The expense is no doubt considerable, but Google's actions speak volumes. The results produced in the environment, designed to facilitate creativity, interaction, and collaboration, are worth the effort.

Key Takeaway

Nonverbal communication can be categorized into eight types: space, time, physical characteristics, body movements, touch, paralanguage, artifacts, and environment.

Exercises

1. Do a Google search on space and culture. Share your findings with your classmates.
2. Note where people sit on the first day of class, and each class session thereafter. Do students return to the same seat? If they do not attend class, do the classmates leave their seat vacant? Compare your results.
3. What kind of value do you have for time, and what is truly important to you? Make a list of what you spend your time on, and what you value most. Do the lists match? Are you spending time on what is truly important to you? Relationships take time, and if you want them to succeed in a personal or business context, you have to make them a priority.
4. To what degree is time a relevant factor in communication in the information age? Give some examples. Discuss your ideas with a classmate.
5. How many people do you know who have chosen tattoos or piercings as a representation of self and statement of individuality? Survey your friends and share your findings with your classmates.

11.4 Movement in Your Speech

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate how to use movement to increase the effectiveness of your presentation.

At some point in your business career you will be called upon to give a speech. It may be to an audience of one on a sales floor, or to a large audience at a national meeting. You already know you need to make a positive first impression, but do you know how to use movement in your presentation? In this section we'll examine several strategies for movement and their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Customers and audiences respond well to speakers who are comfortable with themselves. Comfortable doesn't mean overconfident or cocky, and it doesn't mean shy or timid. It means that an audience is far more likely to forgive the occasional "umm" or "ahh," or the nonverbal equivalent of a misstep, if the speaker is comfortable with themselves and their message.

Let's start with behaviors to avoid. Who would you rather listen to: a speaker who moves confidently across the stage or one who hides behind the podium; one who expresses herself nonverbally with purpose and meaning or one who crosses his arms or clings to the lectern?

Audiences are most likely to respond positively to open, dynamic speakers who convey the feeling of being at ease with their bodies. The setting, combined with audience expectations, will give a range of movement. If you are speaking at a formal event, or if you are being covered by a stationary camera, you may be expected to stay in one spot. If the stage allows you to explore, closing the distance between yourself and your audience may prove effective. Rather than focus on a list of behaviors and their relationship to environment and context, give emphasis to what your audience expects and what you yourself would find more engaging instead.

Novice speakers are often told to keep their arms at their sides, or to restrict their movement to only that which is absolutely necessary. If you are in formal training for a military presentation, or a forensics (speech and debate) competition, this may hold true. But in business and industry, "whatever works" rules the day. You can't say that expressive gestures—common among many cultural groups, like arm movement while speaking—are not appropriate when they are, in fact, expected.

The questions are, again, what does your audience consider appropriate and what do you feel comfortable doing during your presentation? Since the emphasis is always on meeting the needs of the customer, whether it is an audience of one on a sales floor or a large national gathering, you may need to stretch outside your comfort zone. On that same note, don't stretch too far and move yourself into the uncomfortable range. Finding balance is a challenge, but no one ever said giving a speech was easy.

Movement is an important aspect of your speech and requires planning, the same as the words you choose and the visual aids you design. Be natural, but do not naturally shuffle your feet, pace back and forth, or rock on your heels through your entire speech. These behaviors distract your audience from your message and can communicate nervousness, undermining your credibility.

Positions on the Stage

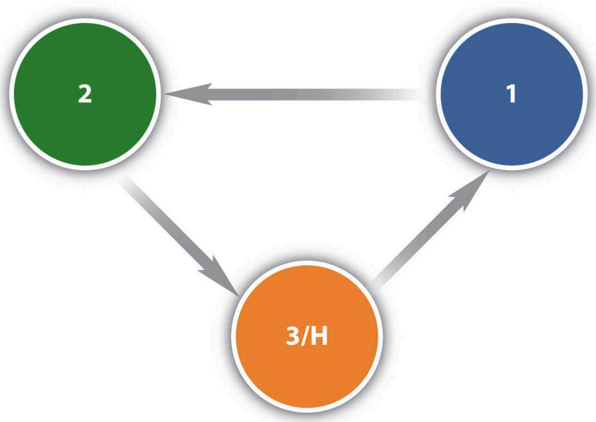


Figure 11.3 Speaker's Triangle

In a classical speech presentation, positions on the stage serve to guide both the speaker and the audience through transitions. The speaker's triangle (see Figure 11.3 "Speaker's Triangle") indicates where the speaker starts in the introduction, moves to the second position for the first point, across for the second point, then returns to the original position to make the third point and conclusion. This movement technique can be quite effective to help you remember each of your main points. It allows you to break down your speech into manageable parts, and putting tape on the floor to indicate position is a common presentation trick. Your movement will demonstrate purpose and reinforce your credibility.

Gestures

Gestures involve using your arms and hands while communicating. Gestures provide a way to channel your nervous energy into a positive activity that benefits your speech and gives you something to do with your hands. For example, watch people in normal, everyday conversations. They frequently use their hands to express themselves. Do you think *they* think about how they use their hands? Most people do not. Their arm and hand gestures come naturally as part of their expression, often reflecting what they have learned within their community.

For professional speakers this is also true, but deliberate movement can reinforce, repeat, and even regulate an audience's response to their verbal and nonverbal messages. You want to come across as comfortable and natural, and your use of your arms and hands contributes to your presentation. We can easily recognize that a well-chosen gesture can help make a point memorable or lead the audience to the next point.

As professional speakers lead up to the main point, they raise their hand slightly, perhaps waist high, often called an anticipation step. The gesture clearly shows the audience your anticipation of an upcoming point, serving as a nonverbal form of foreshadowing.

The implementation step, which comes next, involves using your arms and hands above your waist. By holding one hand at waist level pointing outward, and raising it up with your palm forward, as in the "stop" gesture, you signal the point. The nonverbal gesture complements the spoken word, and as students of speech have noted across time, audiences respond to this nonverbal reinforcement. You then slowly lower your hand down past your waistline and away from your body, letting go of the gesture, and signaling your transition.

The relaxation step, where the letting go motion complements your residual message, concludes the motion.

Facial Gestures

As you progress as a speaker from gestures and movement, you will need to turn your attention to facial gestures and expressions. Facial gestures involve using your face to display feelings and attitudes nonverbally. They may reinforce, or contradict, the spoken word, and their impact cannot be underestimated. As we have discussed, people often focus more on how we say something than what we actually say, and place more importance on our nonverbal gestures (Mehrabian, A., 1981). As in other body movements, your facial gestures should come naturally, but giving them due thought and consideration can keep you aware of how you are communicating the nonverbal message.

Facial gestures should reflect the tone and emotion of your verbal communication. If you are using humor in your speech, you will likely smile and wink to complement the amusement expressed in your words. Smiling will be much less appropriate if your presentation involves a serious subject such as cancer or car accidents. Consider how you want your audience to feel in response to your message, and identify the facial gestures you can use to promote those feelings. Then practice in front of a mirror so that the gestures come naturally.

The single most important facial gesture (in mainstream U.S. culture) is eye contact[14] Eye contact refers to the speaker's gaze that engages the audience members. It can vary in degree and length, and in many cases, is culturally influenced. Both in the speaker's expectations and the audience member's notion of what is appropriate will influence normative expectations for eye contact. In some cultures, there are understood behavioral expectations for male gaze directed toward females, and vice versa. In a similar way, children may have expectations of when to look their elders in the eye, and when to gaze down. Depending on the culture, both may be nonverbal signals of listening. Understanding your audience is critical when it comes to nonverbal expectations.

When giving a presentation, avoid looking over people's heads, staring at a point on the wall, or letting your eyes dart all over the place. The audience will find these mannerisms unnerving. They will not feel as connected, or receptive, to your message and you will reduce your effectiveness. Move your eyes gradually and naturally across the audience, both close to you and toward the back of the room. Try to look for faces that look interested and engaged in your message. Do not to focus on only one or two audience members, as audiences may respond negatively to perceived favoritism. Instead, try to give as much eye contact as possible across the audience. Keep it natural, but give it deliberate thought.

Key Takeaway

To use movement strategically in your presentation, keep it natural and consider using the speaker's triangle, the three-step sequence, facial gestures, and eye contact.

Exercises

1. Think of a message you want to convey to a listener. If you were to dance your message, what would the dance look like? Practice in front of a mirror.
2. Ask a friend to record you while you are having a typical conversation with another friend or family member. Watch the video and observe your movements and facial gestures. What would you do differently if you were making a presentation? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
3. Play "Lie to Me," a game in which each person creates three statements (one is a lie) and tells all three statements to a classmate or group. The listeners have to guess which statement is a lie.

14. (Seiler, W., and Beall, M., 2000).

11.5 Visual Aids

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate how to use visual aids effectively in your presentation.

Almost all presentations can be enhanced by the effective use of visual aids. These can include handouts, overhead transparencies, drawings on the whiteboard, PowerPoint slides, and many other types of props. Visual aids are an important nonverbal aspect of your speech that you can control. Once you have chosen a topic, you need to consider how you are going to show your audience what you are talking about.

Have you ever asked for driving directions and not understood someone's response? Did the person say, "Turn right at Sam's Grocery Store, the new one" or "I think you will turn at the second light, but it might be the third one"? Chances are that unless you know the town well or have a map handy, the visual cue of a grocery store or a traffic light might be insufficient to let you know where to turn. Your audience experiences the same frustration, or sense of accomplishment, when they get lost or find their way during your speech. Consider how you can express yourself visually, providing common references, illustrations, and images that lead the audience to understand your point or issue.

Visual aids accomplish several goals:

- Make your speech more interesting
- Enhance your credibility as a speaker
- Serve as guides to transitions, helping the audience stay on track
- Communicate complex or intriguing information in a short period of time
- Reinforce your verbal message
- Help the audience use and retain the information

Purpose, Emphasis, Support, and Clarity

When you look at your own presentation from an audience member's perspective, you might consider how to distinguish the main points from the rest of the information. You might also consider the relationships being presented between ideas or concepts, or how other aspects of the presentation can complement the oral message.

Your audience naturally will want to know why you are presenting the visual aid. The purpose for each visual aid should be clear, and almost speak for itself. If you can't quickly grasp the purpose of a visual aid in a speech, you have to honestly consider whether it should be used in the first place. Visual aids can significantly develop the message of a speech, but they must be used for a specific purpose the audience can easily recognize.

Perhaps you want to highlight a trend between two related issues, such as socioeconomic status and educational attainment. A line graph might show effectively how, as socioeconomic status rises, educational attainment also rises. This use of a visual aid can provide emphasis, effectively highlighting key words, ideas, or relationships for the audience.

Visual aids can also provide necessary support for your position. Audience members may question your assertion of the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational attainment. To support your argument, you might include on the slide, "According to the U.S. Department of Education Study no. 12345," or even use an image of the Department of Education Web page projected on a large screen. You might consider showing similar studies in graphic form, illustrating similarities across a wide range of research.

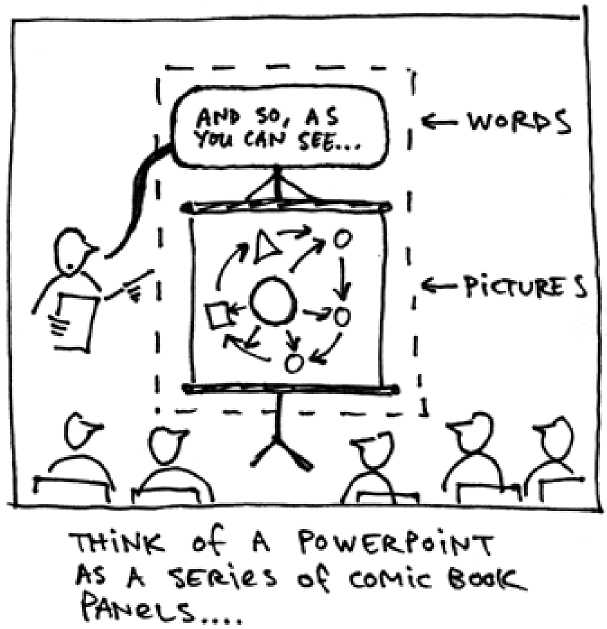


Figure 11.4. Visual aids provide necessary support for your position, illustrate relationships, and demonstrate trends. Austin Kleon – powerpoint as a comic – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Clarity is key in the use of visual aids. One way to improve clarity is to limit the number of words on a PowerPoint slide. No more than ten words per slide, with a font large enough to be read at the back of the room or auditorium, is a good rule of thumb. Key images that have a clear relationship to the verbal message can also improve clarity. You may also choose to illustrate the same data successively in two distinct formats, perhaps a line graph followed by two pie graphs. Your central goal is to ensure your visual aid is clear.

Methods and Materials

Figure 11.5. Visual aids make it vivid for your audience. Gareth Saunders – Welcome to Powerpoint – CC BY-SA 2.0.

If you have been asked to give a presentation on a new product idea that a team within your organization is considering, how might you approach the challenge? You may consider a chronological organization pattern, starting with background, current market, and a trend analysis of what is to come—fair enough, but how will you make it vivid for your audience? How to represent information visually is a significant challenge, and you have several options.

You may choose to use a chart or diagram to show a timeline of events to date, from the first meeting about the proposed product to the results from the latest focus group. This timeline may work for you, but let's say you would like to get into the actual decision-making process that motivated your team to design the product with specific features in the first place. You may decide to use decision trees (or tree diagrams) showing the variables and products in place at the beginning of your discussions, and how each decision led to the next, bringing you to the decision-making point where you are today.

To complement this comprehensive guide and help make a transition to current content areas of questions, you may use a bar or pie graph to show the percentage of competing products in the market. If you have access to the Internet and a projector, you may use a topographical map showing a three-dimensional rendering of the local areas most likely to find your product attractive. If actual hills and valleys have nothing to do with your project, you can still represent the data you have collected in three dimensions. Then you may show a comparable graph illustrating the distribution of products and their relative degree of market penetration.

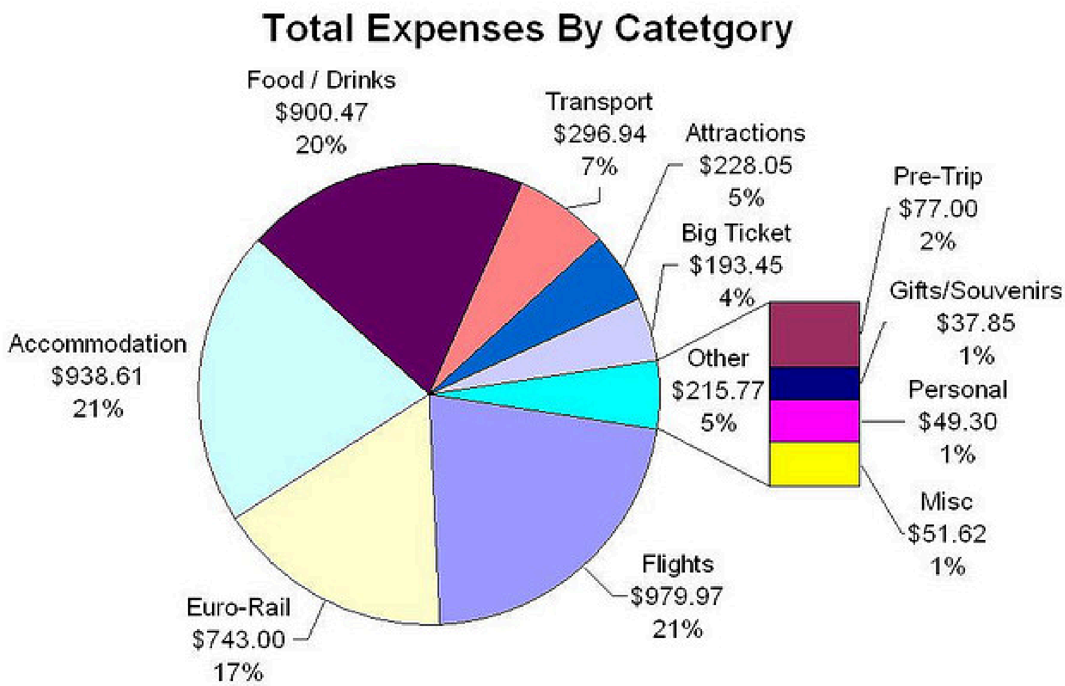


Figure 11.6. Bar and pie graphs can clearly demonstrate results. Christopher Porter – EuroTrip2006 – Total Expenses – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Finally, you may move to the issue of results, and present the audience with a model of your product and one from a competitor, asking which they prefer. The object may be just the visual aid you need to make your point and reinforce the residual message. When we can see, feel, touch, or be in close proximity to an object it often has a greater impact. In a world of digital images and special effects, objects presented in real time can still make a positive effect on the audience.

Additional visual aids you may choose include—but are not limited to—sound and music, video, and even yourself. If your speech is about how to use the product, your demonstration may just be the best visual aid.

You will want to give some thought to how to portray your chart, graph, or object when it's time to use your visual aids. The chalk or white board is common way of presenting visual aids, but it can get messy. Your instructor may write key words or diagrams on the boards while discussing a textbook chapter, but can you read his or her writing? The same lesson holds true for you. If you are going to use a white board and have a series of words on it, write them out clearly before you start your presentation.

Flip charts on a pedestal can also serve to show a series of steps or break a chart down into its basic components. A poster board is another common way of organizing your visual aids before a speech, but given its often one-time use, it is losing out to the computer screen. It is, however, portable and allows you a large "blank page" with which to express your ideas.

Handouts may also serve to communicate complex or detailed information to the audience, but be careful never to break handout rule number one: never give handouts to the audience at the beginning of your speech. Where do you want the audience to look—at you or at the handout? Many novice speakers might be tempted to say the handout, but you will no doubt recognize how that diverts and divides the audience's attention. People will listen to the words from the handout in their minds and tune you out. They will read at their own pace and have questions. They may even be impolite enough to use them as fans or paper airplanes. Handouts can be your worst enemy. If you need to use one, state at the beginning of the speech that you will be providing one at the conclusion of your presentation. This will alleviate the audience's worry about capturing all your content by taking notes, and keep their attention focused on you while you speak.

Transparencies and slides have been replaced by computer-generated slide show programs like PowerPoint by Microsoft, which we will discuss in greater detail later in this section. These programs can be very helpful in presenting visual information, but because computers and projectors sometimes break down and fail to work as planned, you need a plan B. You may need a poster board, or to write on the whiteboard or to have a handout in reserve, but a Plan B is always a good idea when it comes to presentations that integrate technology. You may arrive at your destination and find the equipment is no longer available, is incompatible with your media storage device, or is simply not working, but the show must go on.

Video clips, such as those you might find on YouTube, can also be effective visual aids. However, as with handouts, there is one concern: You don't want the audience to want to watch the video more than they want to tune into your presentation. How do you prevent this? Keep the clip short and make sure it reinforces the central message of your presentation. Always stop speaking before the audience stops listening, and the same holds true for the mesmerizing force of moving images on a screen. People are naturally attracted to them and will get "sucked into" your video example rather quickly. Be a good editor, introduce the clip and state what will happen out loud, point out a key aspect of it to the audience while it plays (overlap), and then make a clear transitional statement as you turn it off. Transitions are often the hardest part of any speech as the audience can get off track, and video clips are one of the most challenging visual aids you can choose because of their power to attract attention. Use that power wisely.

Preparing Visual Aids

Get started early so that you have time to create or research visual aids that will truly support your presentation, not just provide "fluff." Make sure you use a font or image large enough to be legible for those in the back of the room, and that you actually test your visual aids before the day of your presentation. Ask a friend to stand at the back of the room and read or interpret your visual aid. If you are using computer-generated slides, try them out in a practice setting, not just on your computer screen. The slides will look different when projected. Allow time for revision based on what you learn.

Your visual aids should meet the following criteria:

- *Big*. They should be legible for everyone, and should be "back row certified."
- *Clear*. Your audience should "get it" the first time they see it.
- *Simple*. They should serve to simplify the concepts they illustrate.
- *Consistent*. They should reinforce continuity by using the same visual style.

Using Visual Aids

Here are three general guidelines to follow when using visual aids (McLean, S., 2003). Here are some *do*s and *don't*s:

1. Do make a clear connection between your words and the visual aid for the audience.
2. Do not distract the audience with your visual aid, blocking their view of you or adjusting the visual aid repeatedly while trying to speak.
3. Do speak to your audience—not to the whiteboard, the video, or other visual aids.

The timing of your presentation, and of your visual aids, can also have good or bad consequences. According to a popular joke, a good way to get your boss to approve just about anything is to schedule a meeting after lunch, turn the lights down, and present some boring PowerPoint slides. While the idea of a drowsy boss signing off on a harebrained project is amusing, in reality you will want to use visual aids not as a sleeping potion but as a strategy to keep your presentation lively and interesting.

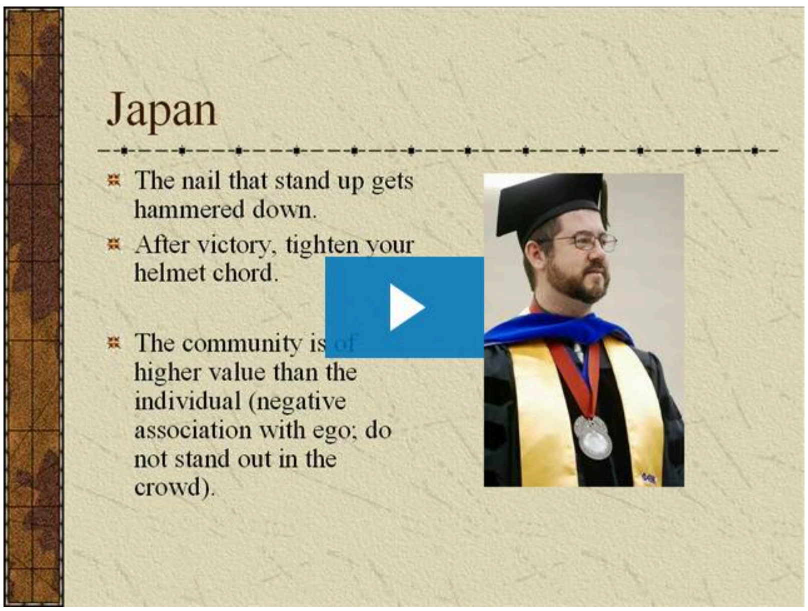
Becoming proficient at using visual aids takes time and practice, and the more you practice before your speech, the more comfortable you will be with your visual aids and the role they serve in illustrating your points. Planning ahead before speaking will help, but when it comes time to actually give your speech, make sure they work for the audience as they should. Speaking to a visual aid (or reading it with your back to the audience) is not an effective strategy. You should know your material well enough that you refer to a visual aid, not rely on it.

Using PowerPoint as a Visual Aid

PowerPoint and similar visual representation programs can be an effective tool to help audiences remember your message, but they can also be an annoying distraction to your speech. How you prepare your slides and use the tool will determine your effectiveness.

PowerPoint is a slideware program that you have no doubt seen used in class, presentation at work, or perhaps used yourself to support a presentation. PowerPoint and similar slideware programs provide templates for creating electronic slides to present visual information to the audience, reinforcing the verbal message. You'll be able to import, or cut and paste, words from text files, images, or video clips to create slides to represent your ideas. You can even incorporate Web links. When using any software program, it's always a good idea to experiment with it long before you intend to use it, explore its many options and functions, and see how it can be an effective tool for you.

Video



Video on Intercultural Communication by Scott MacLean

PowerPoint slides can connect words with images.

At first, you might be overwhelmed by the possibilities, and you might be tempted to use all the bells, whistles, and sound effects, not to mention the tumbling, flying, and animated graphics. If used wisely, a dissolve or key transition can be like a well-executed scene from a major motion picture film and lead your audience to the next point. But if used indiscriminately, it can annoy the audience to the point where they cringe in anticipation of the sound effect at the start of each slide. This danger is inherent in the tool, but you are in charge of it and can make wise choices that enhance the understanding and retention of your information.

The first point to consider is what is the most important visual aid? The answer is you, the speaker. You will facilitate the discussion, give life to the information, and help the audience correlate the content to your goal or purpose. You don't want to be in a position where the PowerPoint presentation is the main focus and you are on the side of the stage, simply helping the audience follow along. It should support you in your presentation, rather than the other way around. Just as there is a number one rule for handouts, there is also one for PowerPoints: do not use PowerPoints as a read-aloud script for your speech. The PowerPoints should amplify and illustrate your main points, not reproduce everything you are going to say.

Your pictures are the second area of emphasis you'll want to consider. The tool will allow you to show graphs, charts and illustrate relationships that words may only approach in terms of communication, but your verbal support of the visual images will make all the difference. Dense pictures or complicated graphics will confuse more than clarify. Choose clear images that have an immediate connection to both your content and the audience, tailored to their specific needs. After images, consider only key words that can be easily read to accompany your pictures. The fewer words the better: try to keep each slide to a total word count of less than ten words. Do not use full sentences. Using key words provides support for your verbal discussion, guiding you as well as your audience. The key words can serve as signposts or signal words related to key ideas.

A natural question at this point is, "How do I communicate complex information simply?" The answer comes with several options. The visual representation on the screen is for support and illustration. Should you need to communicate more technical, complex, or in-depth information in a visual way, consider preparing a handout to distribute at the conclusion of your speech. You may also consider using a printout of your slide show with a "notes" section, but if you distribute it at the beginning of your speech, you run the risk of turning your presentation into a guided reading exercise and possibly distracting or losing members of the audience. Everyone reads at a different pace and takes notes in their own way. You don't want to be in the position of going back and forth between slides to help people follow along.

Another point to consider is how you want to use the tool to support your speech and how your audience will interpret its presentation. Most audiences wouldn't want to read a page of text—as you might see in this book—on the big screen. They'll be far more likely to glance at the screen and assess the information you present in relation to your discussion. Therefore, it is key to consider one main idea, relationship, or point per slide. The use of the tool should be guided with the idea that its presentation is for the audience's benefit, not yours. People often understand pictures and images more quickly and easily than text, and you can use this to your advantage, using the knowledge that a picture is worth a thousand words.

Use of Colour

People love colour, and understandably your audience will appreciate the visual stimulation of a colourful presentation. If you have ever seen a car painted a custom colour that just didn't attract you, or seen colorus put together in ways that made you wonder what people were thinking when they did that, you will recognize that colour can also distract and turn off an audience.

Colour is a powerful way to present information, and the power should be used wisely. You will be selecting which colour you want to use for headers or key words, and how they relate the colours in the visual images. Together, your images, key words, and the use of colour in fonts, backgrounds, table, and graphs can have a significant impact on your audience. You will need to give some thought and consideration to what type of impact you want to make, how it will contribute or possibly distract, and what will work well for you to produce an effective and impressive presentation.

There are inherent relationships between colours, and while you may have covered some of this information in art classes you have taken, it is valuable to review here. According to the standard colour wheel, colours are grouped into primary, secondary, and tertiary categories. Primary colours are the colours from which other colours are made through various combinations. Secondary colours represent a combination of two primary colours, while tertiary colours are made from combinations of primary and secondary colours.

- *Primary colours*. Red, blue and yellow
- *Secondary colours*. Green, violet, and orange
- *Tertiary colours*. Red-orange, red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-orange, and yellow-green

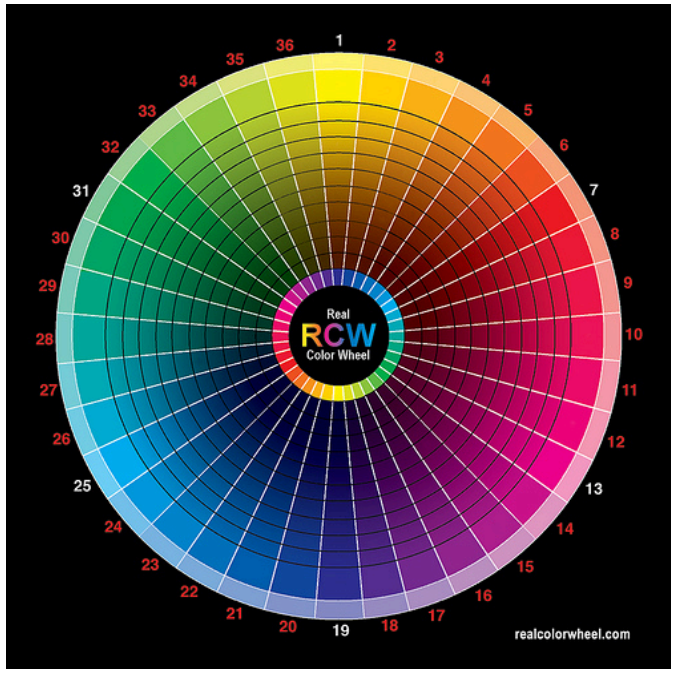


Figure 11.7. Colour Wheel by Michael Hernandez. CC BY 2.0.

Colours have relationships depending on their location on the wheel. Colors that are opposite each other are called complementary and they contrast, creating a dynamic effect. Analogous colours are located next to each other and promote harmony, continuity, and sense of unity.

Your audience comes first: when considering your choice of colors to use, legibility must be your priority. Contrast can help the audience read your key terms more easily. Also, focus on the background colour and its relation to the images you plan to incorporate to insure they complement each other. Consider repetition of color, from your graphics to your text, to help unify each slide. To reduce visual noise, try not to use more than two or three additional colors. Use colors sparingly to make a better impact, and consider the use of texture and reverse colour fonts (the same as a background or white) as an option.

Be aware that many people are blue-green colorblind, and that red-green colorblindness is also fairly common. With this in mind, choose colors that most audience members will be able to differentiate. If you are using a pie chart, for example, avoid putting a blue segment next to a green one. Use labeling so that even if someone is totally colorblind they will be able to tell the relative sizes of the pie segments and what they signify.

Color is also a matter of culture. Some colors may be perceived as formal or informal, or masculine or feminine. Recognize that red is usually associated with danger, while green signals "go." Make sure the color associated with the word is reflected in your choice. If you have a key word about nature, but the color is metallic, the contrast may not contribute to the rhetorical situation and confuse the audience.

Seeking a balance between professionalism and attractiveness may seem to be a challenge, but experiment and test your drafts with friends to see what works for you. Also consider examining other examples, commonly available on the Internet, but retain the viewpoint that not everything online is effective nor should it be imitated. There are predetermined color schemes already incorporated into PowerPoint that you can rely on for your presentation.

We've given consideration to color in relation to fonts and the representation of key words, but we also need to consider font size and selection. PowerPoint will have default settings for headlines and text, but you will need to consider what is most appropriate for your rhetorical situation. Always think about the person sitting in the back of the room. The title size should be at least forty points, and the body text (used sparingly) should be at least thirty-two points.

Figure 11.8. Visual aids should be clear from the back of the room. Martin Roell – Powerpoint + Sonne = … – CC BY-SA 2.0.

In *Designing Visual Language: Strategies for Professional Communicators* (Kostelnick, C., and Roberts, D., 1998), Charles Kostelnick and David Roberts provide a valuable discussion of fonts, font styles, and what to choose to make an impact depending on your rhetorical situation. One good principle they highlight is that sans serif fonts such as Arial work better than serif fonts like Times New Roman for images projected onto a screen. The thin lines and extra aspects to serif the font may not portray themselves well on a large screen or contribute to clarity. To you this may mean that you choose Arial or a similar font to enhance clarity and ease of reading. Kostelnick and Roberts also discuss the use of grouping strategies to improve the communication of information (Kostelnick, C., and Roberts, D., 1998). Bullets, the use of space, similarity, and proximity all pertain to the process of perception, which differs from one person to another.

Helpful Hints for Visual Aids

As we've discussed, visual aids can be a powerful tool when used effectively, but can also run the risk of dominating your presentation. As a speaker, you will need to consider your audience and how the portrayal of images, text, graphic, animated sequences, or sound files will contribute or detract from your presentation. Here is a brief list of hints to keep in mind as you prepare your presentation.

- Keep visual aids simple.
- Use one key idea per slide.
- Avoid clutter, noise, and overwhelming slides.
- Use large, bold fonts that the audience can read from at least twenty feet from the screen.
- Use contrasting colors to create a dynamic effect.
- Use analogous colors to unify your presentation.
- Use clip art with permission and sparingly.
- Edit and proofread each slide with care and caution.
- Use copies of your visuals available as handouts after your presentation.

- Check the presentation room beforehand.
- With a PowerPoint presentation, or any presentation involving technology, have a backup plan, such as your visuals printed on transparencies, should unexpected equipment or interface compatibility problems arise

Becoming proficient at using visual aids takes time and practice. The more you practice before your speech, the more comfortable you will be with your visual aids and the role they serve in illustrating your message. Giving thought to where to place visual aids before speaking helps, but when the time comes to actually give your speech, make sure you reassess your plans and ensure that they work for the audience as they should. Speaking to a visual aid (or reading it to the audience) is not an effective strategy. Know your material well enough that you refer to your visual aids, not rely on them.

Key Takeaway

Strategically chosen visual aids will serve to illustrate, complement, and reinforce your verbal message.

Exercises

1. Look at the picture of the blankets above. Write copy for the left part of the slide and decide what colors would best complement the message. Share your results with the class.
2. Create your own presentation of three to five slides with no less than three images and three words per slide. Share the results with the class.
3. Explore PowerPoint or a similar slideware program and find your favorite feature. Write a series of steps on how to access and use it. Share your results with the class.
4. Create a slide presentation that defines and explains your favorite feature in the program and include at least one point on its advantage for the audience. Share the results with the class.

11.6 Nonverbal Strategies for Success with Your Audience

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate three ways to improve nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal communication is an important aspect of business communication, from the context of an interpersonal interaction to a public presentation. It is a dynamic, complex, and challenging aspect of communication. We are never done learning and adapting to our environment and context, and improving our understanding of nonverbal communication comes with the territory.

When your audience first sees you, they begin to make judgments and predictions about you and your potential, just as an employer might do when you arrive for a job interview. If you are well dressed and every crease is ironed, your audience may notice your attention to detail. Wearing jeans with holes, a torn T-shirt, and a baseball cap would send a different message. Neither style of dress is “good” or “bad, but simply appropriate or inappropriate depending on the environment and context. Your skills as an effective business communicator will be called upon when you contemplate your appearance. As a speaker, your goal is to create common ground and reduce the distance between the audience and yourself. You want your appearance to help establish and reinforce your credibility.

In order to be a successful business communicator, you will need to continually learn about nonverbal communication and its impact on your interactions. Below are three ways to examine nonverbal communication.

Watch Reactions

Market research is fundamental to success in business and industry. So, too, you will need to do a bit of field research to observe how, when, and why people communicate the way they do. If you want to be able to communicate effectively with customers, you will need to anticipate not only their needs, but also how they communicate. They are far more likely to communicate with someone whom they perceive as being like them, than with a perceived stranger. From dress to mannerisms and speech patterns, you can learn from your audience how to be a more effective business communicator.

Enroll an Observer

Most communication in business and industry involves groups and teams, even if the interpersonal context is a common element. Enroll a coworker or colleague in your effort to learn more about your audience, or even yourself. They can observe your presentation and note areas you may not have noticed that could benefit from revision. Perhaps the gestures you make while speaking tend to distract rather than enhance your presentations. You can also record a video of your performance and play it for them, and yourself, to get a sense of how your nonverbal communication complements or detracts from the delivery of your message.

Focus on a Specific Type of Nonverbal Communication

What is the norm for eye contact where you work? Does this change or differ based on gender, age, ethnicity, cultural background, context, environment? Observation will help you learn more about how people communicate; looking for trends across a specific type of nonverbal communication can be an effective strategy. Focus on one behavior you exhibit on your videotape, like pacing, body movements across the stage, hand gestures as you are making a point, or eye contact with the audience.

Key Takeaway

To use nonverbal communication to enhance your message, watch reactions and consider enrolling an observer to help you become aware of your nonverbal habits and how your audience receives nonverbal messages.

Exercises

- Watch a television program without the sound. Can you understand the program? Write a description of the program and include what you found easy to understand, and what presented a challenge, and present it to the class.
- Observe communication in your environment. Focus on specific actions like face touching, blink rate, or head nodding and write a brief description of what you observe. Share with classmates.
- In a group, play charades. Pull words from a hat or envelope and act out the words without verbal communication.
- Interview someone from a different culture than your own and ask them to share a specific cultural difference in nonverbal communication—for example, a nonverbal gesture that is not used in polite company. Write a brief description and present it to the class.
- What do you think are the assumptions (explicit or underlying) about nonverbal communication in this chapter? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
-

11.7 Rhetorical Situation

Learning Objectives

1. Label and discuss the three main components of the rhetorical situation.

In the classical tradition, the art of public speaking is called rhetoric; the circumstances in which you give your speech or presentation are the rhetorical situation. By understanding the rhetorical situation, you can gauge the best ways to reach your listeners and get your points across. In so doing, you'll make the transition from your viewpoint to that of your audience members. Remember that without an audience to listen and respond to you, it's really not much of a speech. The audience gives you the space and time as a speaker to fulfill your role and, hopefully, their expectations. Just as a group makes a leader, an audience makes a speaker. By looking to your audience, you shift your attention from an internal focus (you) to an external (them/others) emphasis. This "other-orientation" is key to your success as an effective speaker.

Several of the first questions any audience member asks himself or herself are, "Why should I listen to you?" "What does what you are saying have to do with me?" and "How does this help me?" We communicate through the lens of personal experience and it's only natural that we would relate what others say to our own needs and wants, but by recognizing that we share in our humanity many of the same basic motivations, we can find common ground of mutual interest. Generating interest in your speech is only the first step as you guide perception through selection, organization, and interpretation of content and ways to communicate your point. Your understanding of the rhetorical situation will guide you as you plan how to employ various strategies to guide your listeners as they perceive and interpret your message. Your awareness of the overall process of building a speech will allow you to take it step by step and focus on the immediate task at hand.

Figure 11.1. Photolibrarian – Red Oak, Iowa, Courtroom, Judge Hayzlett – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The rhetorical situation involves where we are, who we are with, and why we are communicating.

The rhetorical situation involves three elements: the set of expectations inherent in the context, audience, and the purpose of your speech or presentation ([15] This means you need to consider, in essence, the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" of your speech from the audience's perspective.

Context

As we consider the rhetorical situation, we need to explore the concept in depth. Your speech is not given in a space that has no connection to the rest of the world. If you are going to be presenting a speech in class, your context will be the familiar space of your classroom. Other contexts might include a business conference room, a restaurant where you are the featured speaker for a dinner meeting, or a podium that has been set up outdoors for a sports award ceremony.

The time of your speech will relate to people's natural patterns of behavior. If you give a speech right after lunch, you can expect people to be a bit sleepy. Knowing this, you can take steps to counter this element of the context by making your presentation

15. Kostelnick, C. and Roberts, D., 1998).

especially dynamic, such as having your audience get up from their seats or calling on them to answer questions at various points in your speech.

You can also place your topic within the frame of reference of current events. If you are presenting a speech on the importance of access to health care for everyone, and you are presenting it in October of an election year, the current events that exist outside your speech may be used to enhance it. Your listeners might be very aware of the political climate, and relating your topic to a larger context may effectively take into consideration the circumstances in which your readers will use, apply, or contemplate your information.

Audience

The receiver (i.e., listener or audience) is one of the basic components of communication. Without a receiver, the source (i.e., the speaker) has only himself or herself in which to send the message. By extension, without an audience you can't have a speech. Your audience comes to you with expectations, prior knowledge, and experience. They have a purpose that makes them part of the audience instead of outside playing golf. They have a wide range of characteristics like social class, gender, age, race and ethnicity, cultural background, and language that make them unique and diverse. What kind of audience will you be speaking to? What do you know about their expectations, prior knowledge or backgrounds, and how they plan to use your information? Giving attention to this aspect of the rhetorical situation will allow you to gain insight into how to craft your message before you present it.

Purpose

A speech or oral presentation may be designed to inform, demonstrate, persuade, motivate, or even entertain. You may also overlap by design and both inform and persuade. The purpose of your speech is central to its formation. You should be able to state your purpose in one sentence or less, much like an effective thesis statement in an essay. You also need to consider alternate perspectives, as we've seen previously in this chapter. Your purpose may be to persuade, but the audience after lunch may want to be entertained, and your ability to adapt can make use of a little entertainment that leads to persuasion.

Key Takeaway

The rhetorical situation has three components: the context, the audience, and the purpose of the speech.

Exercises

1. Is it important to consider the rhetorical situation? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.
2. Think of an example (real or hypothetical) of a speech, a sales presentation, a news broadcast or television program. Using the elements listed in this section of the chapter, describe the rhetorical situation present in your

example. Present your example to the class.

3. Let's take the topic of tattoos. Imagine you are going to present two informative speeches about tattoos: one to a group of middle school children, and the other to a group of college students. How would you adapt your topic for each audience and why? Write your results, provide an example or explanation, and discuss with classmates.
4. Examine a communication interaction and identify the context, the audience, and the purpose of the exchange. Write a brief description and share with classmates.
5. You've been assigned the task of arranging a meeting for your class to discuss an important topic. How do context, audience, and purpose influence your decisions? Write a brief statement of what you would want in terms of time, location, setting, and scene and why. Please share your results with classmates.

11.8 Strategies for Success

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and provide examples of at least five of the nine basic cognate strategies in communication.

Given the diverse nature of audiences, the complexity of the communication process, and the countless options and choices to make when preparing your speech, you may feel overwhelmed. One effective way to address this is to focus on ways to reach, interact, or stimulate your audience. Humans share many of the same basic needs, and meeting those needs provides various strategies for action.

Charles Kostelnick and David Roberts outline several cognate strategies, or ways of framing, expressing, and representing a message to an audience, in *Designing Visual Language: Strategies for Professional Communicators*[16]. The word "cognate" refers to knowledge, and these strategies are techniques to impart knowledge to your audience. Kostelnick and Roberts's strategies are cross-disciplinary in that they can be applied to writing, graphic design, and verbal communication. They help the writer, designer, or speaker answer questions like "Does the audience understand how I'm arranging my information?" "Am I emphasizing my key points effectively?" and "How does my expression and representation of information contribute to a relationship with the audience?" They can serve you to better anticipate and meet your audience's basic needs.

Aristotle outlined three main forms of rhetorical proof: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos involves the speaker's character and expertise. Logos is the logic of the speaker's presentation—something that will be greatly enhanced by a good organizational plan. Aristotle discussed pathos as the use of emotion as a persuasive element in the speech[17], or "the arousing of emotions in the audience." We don't always make decisions based on clear thinking. Sometimes we are moved by words, by a scene in a movie, or by other mediated forms of communication. As the speaker, you may create a message by selecting some aspects and rejecting others. A close-up picture of a child starving to death can capture attention and arouse emotions. If you use pathos in a strategic way, you are

16. (Kostelnick C. and Roberts, D., 1998)
17. (Wisse, J., 1998)

following Aristotle's notion of rhetorical proof as the available means of persuasion. If logic and expertise don't move the audience, a tragic picture may do so.

The cognate strategies are in many ways expressions of these three elements, but by focusing on individual characteristics, can work towards being more effective in their preparation and presentation. Many of these strategies build on basic ideas of communication, such as verbal and nonverbal delivery. By keeping that in mind, you'll be more likely to see the connections and help yourself organize your presentation effectively.

Here we adapt and extend Kostelnick and Roberts' strategies in order to highlight ways to approach the preparation and presentation of your message. Across the cognate strategies, we can see Aristotle's rhetorical elements through a range of strategies to communicate better with our audience. There is a degree of overlap, and many of the strategies draw on related elements, but by examining each strategy as a technique for engaging your audience, you can better craft your message to meet their expectations.

Tone

From the choice of your words, to the choice of your dress, you contribute to the tone of the speech. Tone, or the general manner of expression of the message, will contribute to the context of the presentation. First, consider your voice. Is it relaxed, or shaky and nervous? Your voice is like a musical instrument that, when played expressively, fulfills a central role in your ability to communicate your message to your audience. Next consider how your tone is expressed through your body language. Are your arms straight down at your sides, or crossed in front of you, or are they moving in a natural flow to the rhythm and cadence of your speech? Your dress, your use of space, and the degree to which you are comfortable with yourself will all play a part in the expression of your message.

Emphasis

If everyone speaks at the same time, it's hard for anyone to listen. In the same way, if all your points are equally presented, it can be hard to distinguish one from another, or to focus on the points that are most important. As the speaker, you need to consider how you place emphasis—stress, importance, or prominence—on some aspects of your speech, and how you lessen the impact of others. Perhaps you have a visual aid to support your speech in the form of a visually arresting picture. Imagine that you want to present a persuasive speech on preventing skin cancer and you start with a photo of two people wearing very little clothing. While the image may capture attention, clearly placing emphasis on skin, it may prove to be more of a distraction than an addition. Emphasis as a cognate strategy asks you to consider relevance, and the degree to which your focal point of attention contributes to or detracts from your speech. You will need to consider how you link ideas through transitions, how you repeat and rephrase, and how you place your points in hierarchical order to address the strategy of emphasis in your presentation.

Engagement

Before you start thinking about weddings, consider what key element is necessary for one to occur? If you guessed a relationship you were correct. Just as a couple forms an interpersonal relationship, the speaker forms a relationship with the audience members. Eye contact can be an engaging aspect of this strategy, and can help you form a connection—an engagement—with individual audience members. Looking at the floor or ceiling may not display interest to the audience. Engagement strategies develop the relationship with the audience, and you will need to consider how your words, visuals, and other relevant elements of your speech help this relationship grow.

Clarity

As a speaker, you may have excellent ideas to present, but if they are not made clear to the audience, your speech will be a failure. "Clarity strategies help the receiver (audience) to decode the message, to understand it quickly and completely, and when necessary, to react without ambivalence"[18] Your word choices, how you say them, and in what order all relate to clarity. If you use euphemisms, or indirect expressions, to communicate a delicate idea, your audience may not follow you. If you use a story, or an arresting image, and fail to connect it clearly to your main point or idea, your audience will also fail to see the connection. Depending on the rhetorical situation, the use of jargon may clarify your message or confuse your audience. You'll also need to consider the visual elements of your presentation and how they clarify your information. Is the font sufficiently large on your PowerPoint slide to be read in the back of the room? Is your slide so packed with words that they key ideas are lost in a noise of text? Will it be clear to your listeners how your pictures, motion clips, or audio files relate to topic?

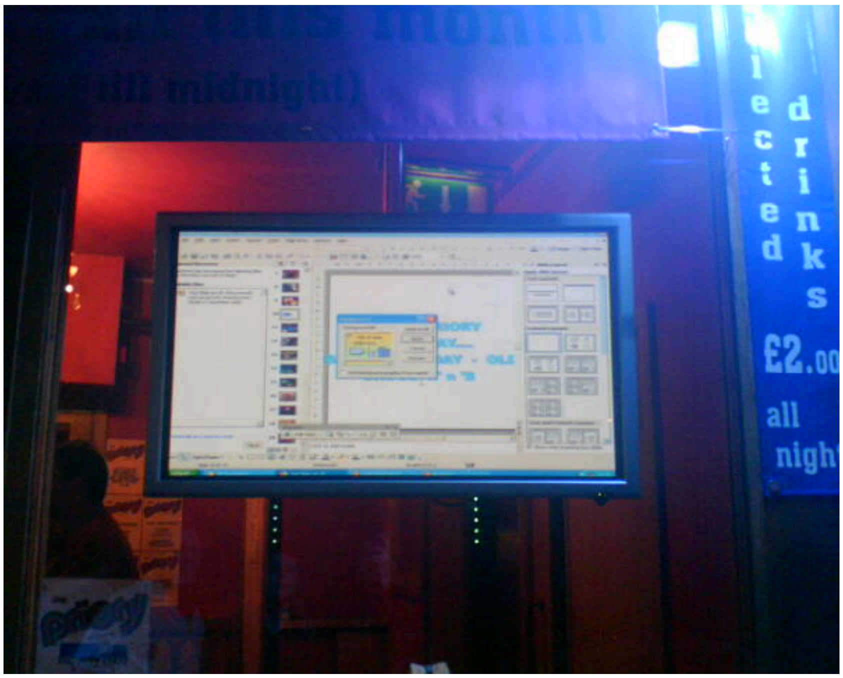


Figure 11.2. Simon Pearson – Powerpoint lessons at The Priory – CC BY-ND 2.0.

Dense graphics that are not legible from the back of the room can sabotage your presentation.

Conciseness

Being clear is part of being concise. Conciseness refers to being brief and direct in the visual and verbal delivery of your message, and avoiding unnecessary intricacy. It involves using as many words as necessary to get your message across, and no more. If you only have five to seven minutes, how will you budget your time? Being economical with your time is a pragmatic approach to insuring that your attention, and the attention of your audience, is focused on the point at hand.

18. (Kostelnick, C. and Roberts, D., 1998).

Arrangement

As the speaker, you will gather and present information in some form. How that form follows the function of communicating your message involves strategically grouping information. "Arrangement means order, the organization of visual (and verbal) elements (Kostelnick, C. and Roberts, D., 1998) "in ways that allow the audience to correctly interpret the structure, hierarchy, and relationships among points of focus in your presentation. We will discuss the importance of hierarchy, and which point comes first and last, as we explore arguments and their impact on the perception of your message.

Credibility

Here we can clearly see Aristotle's ethos—character and expertise. You will naturally develop a relationship with your audience, and the need to make trust an element is key to that development. The word "credibility" comes from the word "credence," or belief. Credibilityinvolves your qualities, capabilities, or power to elicit from the audience belief in your character. Cultivating a sense of your character and credibility may involve displaying your sense of humor, your ability to laugh at yourself, your academic or profession-specific credentials, or your personal insight into the topic you are discussing.

For example, if you are going to present a persuasive speech on the dangers of drinking and driving, and start with a short story about how you helped implement a "designated driver" program, the audience will understand your relationship to the message, and form a positive perception of your credibility. If you are going to persuade the audience to give blood, practice safe sex, or get an HIV test, your credibility on the subject may come from your studies in the medical or public health field, from having volunteered at a blood drive, or perhaps from having had a loved one who needed a blood transfusion. Consider persuasive strategies that will appeal to your audience, build trust, and convey your understanding of the rhetorical situation.

Expectation

Your audience, as we've addressed previously, will have inherent expectations of themselves and of you depending on the rhetorical situation. Expectations involve the often unstated, eager anticipation of the norms, roles and outcomes of the speaker and the speech. If you are giving an after-dinner speech at a meeting where the audience members will have had plenty to eat and drink immediately before you get up to speak, you know that your audience's attention may be influenced by their state of mind. The "after-dinner speech" often incorporates humor for this very reason, and the anticipation that you will be positive, lighthearted and funny is implicit in the rhetorical situation. If, on the other hand, you are going to address a high school assembly on the importance of graduating from high school and pursuing a college education, you may also be motivational, funny, and lighthearted, but there will be an expectation that you will also discuss some serious issues as a part of your speech.

Reference

No one person knows everything all the time at any given moment, and no two people have experienced life in the same way. For this reason, use references carefully. Reference involves attention to the source and way you present your information. If you are a licensed pilot and want to inform your audience about the mistaken belief that flying is more dangerous than driving, your credibility will play a role. You might also say "according to the Federal Aviation Administration" as you cite mortality statistics associated with aviation accidents in a given year. The audience won't expect you to personally gather statistics and publish a study, but they will expect you to state where you got your information. If you are talking to a group of children who have never flown before, and lack a frame of reference to the experience of flying, you will need to consider how to reference key ideas within their scope of experience.

A good way to visualize this is as a frame, where some information you display to the audience is within the frame, and other information (that you do not display) lies outside the frame. You focus the information to improve clarity and conciseness, and the audience will want to know why the information you chose is included and where you got it. That same frame may also be related to experience, and your choice of terms, order or reliance on visual aids to communicate ideas. If you are giving a speech on harvesting crops on an incline, and your audience is made up of rural Bolivians who farm manually, talking about a combine may not be as effective as showing one in action in order to establish a frame of reference.

Table 11.1 "Nine Cognate Strategies" summarizes the nine cognate strategies in relation to Aristotle's forms of rhetorical proof; it also provides areas on which to focus your attention as you design your message.

Table 11.1 Nine Cognate Strategies

Aristotle's Forms of Rhetorical Proof	Cognate Strategies	Focus
Pathos	• Tone • Emphasis • Engagement	• Expression • Relevance • Relationship
Logos	• Clarity • Conciseness • Arrangement	• Clear understanding • Key points • Order, hierarchy, placement
Ethos	• Credibility • Expectation • Reference	• Character, trust • Norms and anticipated outcomes • Sources and frames of reference

You'll want to consider the cognate strategies and how to address each area to make your speech as effective as possible, given your understanding of the rhetorical situation.

Key Takeaway

The nine cognate strategies all contribute to your success in conveying the speech to the audience

Exercises

1. Make a copy of Table 11.2 "How I Will Apply the Cognate Strategies" and use it to help get yourself organized as you start to prepare your speech. Fill in the far right column according to how each rhetorical element, cognate

strategy, and focus will apply to the specific speech you are preparing.

Table 11.2 How I Will Apply the Cognate Strategies

Aristotle's Forms of Rhetorical Proof	Cognate Strategies	Focus	My speech will address each element and strategy by (verbal and visual)
Pathos	• Tone • Emphasis • Engagement	• Expression • Relevance • Relationship	
Logos	• Clarity • Conciseness • Arrangement	• Clear understanding • Key points • Order, hierarchy, placement	
Ethos	• Credibility • Expectation • Reference	• Character, trust • Norms and anticipated outcomes • Sources and frames of reference	

1. In a group with your classmates, complete the above exercise using Table 11.2 "How I Will Apply the Cognate Strategies" and demonstrate your results.
2. Find an example where a speaker was lacking ethos, pathos, or logos. Write a brief summary of the presentation, and make at least one suggestion for improvement. Compare your results with classmates.
3. Does organizing a presentation involve ethics? Explain your response and discuss it with the class.

11.9 Building a Sample Speech

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate how to build a sample speech by expanding on the main points you wish to convey.
2. Demonstrate how to use the five structural parts of any speech.

As you begin to investigate your topic, make sure you consider several sides of an issue. Let's say you are going to do a speech to inform on the history of the First Transcontinental Railroad. At first you may have looked at just two sides, railroaders versus local merchants. Railroad tycoons wanted to bring the country together—moving people, goods, and services in a more efficient way—and to make money. Local merchants wanted to keep out competition and retain control of their individual markets.

Take another look at this issue and you see that several other perspectives have bearing on this issue. Shipping was done primarily by boat prior to the railroad, so shippers would not want the competition. Recent Chinese immigrants were in need of work. Native Americans did not want to lose their culture or way of life, and a railroad that crossed the country would cut right through the buffalo's migration patterns. We now have five perspectives to the central issue, which makes the topic all the more interesting.

The general purpose is to inform the audience on the First Transcontinental Railroad and its impact on a young but developing United States. The thesis statement focuses on shipping, communication, and cultures across America.

- *Topic*. First Transcontinental Railroad
- *General purpose statement*. I want the audience to be more informed about the impact of the First Transcontinental Railroad.
- *Thesis statement*. The First Transcontinental Railroad changed shipping, communication, and cultures across America.

With the information we have so far, we can now list three main points:

1. Change in shipping
2. Change in communication
3. Change in cultures

Think of each one of these main points as a separate but shorter speech. The point is to develop each of these main points like you have developed your overall speech. What do you want to focus on? The major types of shipping at the time of the First Transcontinental Railroad? One aspect you may want consider is to what degree is your audience familiar with this time in history. If they are not very familiar, a little background and context can help make your speech more meaningful and enhance its relevance to your thesis statement. By taking time to consider what you want to accomplish with each point, you will help yourself begin to address how you need to approach each point. Once you have thought about what you want to focus on for each point, list each subheading next to the main points. For example,

1. Change in shipping
    1. Navigating the waterways via barges and boats
    2. Overland stagecoaches
    3. Timetables for modes of travel
2. Change in communication
    1. Letters in the days of the Pony Express
    2. How the Morse Code telegraph system followed railroad lines
    3. Bringing people together across distances
3. Change in cultures
    1. Prerailroad immigration
    2. Impact on Native Americans
    3. Territories become States

By now you've identified your key points and are ready to start planning your speech in more detail. While your organizational structure will vary from speech to speech, there are nonetheless five main parts of any speech: attention statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and residual message. These are basic to the rhetorical process and you will see time and time again, regardless of audience or culture, these same elements in some form utilized to communicate in public. They will serve to guide you, and possibly even save you should you get a last minute request to do a speech or presentation.

Place your hand on the table or desk and you'll more likely see a thumb and four fingers. Associate your hand with these five elements. Each digit is independently quite weak, but together they make a powerful fist. Your thumb is quite versatile and your most important digit. It's a lot like your attention statement. If you don't gain the audience's attention, the rest of the speech will be ineffective.

Each successive digit can represent the remaining four parts of any speech. One day you will be asked to speak with little or no time for preparation. By focusing on this organizational model, and looking down at your hand, you can quickly and accurately prepare your speech. With the luxury of time for preparation, each step can even be further developed. Remember the five-finger model of public speaking, as summarized in Table 11.3 "Five-Finger Model of Public Speaking", and you will always stand out as a more effective speaker.

Table 11.3 Five-Finger Model of Public Speaking	
Attention Statement	The attention statement is the way you focus the audience's attention on you and your speech.
Introduction	Your introduction introduces you and your topic, and should establish a relationship with your audience and state your topic clearly.
Body	In the body, or main content area of your speech, you will naturally turn to one of the organizational patterns.
Conclusion	You conclusion should provide the audience with a sense of closure by summarizing the main points and relating the points to the overall topic.
Residual Message	The residual message is an idea or thought that stays with your audience well after the speech.

Key Takeaways

Speeches are built by identifying the main points to be communicated and by following five structural elements (attention statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and residual message).

Exercises

1. By visiting the library or doing an Internet search, find a speech given by someone you admire. The speech may be published in a book or newspaper, recorded in an audio file, or recorded on video. It may be a political speech, a business speech, or even a commercial sales pitch. Read or listen to the speech and identify the five structural elements as this speaker has used them. Post your results, discuss with classmates, and if a link to the speech is available, please be sure to include it.

2. By visiting the library or doing an Internet search, find a speech that would benefit from significant improvement. The speech may be published in a book or newspaper, recorded in an audio file, or recorded on video. It may be a political speech, a business speech, or even a commercial sales pitch. Read or listen to the speech and identify the five structural elements as this speaker has used them, noting specifically where they could improve their performance. Post your results, discuss with classmates, and if a link to the speech is available, please be sure to include it.
3. What functions does organization serve in a speech? Can organization influence or sway the audience? Explain your response and position.
4.

11.10 Sample Speech Outlines

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how to create two different styles of outlines for a speech.

Chances are you have learned the basic principles of outlining in English writing courses: an outline is a framework that organizes main ideas and subordinate ideas in a hierarchical series of roman numerals and alphabetical letters. The center column of Table 11.4 “Speech Outline A” presents a generic outline in a classical style. In the left column, the five main structural elements of a speech are tied to the outline. Your task is to fill in the center column outline with the actual ideas and points you are making in your speech. Feel free to adapt it and tailor it to your needs, depending on the specifics of your speech. Next, fill in the right column with the verbal and visual delivery features of your speech.

Table 11.4 Speech Outline A

Attention Statement	Device	Verbal and Visual Delivery
Introduction	• Main idea • Common ground	
Body	• I. Main idea: Point 1 • Subpoint 1 • A.1 specific information 1 • A.2 specific information 2 • II. Main idea: Point 2 • Subpoint 1 • B.1 specific information 1 • B.2 specific information 2 • III. Main idea: Point 3 • Subpoint 1 • C.1 specific information 1 • C.2 specific information 2	
Conclusion	Summary, main points 1–3	
Residual Message	Main idea	

There is no law that says a speech outline has to follow a classical outline format, however. Table 11.5 "Speech Outline B" is an alternate outline form you may want to use to develop your speech. As you can see, this outline is similar to the one above in that it begins with the five basic structural elements of a speech. In this case, those elements are tied to the speech's device, thesis, main points, summary, and recap of the thesis. In the right column, this outline allows you to fill in the cognate strategies you will use to get your points across to your audience. You may use this format as a model or modify it as needed.

Table 11.5 Speech Outline B

Attention Statement	Device	Cognate Strategies, Verbal and Visual
Introduction	• General purpose statement or thesis statement • Common ground	
Body	• Point 1: • Point 2: • Point 3:	
Conclusion	Summarize main points and reinforce common ground	
Residual Message	Reiterate thesis	

Key Takeaways

An outline is a framework that helps the speaker to organize ideas and tie them to the main structural elements of the speech.

Exercises

1. The next time you attend a class lecture, try to take notes in outline form, using the sample outlines in this chapter as a guide. You may want to do this as a class project: have all your classmates put their notes into outline form and then compare the different student outlines with the outline your professor began with in planning the lecture.
2. Create an outline of your day, with main headings and detail points for your main tasks of the day. At the end of the day, review the outline and write a brief summary of your experience. Share with classmates.
3. Diagram or create an outline from a sample speech. Do you notice any patterns? Share and compare your results with classmates.
4.

11.11 Organizing Principles for Your Speech

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and understand how to use at least five different organizing principles for a speech.

There are many different ways to organize a speech, and none is "better" or "more correct" than the others. The choice of an organizing principle, or a core assumption around which everything else is arranged, depends on the subject matter, the rhetorical situation, and many other factors, including your preference as speaker.

The left column of Table 11.6 "Sample Organizing Principles for a Speech" presents seventeen different organizing principles to consider. The center column explains how the principle works, and the right column provides an applied example based on our sample speech about the First Transcontinental Railroad. For example, using a biographical organizing principle, you might describe the journey of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804; the signing of the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862, and the completion of the first Transcontinental Express train trip in 1876. As another example, using a spatial organizing principle, you might describe the mechanics of how a steam locomotive engine works to turn the train wheels, which move on a track to travel across distances.

As you read each organizational structure, consider how the main points and subheadings might change or be adapted to meet each pattern.

Table 11.6 Sample Organizing Principles for a Speech

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
1. Time (Chronological)	Structuring your speech by time shows a series of events or steps in a process, which typically has a beginning, middle, and end. "Once upon a time stories" follow a chronological pattern.	Before the First Transcontinental Railroad, the events that led to its construction, and its impact on early America...
2. Comparison	Structuring your speech by comparison focuses on the similarities and/or differences between points or concepts.	A comparison of pre– and post–First Transcontinental Railroad North America, showing how health and life expectancy remained the same.
3. Contrast	Structure your speech by using contrasting points highlights the differences between items and concepts.	A contrast of pre– and post–First Transcontinental Railroad North America, by shipping times, time it took to communicate via letter, or how long it took to move out West.
5. Problem and Solution	Structuring your speech by problem and solution means you state the problem and detail how it was solved. This approach is effective for persuasive speeches.	Manufacturers were producing better goods for less money at the start of the Industrial Revolution, but they lack a fast, effective method of getting their goods to growing markets. The First Transcontinental Railroad gave them speed, economy, and access to new markets.
6. Classification (Categorical)	Structuring your speech by classification establishes categories.	At the time the nation considered the First Transcontinental Railroad, there were three main types of transportation: by water, by horse, and by foot.
7. Biographical	Structuring your speech by biography means examining specific people as they relate to the central topic.	• 1804: Lewis and Clark travel 4,000 miles in over two years across America • 1862: President Lincoln signs the Pacific Railroad Act • 1876: The Transcontinental Express from New York arrives in San Francisco with a record-breaking time of 83 hours and 39 minutes • 2009: President Obama can cross America by plane in less than 5 hours
8. Space (Spatial)	Structuring your speech by space involves the parts of something and how they fit to form the whole.	A train uses a heat source to heat water, create stream, and turn a turbine, which moves a lever that causes a wheel to move on a track.
9. Ascending and Descending	Structuring your speech by ascending or descending order involves focusing on quantity and quality. One good story (quality) leads to the larger picture, or the reverse.	A day in the life of a traveler in 1800. Incremental developments in transportation to the present, expressed through statistics, graphs, maps and charts.
10. Psychological	It is also called "Monroe's Motivated Sequence" (Ayres, J. and Miller, J., 1994). Structuring your speech on the psychological aspects of the audience involves focusing on their inherent needs and wants. See Maslow and Shutz. The speaker calls *attention* to a *need*, then focuses on the satisfaction of the need, *visualization* of the solution, and ends with a proposed or historical *action*. This is useful for a persuasive speech.	When families in the year 1800 went out West, they rarely returned to see family and friends. The country as a whole was an extension of this distended family, separated by time and distance. The railroad brought families and the country together.
11. Elimination	Structuring your speech using the process of elimination involves outlining all the possibilities.	The First Transcontinental Railroad helped pave the way for the destruction of the Native American way of life in 1870. After examining treaties, relocation and reservations, loss of the buffalo, disease and war, the railroad can be accurately considered the catalyst for the end of an era.

Organizing Principle	**Explanation**	**Applied Example**
12. Ceremonial: Events, Ceremonies, or Celebrations	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Thank dignitaries and representatives. 2. Mention the importance of the event. 3. Mention the relationship of the event to the audience. 4. Thank the audience for their participation in the event, ceremony, or celebration.	Thanking the representatives, builders, and everyone involved with the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. The railroad will unite America, and bring us closer in terms of trade, communication and family. Thank you for participating in today's dedication.
13. Awards	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Thank everyone for coming together. 2. Discuss the history and importance of the award. 3. Give a brief biography of the person who will receive the award (often nonspecific to keep people guessing and to build suspense). 4. Announce the name of the award recipient. 5. Present the award (present award with left hand, shake with right). 6. Award recipient may give a speech. 7. Transition to the next item or thank everyone for participating.	>Thank everyone for coming together. The Golden Spike Award was created in honor of all the great men and women that made today possible. The person receiving this award needs no introduction. His/her tireless efforts to build partnerships, coalitions, and raise support for the railroad have been unwavering. (Name), please come and receive the Golden Spike Award. (Speech/no speech.) Thank you, everyone, for coming.
14. Toast: Weddings or Similar Gatherings	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Thank everyone for coming together. 2. Discuss the importance of the event (wedding). 3. Mention the relationship of the couple to the audience or the speaker to the person being celebrated. 4. Add one short sentence. 5. Optional: Conclude, thanking the audience for participation in the event, ceremony, or celebration.	Thank everyone for coming together. I've know the groom since he played with toy trains and only now, with (partner's name), can I see how far his involvement in our new cross-country train got him. "All the best of healthy and happiness." Thank you everyone for joining us in this celebration of (name) and (name) (point 5 is optional).
15. Speaker Introductions	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Thank everyone for coming together. 2. Provide a brief biography of the person who will speak or establish their credibility. 3. Discuss the speaker and his or her topic. 4. Announce the name of the speaker, and possibly once their speech has concluded. 5. Transition to the next item or thank everyone for participating.	Thank everyone for coming together. Today's speaker has a long history in the development of the train, including engineering technical aspects of steam locomotion. Today he/she will address the steps that lead to our very own cross-country railroad. Please help me welcome (name). (Optional after speech: Thank you, everyone. Next we have...)
16. After-Dinner Speech	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Thank everyone for coming together. 2. Provide a fun or humorous attention statement. 3. Discuss the topic in a light-hearted manner with connected stories, anecdotes, or even a joke or two. 4. Connect the humor to the topic of importance 5. Thank everyone for participating.	Thank you for coming together to celebrate the driving of the Golden Spike. There have been many challenging moments along the way that I would like to share tonight (stories, anecdotes, or even a joke). While it's been a long journey, we've made it. Thank you for coming tonight.

Organizing Principle	Explanation	Applied Example
17. Oral Interpretation	Structure your speech by focusing on the following: 1. Draw attention to the piece of literature. 2. Explain its significance, context, and background. 3. Interpret the manuscript for the audience. 4. Conclude with key points from the reading. 5. Reiterate the main point of the piece of literature.	Today I would like to share with you the proclamation that led to the railroad you see before you today. (Interpret the proclamation, using your voice to bring the written word alive.) Without the foresight, vision and leadership we can now see, this railroad might still be a dream.

Key Takeaways

A speech may be organized according to any of many different organizing principles.

Exercises

- Choose at least three different organizing principles from the left column of Table 11.6 "Sample Organizing Principles for a Speech". Take the thesis of a speech you are preparing and write an applied example, similar to the ones provided about the First Transcontinental Railroad that shows how you would apply each of your chosen organizing principles to your speech.
- Think of one technology or application that you perceive has transformed your world. Choose two organizing principles and create two sample outlines for speeches about your topic. Share and compare with classmates.

11.12 Transitions

Learning Objectives

1. Understand and demonstrate how to use transitions effectively within your speech.

By now you have identified your main points, chosen your organizational model, and are ready to begin putting your speech together.

If you were going to build a house, you would need a strong foundation. Could the columns and beams hold your roof in place without anything to keep them from falling down? Of course not. In the same way, the columns or beams are like the main ideas of your speech, and identifying them is one important step. Another is to consider how to position them securely to rest on a solid foundation, have sufficient connection to each other that they become interdependent, and to make sure they stay where you want them to so your house, or your speech, doesn't come crashing down.

Transitions are words, phrases, or visual devices that help the audience follow the speaker's ideas, connect the main points to each other, and see the relationships you've created in the information you are presenting. They are often described as bridges between ideas, thought or concepts, providing some sense of where you've been and where you are going with your speech. Transitions are used by the speaker to guide the audience in the progression from one significant idea, concept or point to the next issue. They can also show the relationship between the main point and the support the speaker uses to illustrate, provide examples for, or reference outside sources. Depending your purpose, transitions can serve different roles as you help create the glue that will connect your points together in a way the audience can easily follow.

Table 11.7 Types of Transitions in Speeches

Type	Definition	Examples
1. Internal Previews	An internal preview is a brief statement referring to a point you are going to make. It can forecast or foreshadow a main point coming in your speech.	If we look ahead to, next we'll examine, now we can focus our attention on, first we'll look at, then we'll examine
2. Signposts	A signpost alerts the audience that you are moving from one topic to the next. Signposts or signal words draw attention to themselves and focus the audience's attention.	Stop and consider, we can now address, next I'd like to explain, turning from/to, another, this reminds me of, I would like to emphasize
3. Internal Summaries	An internal summary briefly covers information or alludes to information introduced previously. It can remind an audience of a previous point and reinforce information covered in your speech.	As I have said, as we have seen, as mentioned earlier, in any event, in other words, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize, as a result, as I've noted previously, in conclusion
4. Sequence Transition	A sequence transition outlines a hierarchical order or series of steps in your speech. It can illustrate order or steps in a logical process.	First…second…third, furthermore, next, last, still, also, and then, besides, finally
5. Time	A time transition focuses on the chronological aspects of your speech order. Particularly useful in a speech utilizing a story, this transition can illustrate for the audience progression of time.	Before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, then, until, afterward
6. Addition	An addition or additive transition contributes to a previous point. This transition can build on a previous point and extend the discussion.	In addition to, furthermore, either, neither, besides, moreover, in fact, as a matter of fact, actually, not only, but also, as well as, not to mention
7. Similarity	A transition by similarity draws a parallel between two ideas, concepts, or examples. It can indicate a common area between points for the audience.	In the same way, by the same token, equally, similarly, just as we have seen, in the same vein
8. Comparison	A transition by comparison draws a distinction between two ideas, concepts, or examples. It can indicate a common or divergent area between points for the audience.	Like, in relation to, bigger than, smaller than, the fastest, than any other, is greater than, both, either…or, likewise, even more important
9. Contrast	A transition by contrast draws a distinction of difference, opposition, or irregularity between two ideas, concepts, or examples. This transition can indicate a key distinction between points for the audience.	But, neither…nor, however, on the other hand, although, even though, in contrast, in spite of, despite, on the contrary, conversely, unlike, while, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, regardless, still, though, yet
10. Cause and Effect or Result	A transition by cause and effect or result illustrates a relationship between two ideas, concepts, or examples and may focus on the outcome or result. It can illustrate a relationship between points for the audience.	As a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, accordingly, so, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, for this reason, as a result, because, therefore, consequently, as a consequence, and the outcome was
11. Examples	A transition by example illustrates a connection between a point and an example or examples. You may find visual aids work well with this type of transition.	In fact, as we can see, after all, even, for example, for instance, of course, specifically, such as, in the following example, to illustrate my point
12. Place	A place transition refers to a location, often in a spatially organized speech, of one point of emphasis to another. Again, visual aids work well when discussing physical location with an audience.	Opposite to, there, to the left, to the right, above, below, adjacent to, elsewhere, far, farther on, beyond, closer to, here, near, nearby, next to
13. Clarification	A clarification transition restates or further develops a main idea or point. It can also serve as a signal to a key point.	To clarify, that is, I mean, in other words, to put it another way, that is to say, to rephrase it, in order to explain, this means
14. Concession	A concession transition indicates knowledge of contrary information. It can address a perception the audience may hold and allow for clarification.	We can see that while, although it is true that, granted that, while it may appear that, naturally, of course, I can see that, I admit that even though

Table 11.7 "Types of Transitions in Speeches" is a summary of fourteen distinct types of transitions. As you contemplate how to bring together your information, consider how you will use various transitions, and note them on your outline.

Key Takeaways

A speech needs transitions to help the audience understand how the speaker's main ideas are connected to one another.

Exercises

1. By visiting the library or doing an Internet search, find a speech that teaches you one new skill or idea. The speech may be published in a book or newspaper, recorded in an audio file, or recorded on video. Read or listen to the speech and identify the transitions the speaker has used.
2. Listen to your favorite comedian. Write a brief summary of how they transition from topic to topic. Share and compare with classmates.
3. Listen to a conversation with friends and observe how they transition from topic to topic. Write a brief summary. Share and compare with classmates.
4.

11.13 Additional Resources

Visit this site for a library of University of California videotapes on nonverbal communication produced by Dane Archer of the University of California at Santa Cruz. http://nonverbal.ucsc.edu

Read "Six Ways to Improve Your Nonverbal Communications" by Vicki Ritts, St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and James R. Stein, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. http://www.comprofessor.com/2011/02/six-ways-to-improve-your-nonverbal.html

Read "Listen With Your Eyes: Tips for Understanding Nonverbal Communication," an About.com article by Susan Heathfield. http://humanresources.about.com/od/interpersonalcommunicatio1/a/nonverbal_com.htm

Presentation Magazine offers a wealth of ideas, tips, and templates for designing effective visual aids. http://www.presentationmagazine.com

The National Center for Education Statistics offers an easy-to-use "Create a Graph" tutorial including bar, line, area, pie, and other types of graphs. The site is made for kids, but it's worthwhile for adults too. http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/graphing/classic

Read "The Seven Sins of Visual Presentations" from Presentation Magazine. http://www.presentationmagazine.com/7sinsvisual.htm

Yale emeritus professor Edward Tufte is one of the top authorities on the visual presentation of data. Learn about his books on data presentation and a one-day course he teaches. http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/courses

Greg Conley has produced an excellent discussion of color, contrast, and tips for the use of color on his Web site and has gracefully allowed it to be included here for your benefit. Check out his site for more in-depth information and consider taking an art course to further develop your awareness of color. http://www.watercolorpainting.com/color.htm

Visit "Presenting Effective Presentations with Visual Aids" from the U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA Office of Training and Education. http://www.rufwork.com/110/mats/oshaVisualAids.html

The American Psychological Association provides guidelines for making presentations accessible for persons with disabilities. http://www.apa.org/pi/disability/resources/convention/index.aspx

Read "Using Visual Aids and Props for Giving More Powerful Presentations" by Larry M. Lynch. http://ezinearticles.com/?Using-Visual-Aids-and-Props-for-Giving-More-Powerful-Presentations&id=100871

Is "how you say it" really more important than what you say? Read an article by communications expert Dana Bristol-Smith that debunks a popular myth. http://www.sideroad.com/Public_Speaking/how-you-say-not-more-important-what-you-say.html

The commercial site from *Inc*. magazine presents an article on organizing your speech by Patricia Fripp, former president of the National Speakers Association. http://www.inc.com/articles/2000/10/20844.html

Read a straightforward tutorial on speech organization by Robert Gwynne on this University of Central Florida site. http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~rbrokaw/organizing.html

View an eHow video on how to organize a speech. How does the advice in this video differ from organizing advice given in this chapter? http://www.ehow.com/video_4401082_organizing-speech-parts.html

Read more about how to outline a speech on this site from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/research/outlining.html

Learn more about how to outline a speech from the Six Minutes public speaking and presentation skills blog. http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/2008/02/29/speech-preparation-3-outline-examples

UNIT 12 TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS

12.1 Presentations to Inform

After all, the ultimate goal of all research is not objectivity, but truth.–Helene Deutsch

Getting Started

Introductory Exercises

1. Please make a list of five activities you have participated in recently. Choose one and create a time order list, from start to finish, of at least five major steps involved in accomplishing the activity.
2. From the list of five activities above, please consider which of the activities the audience (or your class) has probably had the least experience with. Now make a list from that activity of at least three things you would explain to them so that they could better understand it. From that new list, consider how you might show those three things, including visual aids.

Storytelling is a basic part of human communication. You've probably told several short stories just today to relate to friends what the drive to school was like, how your partner has been acting, what your boss said to a customer, or even what your speech teacher did in class. With each story you were sharing information, but is sharing the same as informing? At first you might be tempted to say "sure," but consider whether you had a purpose for telling a friend about another friend's actions, or if the words you used to discuss your boss communicated any attitude.

At some point in your business career you will be called upon to teach someone something. It may be a customer, coworker, or supervisor, and in each case you are performing an informative speech. It is distinct from a sales speech, or persuasive speech, in that your goal is to communicate the information so that your listener understands. For example, let's say you have the task of teaching a customer how to use a remote control (which button does what) to program a DVD/R to record. Easy, you say? Sure, it's easy for you. But for them it is new, so take a moment and consider their perspective. You may recommend this unit versus that unit, and aim for a sale, but that goal is separate from first teaching them to be successful at a task they want to learn to perform. You may need to repeat yourself several times, and they may not catch on as fast as you expect, but their mastery of the skill or task they want to learn can directly lead to a sale. They will have more confidence in you and in themselves once they've mastered the task, and will be more receptive to your advice about the competing products available.

While your end goal may be a sale, the relationship you form has more long-term value. That customer may tell a friend about the experience, show their family what they learned, and before you know it someone else comes in asking for you by name. Communicating respect and focusing on their needs is a positive first step. The informative speech is one performance you'll give many times across your career, whether your audience is one person, a small group, or a large auditorium full of listeners. Once you master the art of the informative speech, you may mix and match it with other styles and techniques.

12.2 Functions of the Presentation to Inform

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the functions of the speech to inform.
2. Explain the difference between exposition and interpretation.

Informative presentations focus on helping the audience to understand a topic, issue, or technique more clearly. You might say, "Is that all?" and the answer is both yes and no. An affirmative response underscores the idea that informative speeches do not seek to motivate the audience to change their minds, adopt a new idea, start a new habit, or get out there and vote. They may, however, inform audiences on issues that may be under consideration in an election or referendum. On the other hand, a negative response reaffirms the idea that to communicate a topic, issue, or subject clearly is a challenge in itself and shouldn't be viewed as a simplistic process. There are distinct functions inherent in a speech to inform, and you may choose to use one or more of these functions in your speech. Let's take a look at the functions and see how they relate to the central objective of facilitating audience understanding.

Share

The basic definition of communication highlights the process of understanding and sharing meaning. An informative speech follows this definition in the aspect of sharing content and information with an audience. You won't be asking the audience to actually do anything in terms of offering a response or solving a problem. Instead you'll be offering to share with the audience some of the information you have gathered relating to a topic. This act of sharing will reduce ignorance, increase learning, and facilitate understanding of your chosen topic.

Increase Understanding

How well does your audience grasp the information? This should be a guiding question to you on two levels. The first involves what they already know—or don't know—about your topic, and what key terms or ideas might be necessary for someone completely unfamiliar with your topic to grasp the ideas you are presenting. The second involves your presentation and the illustration of ideas. A bar chart, a pie graph, and a video clip may all serve you and the audience well, but how will each ingredient in your speech contribute to their understanding? The audience will respond to your attention statement and hopefully maintain interest, but how will you take your speech beyond superficial coverage of content and effectively communicate key relationships that increase understanding? These questions should serve as a challenge for your informative speech, and by looking at your speech from an audience-oriented perspective, you will increase your ability to increase the audience's understanding.

Change Perceptions

How you perceive stimuli has everything to do with a range of factors that are unique to you. We all want to make sense of our world, share our experiences, and learn that many people face the same challenges we do. Many people perceive the process of speaking in public as a significant challenge, and in this text, we have broken down the process into several manageable steps. In so doing, we have to some degree changed your perception of public speaking. When you present your speech to inform, you may want to change the audience member's perceptions of your topic. You may present an informative speech on air pollution and want to change common perceptions such as the idea that most of North America's air pollution comes from private cars, or that nuclear power plants are a major source of air pollution. You won't be asking people to go out and vote, or change their choice of automobiles, but you will help your audience change their perceptions of your topic.

Gain Skills

Just as you want to increase the audience's understanding, you may want to help the audience members gain skills. If you are presenting a speech on how to make salsa from fresh ingredients, your audience may thank you for not only the knowledge of the key ingredients and their preparation but also the product available at the conclusion. If your audience members have never made their own salsa, they may gain a new skill from your speech. In the same way, perhaps you decide to inform your audience about eBay, a person-to-person marketplace much like a garage sale in which items are auctioned or available for purchase over the Internet. You may project onto a screen in class the main Web site and take the audience through a step-by-step process on how to sell an item. The audience may learn an important skill, clean out the old items in their garage, and buy new things for the house with their newfound skills. Your intentions, of course, are not to argue that salsa is better than ketchup or that eBay is better than Amazon, but to inform the audience, increasing their understanding of the subject, and in this case, gaining new skills.

Exposition versus Interpretation

When we share information informally, we often provide our own perspective and attitude for our own reasons. But when we set out to inform an audience, taking sides or using sarcasm to communicate attitude may divide the audience into groups that agree or disagree with the speaker. The speech to inform the audience on a topic, idea, or area of content is not intended to be a display of attitude and opinion. Consider the expectations of people who attend a formal dinner. Will they use whatever fork or spoon they want, or are there expectations of protocol and decorum? In any given communication context there are expectations, both implicit and explicit. If you attend a rally on campus for health care reform, you may expect the speaker to motivate you to urge the university to stop investing in pharmaceutical companies, for example. On the other hand, if you enroll in a biochemistry course, you expect a teacher to inform you about the discipline of biochemistry—not to convince you that pharmaceutical companies are a good or bad influence on our health care system.

The speech to inform is like the classroom setting in that the goal is to inform, not to persuade, entertain, display attitude, or create comedy. If you have analyzed your audience, you'll be better prepared to develop appropriate ways to gain their attention and inform them on your topic. You want to communicate thoughts, ideas, and relationships and allow each listener specifically, and the audience generally, to draw their own conclusions. The speech to inform is all about sharing information to meet the audience's needs, not your own. While you might want to inform them about your views on politics in the Middle East, you'll need to consider what they are here to learn from you and let your audience-oriented perspective guide you as you prepare.

Exposition

This relationship between informing as opposed to persuading your audience is often expressed in terms of exposition versus interpretation. Exposition means a public exhibition or display, often expressing a complex topic in a way that makes the relationships and content clear. Expository prose is writing to inform; you may have been asked to write an expository essay in an English course or an expository report in a journalism course. The goal is to communicate the topic and content to your audience in ways that illustrate, explain, and reinforce the overall content to make your topic more accessible to the audience. The audience wants to learn about your topic and may have some knowledge on it as you do. It is your responsibility to consider ways to display the information effectively.

Interpretation and Bias

Interpretation involves adapting the information to communicate a message, perspective, or agenda. Your insights and attitudes will guide your selection of material, what you focus on, and what you delete (choosing what not to present to the audience). Your interpretation will involve personal bias. Bias is an unreasoned or not-well-thought-out judgment. Bias involves beliefs or ideas held on the basis of conviction rather than current evidence. Beliefs are often called "habits of the mind" because we come to rely on them to make decisions. Which is the better, cheapest, most expensive, or the middle-priced product? People often choose the middle-priced product and use the belief "if it costs more it must be better" (and the opposite: "if it is cheap it must not be very good"). The middle-priced item, regardless of actual price, is often perceived as "good enough." All these perceptions are based on beliefs, and they may not apply to the given decision or even be based on any evidence or rational thinking.

By extension, marketing students learn to facilitate the customer "relationship" with the brand. If you come to believe a brand stands for excellence, and a new product comes out under that brand label, you are more likely to choose it over an unknown or lesser-known competitor. Again, your choice of the new product is based on a belief rather than evidence or rational thinking. We take mental shortcuts all day long, but in our speech to inform, we have to be careful not to reinforce bias.

Bias is like a filter on your perceptions, thoughts, and ideas. Bias encourages you to accept positive evidence that supports your existing beliefs (regardless of whether they are true) and reject negative evidence that does not support your beliefs. Furthermore, bias makes you likely to reject positive support for opposing beliefs and accept negative evidence (again, regardless of whether the evidence is true). So what is positive and what is negative? In a biased frame of mind, that which supports your existing beliefs is positive and likely to be accepted, while that which challenges your beliefs is likely to be viewed as negative and rejected. There is the clear danger in bias. You are inclined to tune out or ignore information, regardless of how valuable, useful, or relevant it may be, simply because it doesn't agree with or support what you already believe.

Point of View

Let's say you are going to present an informative speech on a controversial topic like same-sex marriage. Without advocating or condemning same-sex marriage, you could inform your audience about current laws in various states, recent and proposed changes in laws, the number of same-sex couples who have gotten married in various places, the implications of being married or not being able to marry, and so on. But as you prepare and research your topic, do you only read or examine information that supports your existing view? If you only choose to present information that agrees with your prior view, you've incorporated bias into your speech. Now let's say the audience members have different points of view, even biased ones, and as you present your information you see many people start to fidget in their seats. You can probably anticipate that if they were to speak, the first word they would say is "but" and then present their question or assertion. In effect, they will be having a debate with themselves and hardly listening to you.

You can anticipate the effects of bias and mitigate them to some degree. First, know the difference between your point of view or perspective and your bias. Your point of view is your perception of an idea or concept from your previous experience and understanding. It is unique to you and is influenced by your experiences and also factors like gender, race, ethnicity, physical characteristics, and social class. Everyone has a point of view, as hard as they may try to be open-minded. But bias, as we've discussed previously, involves actively selecting information that supports or agrees with your current belief and takes away from any competing belief. To make sure you are not presenting a biased speech, frame your discussion to inform from a neutral stance and consider alternative points of view to present, compare and contrast, and diversify your speech. The goal of the speech to inform is to present an expository speech that reduces or tries to be free from overt interpretation.

This relates to our previous discussion on changing perceptions. Clearly no one can be completely objective and remove themselves from their own perceptual process. People are not modern works of minimalist art, where form and function are paramount and the artist is completely removed from the expression. People express themselves and naturally relate what is happening now to what has happened to them in the past. You are your own artist, but you also control your creations.

Objectivity involves expressions and perceptions of facts that are free from distortion by your prejudices, bias, feelings or interpretations. For example, is the post office box blue? An objective response would be yes or no, but a subjective response might sound like "Well, it's not really blue as much as it is navy, even a bit of purple, kind of like the color of my ex-boyfriend's car, remember? I don't care for the color myself." Subjectivity involves expressions or perceptions that are modified, altered, or impacted by your personal bias, experiences, and background. In an informative speech, your audience will expect you to present the information in a relatively objective form. The speech should meet the audience's need as they learn about the content, not your feelings, attitudes, or commentary on the content.

Here are five suggestions to help you present a neutral speech:

1. Keep your language neutral and not very positive for some issues while very negative for others.
2. Keep your sources credible and not from biased organizations. The National Rifle Association (NRA) will have a biased view of the Second Amendment, for example, as will the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on civil rights.
3. Keep your presentation balanced. If you use a source that supports one clear side of an issue, include an alternative source and view. Give each equal time and respectful consideration.
4. Keep your audience in mind. Not everyone will agree with every point or source of evidence, but diversity in your speech will have more to offer everyone.
5. Keep who you represent in mind: Your business and yourself.

Key Takeaways

- The purpose of an informative speech is to share ideas with the audience, increase their understanding, change their perceptions, or help them gain new skills.
- An informative speech incorporates the speaker's point of view but not attitude or interpretation.

Exercises

1. Consider the courses you have taken in the past year or two, and the extent to which each class session involved an informative presentation or one that was more persuasive. Do some disciplines lend themselves more to informing rather than interpretation and attitude? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Visit a major network news Web site and view a video of a commentator such as Rachel Maddow or Keith Olbermann (MSNBC) or Glenn Beck or Bill O'Reilly (Fox News). Identify the commentator's point of view. If you

were giving a presentation to inform, would you express your point of view in a similar style?

3. On the same network news Web site you used for Exercise no. 2, view a video reporting a news event (as opposed to a commentator's commentary). Do you feel that the reporter's approach conveys a point of view, or is it neutral? Explain your feelings and discuss with your classmates.
4. What is the difference between an informative presentation and a persuasive one? Provide an example in your response.
5. Consider a sample speech to inform on a topic where you have a strong opinion. In what ways would you adjust your key points so as not to persuade your listeners? Discuss your ideas with a classmate.
6.

12.3 Types of Presentations to Inform

Learning Objectives

1. Provide examples of four main types of speech to inform.

Speaking to inform may fall into one of several categories. The presentation to inform may be

- an explanation,
- a report,
- a description, or
- a demonstration of how to do something.

Let's explore each of these types of informative speech.

Explanation

Have you ever listened to a lecture or speech where you just didn't get it? It wasn't that you weren't interested, at least not at first. Perhaps the professor used language and jargon, or gave a confusing example, or omitted something that would have linked facts or concepts together. Soon you probably lost interest and sat there, attending the speech or lecture in body but certainly not in mind. An effective speech to inform will take a complex topic or issue and *explain* it to the audience in ways that increase audience understanding. Perhaps the speech where you felt lost lacked definitions upfront, or a clear foundation in the introduction. You certainly didn't learn much, and that's exactly what you want to avoid when you address your audience. Consider how you felt and then find ways to explain your topic—visually, using definitions and examples, providing a case study—that can lay a foundation on common ground with your audience and build on it.

No one likes to feel left out. As the speaker, it's your responsibility to ensure that this doesn't happen. Also know that to teach someone something new—perhaps a skill that they did not posses or a perspective that allows them to see new connections—is a real gift, both to you and the audience members. You will feel rewarded because you made a difference and they will perceive the gain in their own understanding.

Report

As a business communicator, you may be called upon to give an informative report where you communicate status, trends, or relationships that pertain to a specific topic. You might have only a few moments to speak, and you may have to prepare within a tight time frame. Your listeners may want "just the highlights," only to ask pointed questions that require significant depth and preparation on your part. The informative report is a speech where you organize your information around key events, discoveries, or technical data and provide context and illustration for your audience. They may naturally wonder, "Why are sales up (or down)?" or "What is the product leader in your lineup?" and you need to anticipate their perspective and present the key information that relates to your topic. If everyone in the room knows the product line, you may not need much information about your best seller, but instead place emphasis on marketing research that seems to indicate why it is the best seller.

Perhaps you are asked to be the scout and examine a new market, developing strategies to penetrate it. You'll need to orient your audience and provide key information about the market and demonstrate leadership as you articulate your strategies. You have a perspective gained by time and research, and your audience wants to know why you see things the way you do, as well as learn what you learned. A status report may be short or long, and may be an update that requires little background, but always consider the audience and what common ground you are building your speech on.

Description

Have you ever listened to a friend tell you about their recent trip somewhere and found the details fascinating, making you want to travel there or visit a similar place? Or perhaps you listened to your chemistry teacher describe a chemical reaction you were going to perform in class and you understood the process and could reasonably anticipate the outcome. Describing information requires emphasis on language that is vivid, captures attention, and excites the imagination. Your audience will be drawn to your effective use of color, descriptive language, and visual aids. An informative speech that focuses description will be visual in many ways. You may choose to illustrate with images, video and audio clips, and maps. Your first-person experience combined with your content will allow the audience to come to know a topic, area, or place through you, or secondhand. Their imagination is your ally, and you should aim to stimulate it with attention-getting devices and clear visual aids. Use your imagination to place yourself in their perspective: how would you like to have someone describe the topic to you?

Demonstration

You want to teach the audience how to throw a fast pitch in softball or a curveball in baseball. You want to demonstrate how to make salsa or how to program the applications on a smartphone. Each of these topics will call on your kindergarten experience of "show and tell." A demonstrative speech focuses on clearly showing a process and telling the audience important details about each step so that they can imitate, repeat, or do the action themselves. If the topic is complicated, think of ways to simplify each step.

Consider the visual aids or supplies you will need. You may have noticed that cooking shows on television rarely show the chef chopping and measuring ingredients during the demonstration. Instead, the ingredients are chopped and measured ahead of time and the chef simply adds each item to the dish with a brief comment like, "Now we'll stir in half a cup of chicken stock." If you want to present a demonstration speech on the ways to make a paper airplane, one that will turn left or right, go up, down or in loops, consider how best to present your topic. Perhaps by illustrating the process of making one airplane followed by example on how to make adjustments to the plane to allow for different flight patterns would be effective. Would you need additional paper airplanes made in advance of your speech? Would an example of the paper airplane in each of the key stages of production be helpful to have ready before the speech? Having all your preparation done ahead of time can make a world of difference, and your audience will appreciate your thoughtful approach.

By considering each step and focusing on how to simplify it, you can understand how the audience might grasp the new information and how you can best help them. Also, consider the desired outcome; for example, will your listeners be able to actually do the task themselves or will they gain an appreciation of the complexities of a difficult skill like piloting an airplane to a safe landing? Regardless of the sequence or pattern you will illustrate or demonstrate, consider how people from your anticipated audience will respond, and budget additional time for repetition and clarification.

Informative presentations come in all sizes, shapes, and forms. You may need to create an "elevator speech" style presentation with the emphasis on brevity, or produce a comprehensive summary of several points that require multiple visual aids to communicate complex processes or trends. The main goal in an informative presentation is to inform, not to persuade, and that requires an emphasis on credibility, for the speaker and the data or information presented. Extra attention to sources is required and you'll need to indicate what reports, texts, or Web sites were sources for your analysis and conclusions.

Here are additional, more specific types of informative presentations:

- Biographical information
- Case study results
- Comparative advantage results
- Cost-benefit analysis results
- Feasibility studies
- Field study results
- Financial trends analysis
- Health, safety, and accident rates
- Instruction guidelines
- Laboratory results
- Product or service orientations
- Progress reports
- Research results
- Technical specifications

Depending on the rhetorical situation, the audience, and the specific information to be presented, any of these types of presentation may be given as an explanation, a report, a description, or a demonstration.

Key Takeaways

An informative speech may explain, report, describe, or demonstrate how to do something.

Exercises

1. Watch a "how-to" television show, such as one about cooking, home improvement, dog training, or crime solving. What informative techniques and visual aids are used in the show to help viewers learn the skills that are being demonstrated?
2. Prepare a simple "how-to" presentation for the class. Present and compare your results.
3. Compare and contrast two television programs, noting how each communicates the meaning via visual communication rather than words or dialogue. Share and compare with classmates.
4.

12.4 Adapting Your Presentation to Teach

Learning Objectives

1. Articulate and demonstrate an audience-centered perspective.
2. Provide and demonstrate examples of ways to facilitate active listening.

Successfully delivering an informative speech requires adopting an audience-centered perspective. Imagine that you are in the audience. What would it take for the speaker to capture and maintain your attention? What would encourage you to listen? In this section we present several techniques for achieving this, including motivating your audience to listen, framing your information in meaningful ways, and designing your presentation to appeal to diverse learning styles.

Motivating the Listener

In an ideal world, every audience member would be interested in your topic. Unfortunately, however, not everyone will be equally interested in your informative speech. The range of interest might extend from not at all interested to very interested, with individual audience members all across this continuum. So what is a speaker to do in order to motivate the listener?

The perception process involves selection or choice, and you want your audience to choose to listen to you. You can have all the "bells and whistles" of a dramatic, entertaining or engaging speech and still not capture everyone's attention. You can, however, use what you know to increase their chances of paying attention to you. Begin with your attention statement at the beginning of your speech and make sure it is dynamic and arresting. Remember what active listening involves, and look for opportunities throughout your speech to encourage active listening.

Let's highlight seven strategies by posing questions that audience members may think, but not actually say out loud, when deciding whether to listen to your speech. By considering each question, you will take a more audience-centered approach to developing your speech, increasing your effectiveness.

How Is Your Topic Relevant to Me?

A natural question audience members will ask themselves is, what does the topic have to do with me? Why should I care about it? Your first response might be because it's your turn to speak, so the least they can do is be respectful. Instead, consider the idea that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make her drink. If you are in a class, the audience is part of the class and they may be present in body, but they may arrive wishing they were somewhere else. You can put a stop to that wish by making your topic relevant for your audience. Relevancemeans that the information applies, relates, or has significance to the listener. Find areas of common ground and build on them.

If you are going to present an informative speech about the drinking and driving laws in your state, you can be assured that many people in the audience drive automobiles, some may consume alcohol, and according to psychologist Abraham Maslow, everyone needs safety. You may also consider that some of your listeners have had experiences with people who have consumed too much alcohol or people who have driven under the influence; they may have even had a loved one injured by an intoxicated driver. You may use the issue of safety to underscore relevance. You might consider briefly alluding to the effects of alcohol, asking rhetorically if audience members have ever seen someone try to walk, talk, or even drive after a drinking binge. All these strategies will reinforce the relevance of your topic and highlight connections across common ground.

What Will I Learn from You?

This question involves several issues. How much does the audience already know about your subject? What areas do you think they might not know? If you know that many people are aware of the laws in your state that pertain to intoxicated driving, you may consider informing them about proposed changes to these laws in your state legislature. Another approach might be to describe the impact of the laws on families and individuals. The consequences can be discussed in terms of annual statistics of motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol, the age and gender distribution of those involved, and the individual consequences in terms of financial penalties, impact on employment, and a criminal record. By building on the information the audience knows, briefly reviewing it and then extending it, illustrating it, and demonstrating the impact, you inform them of things they didn't already know.

Why Are You Interested in This Topic?

Your interest in your topic is an excellent way to encourage your audience to listen. Interestinvolves qualities that arouse attention, stimulate curiosity, or move an individual to a more excited state of mind. You probably selected your topic with your audience in mind, but also considered your interest in the topic. Why did you choose it over other topics? What about your topic aroused your attention? Did it stimulate your curiosity? Did it make you excited about researching and preparing a speech on it? These questions will help you clarify your interest, and by sharing the answers with your listeners, you will stimulate excitement on their part.

How Can I Use the Knowledge or Skills You Present to Me?

In an informative speech you are not asking your listeners to go out and vote, or to quit smoking tomorrow, as you would in a persuasive speech. Nevertheless, you need to consider how they will apply their new understanding. Application involves the individual's capacity for practical use of the information, skill, or knowledge. As a result of your speech, will your listeners be able to do something new like set up an auction on eBay? Will they better understand the importance of saving money and know three new ways to save for retirement?

For example, as a result of your informative speech on drunk driving laws, they may reflect on what a conviction would mean to them financially, think about how they would get to work if their driver's license was suspended, or imagine the grief of a family when an innocent person is killed in a drunk driving accident. Although your goal is not to persuade but inform, the new knowledge gained by your audience may motivate them to make new decisions about their lives.

When you prepare your presentation, consider ways you can actively show application of your material or content. Incorporate messages into your speech to highlight the practical use of the knowledge or skill. A couple of helpful comments about how the audience will actually use the information will go a long way toward encouraging listening and gaining attention.

What Is New about What You Propose to Present?

Sometimes humans seem like a mass of contradictions. We are naturally attracted to novelty, yet we appreciate predictability. We like clear organization, yet there are times when we enjoy a little controlled chaos. Novelty involves something new, unusual, or unfamiliar. As a speaker, how do you meet the two contrasting needs for familiarity and novelty?

Address both. You may want to start by forming a clear foundation on what you have in common with the audience. Present the known elements of your topic and then extend into areas where less is known, increasing the novelty or new information as you progress. People will feel comfortable with the familiar, and be intrigued by the unfamiliar.

You might also invert this process, starting from a relatively unfamiliar stance and working your way back to the familiar. This is a technique often used in cinema, where the opening shot is an extreme close-up of something and you can't guess what it is for lack of perspective. As the camera pulls back or pans left or right, you get more clues and eventually are able to see what it is. It is intriguing, yet familiar. Consider ways to reinforce the novelty of your material to your audience to encourage listening.

Are You Going to Bore Me?

You have probably sat through your fair share of boring lectures where the speaker, teacher, or professor talks at length in a relatively monotone voice, fails to alternate his or her pace, incorporates few visual aids or just reads from a PowerPoint show for an hour in a dimly lighted room. Recall how you felt. Trapped? Tired? Did you wonder why you had to be there? Then you know what you need to avoid.

Being bored means the speaker failed to stimulate you as the listener, probably increased your resistance to listening or participating, and became tiresome. To avoid boring your audience, speak with enthusiasm, and consider ways to gain, and keep gaining, their attention. You don't have to be a standup comedian, however, to avoid being a boring speaker. Consider the rhetorical situation, and let the audience's needs guide you as you prepare. Adjust and adapt as they give you feedback, nonverbal or verbal. Consider the question, "What's in it for me?" from the audience's perspective and plan to answer it specifically with vivid examples. If your presentation meets their expectations and meets their needs, listeners are more likely to give you their attention.

Figure 12.1. Michael Coghlan – Attentive – CC BY-SA 2.0.

If your presentation meets their expectations and meets their needs, listeners are more likely to give you their attention.

You may also give some thought and consideration to the organizational principle and choose a strategy that promises success. By organizing the information in interesting ways within the time frame, you can increase your effectiveness. The opposite of boring is not necessarily entertaining. Variety in your speech, from your voice to your visual aids, will help stimulate interest.

Is This Topic Really as Important as You Say It Is?

No one wants to feel like his or her time is being wasted. That trapped, tired, or bored feeling is often related to a perception that the topic is not relevant or important. What is important to you and what is important to your audience may be two different things. Take time and plan to reinforce in your speech how the topic is important to your audience. Importance involves perceptions of worth, value, and usefulness.

How can you express that the topic is worthy of their attention? We've discussed the importance of considering why you chose the topic in the first place as a strategy to engage your audience. They will want to know why the topic was worthy of your time, and by extension, their time.

Consider how to express through images, examples, or statistics the depth, breadth, and impact of your topic. Tell the audience how many drivers under the age of twenty-one lose their lives each year in alcohol-related accidents, or what percentage of all under-twenty-one deaths in your state are related to a combination of drinking and driving. Remember, too, that because statistics may sound impersonal or overwhelming, focusing on a specific case may provide more depth. As a final tip, be careful not to exaggerate the importance of your topic, as you may run the risk of having the audience mentally call your bluff. If this happens, you will lose some credibility and attention.

Framing

The presentation of information shapes attitudes and behavior. This is done through framing and content. Framing involves placing an imaginary set of boundaries, much like a frame around a picture or a window, around a story, of what is included and omitted, influencing the story itself. What lies within the frame that we can see? What lies outside the frame that we cannot see? Which way does the window face? All these variables impact our perspective, and by the acts of gatekeeping and agenda setting, the media frames the stories we see and information we learn.

Suppose you are presenting an informative speech about media effects on viewers. You might cite the case of the 1993 movie *The Program* about college football players (James, C., 1993). In one scene, to demonstrate their "courage," the football players lie on the divider line of a busy highway at night as cars rush past. After viewing the film, several teenagers imitated the scene; some were seriously injured and one died as a result (Wilson, J. and Wilson, S., 1998). How will you frame this incident in the context of your speech? You might mention that the production studio subsequently deleted the highway sequence from the film, that the sequence clearly indicated the actors were stunt men, or that *The Program* ultimately argues that such behavior is destructive and unwarranted. Or you might cite additional incidents where people have been injured or killed by trying a stunt they saw in the media.

One form of framing is gatekeeping. Gatekeeping, according to Pearson and Nelson, is "a process of determining what news, information, or entertainment will reach a mass audience" (Pearson, J. and Nelson, P., 2000). The term "gatekeeping" was originally used by psychologist Kurt Lewin as a metaphor, featuring a series of gates that information must pass through before ever reaching the audience (Wilson, J. and Wilson, S., 1998). In the context of journalism and mass media, gates and gatekeepers may include media owners, editors, or even the individual reporter in the context of mass communication. In the context of public speaking, you as the speaker are the gatekeeper to the information.

Another function of gatekeeping is agenda setting. Setting the agenda, just like the agenda of a meeting, means selecting what the audience will see and hear and in what order. Who decides what is the number one story on the evening news? Throughout the twentieth century, professional communicators working in the media industry set the agenda for readers, listeners, and viewers; today widespread Internet access has greatly broadened the number of people who can become agenda setters. In giving a speech, you select the information and set the agenda. You may choose to inform the audience on a topic that gets little press coverage, or use a popular story widely covered in a new way, with a case example and local statistics.

Another aspect of framing your message is culture. According to Pearson and Nelson, culturewithin the context of communication is "a set of beliefs and understandings a society has about the world, its place in it, and the various activities used to celebrate and reinforce those beliefs" (Pearson, J. and Nelson, P., 2000). Themes of independence, overcoming challenging circumstances, and hard-fought victory are seen repeatedly in American programming and national speeches. They reflect an aspect of American culture. In the case of football, it is sometimes viewed as the quintessentially male American sport, and its importance on Thanksgiving Day is nothing short of a ritual for many Americans. If you went to a country in Latin America, you would probably find the television set tuned to a soccer game, where soccer is the revered sport. What do these sports say about culture?

Figure 12.2. Celso FLORES – Mexico – South Africa Match at Soccer City – CC BY 2.0.

Cultural values are expressed through interaction, including sports.

One might argue that American football is aggressive and that, while the team is important, the individual's effort and record are celebrated in all the time between plays. Significant attention is given to the salary each individual player makes. In South American football, or soccer, the announcer's emphasis is on the team and at breaks, some discussion of key players is present, but not to the same degree, though this is changing.

What do these differences tell us? Our interpretation of these differences may point toward ways in which the media reinforces national culture and its values. However, since you are speaking to inform, take care not to overgeneralize. To state that American football is a male-viewer-dominated sport may be an accurate observation, but to exclude women when discussing the sport would lead to a generalization that is not accurate, and may even perpetuate a stereotype.

The media and its public communication is an active participant in the perpetuation of stereotypes in many ways. In the mid-1990s, Julia Wood made an interesting observation of the world according to television: "It is a world in which males make up two-thirds of the population. The women are fewer in number perhaps because less than 10 percent live beyond 35. Those who do, like their male counterparts and the younger females, are nearly all white and heterosexual. In addition to being young, the majority of women are beautiful, very thin, passive, and primarily concerned with relationships and getting rings out of collars and commodes" (Pearson, J. and Nelson, P., 2000).

This limited view, itself a product of gatekeeping, agenda setting, and the profit motive, has little connection to the "real world." Most people in the world are not white, and the majority of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. There are more women than men in the adult populations of most countries. Women do not tend to die off at age thirty-five, in fact women on average live longer than men. Many people, particularly in a diverse country that is undergoing dramatic demographic changes, are not members of just one racial, ethnic, or cultural group but rather a member of many groups. Consider culture when selecting content and note that diversity of information and sources will strengthen your speech and relate to more members of your audience.

Additional Tips

Andrews, Andrews, and Williams offer eight ways to help listeners learn that are adapted and augmented here.

Limit the Number of Details

While it may be tempting to include many of the facts you've found in your research, choose only those that clearly inform your audience. Try to group the information and then choose the best example to reduce your list of details. You don't want the audience focusing on a long list of facts and details only to miss your main points.

Focus on Clear Main Points

Your audience should be able to discern your main points clearly the first time. You'll outline them in your introduction and they will listen for them as you proceed. Connect supporting information to your clear main points to reinforce them, and provide verbal cues of points covered and points to come.

Use internal summaries, where you state, "Now that we've discussed X point, let's examine its relationship to Y point. This will help your audience follow your logic and organization and differentiate between supporting material and main points. You may also want to foreshadow points by stating, "We'll examine Z point in a moment but first let's consider Y point."

Pace Yourself Carefully

Talking too fast is a common expression of speech anxiety. One way to reduce your anxiety level is to practice and know your information well. As you practice, note where you are in terms of time at the completion of each point. After a few practice rounds, you should begin to see some consistency in your speed. Use these benchmarks of time to pace yourself. When you deliver your speech, knowing you have time, are well prepared, and are familiar with your speech patterns will help you to pace yourself more effectively.

Speak with Concern for Clarity

Not everyone speaks English as his or her first language, and even among English speakers, there is a wide discrepancy in speaking style and language use. When you choose your language, consider challenging terms and jargon, and define them accordingly. You may assume that everyone knows "NIH" stands for "National Institutes of Health," but make sure you explain the acronym the first time you use it, just as you would if you were writing a formal article. Also pay attention to enunciation and articulation. As your rate of speech picks up, you may tend to slur words together and drop or de-emphasize consonants, especially at the ends of words. Doing this will make you harder to understand, discouraging listening.

Use Restatement and Repetition

There is nothing wrong with restating main points or repeating key phrases. The landmark speech titled "I have a dream," which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered on August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, used that phrase multiple times to reinforce the main message effectively.

Provide Visual Reinforcement

We've discussed the importance of visual aids to support and illustrate your content. As a speaker giving a prepared presentation, you have the luxury of preparing your visual aids with your audience in mind. In an impromptu speech, or a media interview, you may lack this luxury and find the effort challenging to appropriately reinforce your content. Take advantage of the known time frame before your speech to prepare effective visual aids and your speech will be more effective.

Include Time for Questions

You can't possibly cover all the information about a topic that every audience member would want to know in the normal five to seven minutes of a speech. You may do an excellent job of supporting and reinforcing your points, but many listeners may have questions. Take this as a compliment—after all, if you hadn't piqued their interest, they wouldn't have any questions to ask. Answering questions is an opportunity to elaborate on a point, reinforcing what you presented and relying on your thorough preparation to illustrate the point with more depth.

In some situations, the speaker will accept and answer questions during the body of the presentations, but it is more typical to ask listeners to hold their questions until the end. Depending on your instructor's guidelines, you may advise the class at the beginning of your presentation which of these formats you will follow.

Look for Ways to Involve Listeners Actively

Instead of letting your audience sit passively, motivate them to get involved in your presentation. You might ask for a show of hands as you raise a question like, "How many of you have wondered about…?" You might point out the window, encouraging your audience to notice a weather pattern or an example of air pollution. Even stepping away from the podium for a moment can provide variety and increase active listening.

Assess Learning, If Possible

Questions during a speech can help assess understanding, but also run the risk of derailing your speech as the audience pursues one point while you have two more to present. Make time for dialogue after the conclusion of your speech and encourage your audience to write down their questions and ask them at that time. Perhaps asking your audience to reflect on a point, and then to write a few sentences at the conclusion of your speech, might reinforce your central message.

Key Takeaways

To present a successful informative speech, motivate your audience by making your material relevant and useful, finding interesting ways to frame your topic, and emphasizing new aspects if the topic is a familiar one.

Exercises

1. Visit an online news Web site such as CNN, MSNBC, or PBS NewsHour. Select a news video on a topic that interests you and watch it a few times. Identify the ways in which the speaker(s) adapt the presentation to be informative and frame the topic. Discuss your results with your classmates.
2. Watch a news program and write down the words that could be considered to communicate values, bias, or opinion. Share and compare with the class.
3. Watch a news program and find an example that you consider to be objective, "just the facts," and share it with the class.
4. Note how television programs (or other media) use novelty to get your attention. Find at least three headlines, teaser advertisements for television programs, or similar attempts to get attention and share with the class.
5. How can an audience's prior knowledge affect a speech? What percentage of an informative presentation do you expect an audience to remember? Why?

12.5 Diverse Types of Intelligence and Learning Styles

Learning Objectives

1. Define the concepts of multiple intelligences and learning styles, and identify different types of intelligence and learning styles that audience members may have.

Psychologist Howard Gardner is known for developing the theory of multiple intelligences in which he proposes that different people are intelligent in different domains. For example, some people may excel in interpersonal intelligence, or the ability to form and maintain relationships. Other people may excel in bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, or physical coordination and control. Still others have a high degree of musical intelligence or of logico-mathematical intelligence. While some psychologists argue that these are actually talents or aptitudes rather than forms of intelligence, the point remains that individual audience members will receive information differently, depending on the types of intelligence (or talent) they possess.

An outgrowth of the theory of multiple intelligences is the theory of learning styles, the idea that people learn better if the message is presented in a strategy that fits with the types of intelligence in which they are strongest. Consider each style when preparing your speech. What styles might work best with your particular audience?

For example, suppose you work for a do-it-yourself home improvement store and part of your job is to give an informative seminar once a month on how to renovate a previously wallpapered wall. Your topic is specified for you, and you are very familiar with your subject matter, having worked in a variety of homes where old wallpaper needed to be removed or replaced. However, you never know from one month to the next how many people will come to your seminar or what their interests and level of prior knowledge are.

If you begin by going around the room and asking each person to describe the wallpaper situation they plan to work on, this will help you determine what kinds of questions your audience hopes to have answered, but it won't tell you anything about their learning styles. Suppose instead that you ask them to state why they decided to attend and what their career or occupation is. Now you can gauge your presentation according to the likely learning styles of your audience. For example, if you have ten attendees and five of them work in the banking or information technology field, it is probably safe to assume they are fairly strong in the logical or mathematical area. This will help you decide how to talk about measuring the wall, calculating product quantities, and estimating cost. If another attendee is a psychologist, he or she may be able to relate on the intrapersonal and interpersonal level. You may decide to strengthen your remarks about the importance of being comfortable with one's choices for renovating the room, seeking consensus from family members, and considering how the finished room will be suitable for guests. If some attendees work in the arts, they may be especially attentive to your advice about the aesthetic qualities of a well-executed wall surface renovation.

Table 12.1 "Diverse Learning Styles and Strategies" provides a summary of the seven styles and some suggested strategies to help you design your speech to align with each learning style.

Table 12.1 Diverse Learning Styles and Strategies

Learning Style	Examples	Strategies
Linguistic	Language, reading, verbal expression, speaking, writing, memorizing words (names, places, and dates)	Reading, oral presentations such as debates, reports, or storytelling
Logical/ Mathematical	Use of numbers, perceiving relationships, reasoning (sequential, deductive, inductive), computation	Problem solving, graphic organizers, categorizing, classifying, working with patterns and relationships
Spatial	Think in three dimensions, mental imagery, design color, form and line within space	Maps, charts, graphic organizers, painting or drawing, visual aids, working with pictures or colors
Musical	Discern rhythm, pitch and tone, interpret music, identify tonal patterns, compose music	Rhythmic patterns and exercises, singing, music performance
Bodily/ Kinesthetic	Sense of timing and balance, athletics, dance, work that takes physical skill	Drama, role playing, touching and manipulating objects, demonstrating
Interpersonal	Organizing, leading others, communicating, collaboration, negotiating, mediating	Group projects, interaction, debates, discussions, cooperative learning, sharing ideas
Intrapersonal	Reflection, thinking strategies, focusing/concentration	Individual projects, self-paced instruction, note-taking, reflection

Key Takeaways

An informative speech can be more effective when the learning styles of the audience members are addressed.

Exercises

1. Make a list of several people you know well, including family members, lifelong friends, or current roommates. Opposite each person's name, write the types of intelligence or the learning styles in which you believe that person is especially strong. Consider making this a reciprocal exercise by listing your strongest learning styles and asking family and friends to guess what is on your list.
2. How do you learn best? What works for you? Write a short paragraph and share with the class.
3. Write a review of your best teacher, noting why you think they were effective. Share with the class.
4. Write a review of your worst teacher, noting why you think they were ineffective. Share with the class.

12.6 Preparing Your Speech to Inform

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss and provide examples of ways to incorporate ethics in a speech.
2. Construct an effective speech to inform.

Now that we've covered issues central to the success of your informative speech, there's no doubt you want to get down to work. Here are five final suggestions to help you succeed.

Start with What You Know

Are you taking other classes right now that are fresh in your memory? Are you working on a challenging chemistry problem that might lend itself to your informative speech? Are you reading a novel by Gabriel García Márquez that might inspire you to present a biographical speech, informing your audience about the author? Perhaps you have a hobby or outside interest that you are excited about that would serve well. Regardless of where you draw the inspiration, it's a good strategy to start with what you know and work from there. You'll be more enthusiastic, helping your audience to listen intently, and you'll save yourself time. Consider the audience's needs, not just your need to cross a speech off your "to-do" list. This speech will be an opportunity for you to take prepared material and present it, gaining experience and important feedback. In the "real world," you often lack time and the consequences of a less than effective speech can be serious. Look forward to the opportunity and use what you know to perform an effective, engaging speech.

Consider Your Audience's Prior Knowledge

You don't want to present a speech on the harmful effects of smoking when no one in the audience smokes. You may be more effective addressing the issue of secondhand smoke, underscoring the relationship to relevance and addressing the issue of importance with your audience. The audience will want to learn something from you, not hear everything they have heard before. It's a challenge to assess what they've heard before, and often a class activity is conducted to allow audience members to come to know each other. You can also use their speeches and topic selection as points to consider. Think about age, gender, and socioeconomic status, as well as your listeners' culture or language. Survey the audience if possible, or ask a couple of classmates what they think of the topics you are considering.

In the same way, when you prepare a speech in a business situation, do your homework. Access the company Web site, visit the location and get to know people, and even call members of the company to discuss your topic. The more information you can gather about your audience, the better you will be able to adapt and present an effective speech.

Adapting Jargon and Technical Terms

You may have a topic in mind from another class or an outside activity, but chances are that there are terms specific to the area or activity. From wakeboarding to rugby to a chemical process that contributes to global warming, there will be jargon and technical terms. Define and describe the key terms for your audience as part of your speech and substitute common terms where appropriate. Your audience will enjoy learning more about the topic and appreciate your consideration as you present your speech.

Using Outside Information

Even if you think you know everything there is to know about your topic, using outside sources will contribute depth to your speech, provide support for your main points, and even enhance your credibility as a speaker. "According to ____________" is a normal way of attributing information to a source, and you should give credit where credit is due. There is nothing wrong with using outside information as long as you clearly cite your sources and do not present someone else's information as your own.

Presenting Information Ethically

A central but often unspoken expectation of the speaker is that we will be ethical. This means, fundamentally, that we perceive one another as human beings with common interests and needs, and that we attend to the needs of others as well as our own. An ethical informative speaker expresses respect for listeners by avoiding prejudiced comments against any group, and by being honest about the information presented, including information that may contradict the speaker's personal biases. The ethical speaker also admits it when he or she does not know something. The best salespersons recognize that ethical communication is the key to success, as it builds a healthy relationship where the customer's needs are met, thereby meeting the salesperson's own needs.

Reciprocity

Tyler discusses ethical communication and specifically indicates reciprocity as a key principle. Reciprocity, or a relationship of mutual exchange and interdependence, is an important characteristic of a relationship, particularly between a speaker and the audience. We've examined previously the transactional nature of communication, and it is important to reinforce this aspect here. We exchange meaning with one another in conversation, and much like a game, it takes more than one person to play. This leads to interdependence, or the dependence of the conversational partners on one another. Inequality in the levels of dependence can negatively impact the communication and, as a result, the relationship. You as the speaker will have certain expectations and roles, but dominating your audience will not encourage them to fulfill their roles in terms of participation and active listening. Communication involves give and take, and in a public speaking setting, where the communication may be perceived as "all to one," don't forget that the audience is also communicating in terms of feedback with you. You have a responsibility to attend to that feedback, and develop reciprocity with your audience. Without them, you don't have a speech.

Mutuality

Mutuality means that you search for common ground and understanding with the audience, establishing this space and building on it throughout the speech. This involves examining viewpoints other than your own, and taking steps to insure the speech integrates an inclusive, accessible format rather than an ethnocentric one.

Nonjudgmentalism

Nonjudgmentalism underlines the need to be open-minded, an expression of one's willingness to examine diverse perspectives. Your audience expects you to state the truth as you perceive it, with supporting and clarifying information to support your position, and to speak honestly. They also expect you to be open to their point of view and be able to negotiate meaning and understanding in a constructive way. Nonjudgmentalism may include taking the perspective that being different is not inherently bad and that there is common ground to be found with each other.

While this characteristic should be understood, we can see evidence of breakdowns in communication when audiences perceive they are not being told the whole truth. This does not mean that the relationship with the audience requires honesty and excessive self-disclosure. The use of euphemisms and displays of sensitivity are key components of effective communication, and your emphasis on the content of your speech and not yourself will be appreciated. Nonjudgmentalism does underscore the importance of approaching communication from an honest perspective where you value and respect your audience.

Honesty

Honesty, or truthfulness, directly relates to trust, a cornerstone in the foundation of a relationship with your audience. Without it, the building (the relationship) would fall down. Without trust, a relationship will not open and develop the possibility of mutual understanding. You want to share information and the audience hopefully wants to learn from you. If you "cherry-pick" your data, only choosing the best information to support only your point and ignore contrary or related issues, you may turn your informative speech into a persuasive one with bias as a central feature.

Look at the debate over the U.S. conflict with Iraq. There has been considerable discussion concerning the cherry-picking of issues and facts to create a case for armed intervention. To what degree the information at the time was accurate or inaccurate will continue to be a hotly debated issue, but the example holds in terms on an audience's response to a perceived dishonestly. Partial truths are incomplete and often misleading, and you don't want your audience to turn against you because they suspect you are being less than forthright and honest.

Respect

Respect should be present throughout a speech, demonstrating the speaker's high esteem for the audience. Respect can be defined as an act of giving and displaying particular attention to the value you associate with someone or a group. This definition involves two key components. You need to give respect in order to earn from others, and you need to show it. Displays of respect include making time for conversation, not interrupting, and even giving appropriate eye contact during conversations.

Trust

Communication involves sharing and that requires trust. Trust means the ability to rely on the character or truth of someone, that what you say you mean and your audience knows it. Trust is a process, not a thing. It builds over time, through increased interaction and the reduction of uncertainty. It can be lost, but it can also be regained. It should be noted that it takes a long time to build trust in a relationship and can be lost in a much shorter amount of time. If your audience suspects you mislead them this time, how will they approach your next presentation? Acknowledging trust and its importance in your relationship with the audience is the first step in focusing on this key characteristic.

Avoid Exploitation

Finally, when we speak ethically, we do not intentionally exploit one another. Exploitationmeans taking advantage, using someone else for one's own purposes. Perceiving a relationship with an audience as a means to an end and only focusing on what you get out of it, will lead you to treat people as objects. The temptation to exploit others can be great in business situations, where a promotion, a bonus, or even one's livelihood are at stake.

Suppose you are a bank loan officer. Whenever a customer contacts the bank to inquire about applying for a loan, your job is to provide an informative presentation about the types of loans available, their rates and terms. If you are paid a commission based on the number of loans you make and their amounts and rates, wouldn't you be tempted to encourage them to borrow the maximum amount they can qualify for? Or perhaps to take a loan with confusing terms that will end up costing much more in fees and interest than the customer realizes? After all, these practices are within the law; aren't they just part of the way business is done? If you are an ethical loan officer, you realize you would be exploiting customers if you treated them this way. You know it is more valuable to uphold your long-term relationships with customers than to exploit them so that you can earn a bigger commission.

Consider these ethical principles when preparing and presenting your speech, and you will help address many of these natural expectations of others and develop healthier, more effective speeches.

Sample Informative Presentation

Here is a generic sample speech in outline form with notes and suggestions.

Attention Statement

Show a picture of a goldfish and a tomato and ask the audience, "What do these have in common?"

Introduction

1. Briefly introduce genetically modified foods.
2. State your topic and specific purpose: "My speech today will inform you on genetically modified foods that are increasingly part of our food supply."
3. Introduce your credibility and the topic: "My research on this topic has shown me that our food supply has changed but many people are unaware of the changes."
4. State your main points: "Today I will define genes, DNA, genome engineering and genetic manipulation, discuss how the technology applies to foods, and provide common examples."

Body

1. *Information*. Provide a simple explanation of the genes, DNA and genetic modification in case there are people who do not know about it. Provide clear definitions of key terms.
2. *Genes and DNA*. Provide arguments by generalization and authority.
3. *Genome engineering and genetic manipulation*. Provide arguments by analogy, cause, and principle.
4. *Case study*. In one early experiment, GM (genetically modified) tomatoes were developed with fish genes to make them resistant to cold weather, although this type of tomato was never marketed.
5. Highlight other examples.

Conclusion

Reiterate your main points and provide synthesis, but do not introduce new content.

Residual Message

"Genetically modified foods are more common in our food supply than ever before."

Key Takeaways

In preparing an informative speech, use your knowledge and consider the audience's knowledge, avoid unnecessary jargon, give credit to your sources, and present the information ethically.

Exercises

1. Identify an event or issue in the news that interests you. On at least three different news networks or Web sites, find and watch video reports about this issue. Compare and contrast the coverage of the issue. Do the networks or Web sites differ in their assumptions about viewers' prior knowledge? Do they give credit to any sources of information? To what extent do they each measure up to the ethical principles described in this section? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Find an example of reciprocity in a television program and write two to three paragraphs describing it. Share and compare with your classmates.
3. Find an example of honesty in a television program and write two to three paragraphs describing it. Share and compare with your classmates.
4. Find an example of exploitation depicted in the media. Describe how the exploitation is communicated with words and images and share with the class.
5. Compose a general purpose statement and thesis statement for a speech to inform. Now create a sample outline. Share with a classmate and see if he or she offers additional points to consider.

12.7 Creating an Informative Presentation

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the parts of an informational presentation.
2. Understand the five parts of any presentation.

An informational presentation is common request in business and industry. It's the verbal and visual equivalent of a written report. Information sharing is part of any business or organization. Informative presentations serve to present specific information for specific audiences for specific goals or functions. The type of presentation is often identified by its primary purpose or function. Informative presentations are often analytical or involve the rational analysis of information. Sometimes they simply "report the facts" with no analysis at all, but still need to communicate the information in a clear and concise format. While a presentation may have conclusions, propositions, or even a call to action, the demonstration of the analysis is the primary function.

A sales report presentation, for example, is not designed to make a sale. It is, however, supposed to report sales to date and may forecast future sales based on previous trends.

An informative presentation does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. It can be generic and nonspecific to the audience or listener, but the more you know about your audience, the better. When you tailor your message to that audience, you zero in on your target and increase your effectiveness. The emphasis is on clear and concise communication, but it may address several key questions:

- Topic: Product or Service?
- Who are you?
- Who is the target market?
- What is the revenue model?
- What are the specifications?
- How was the information gathered?
- How does the unit work?
- How does current information compare to previous information?

Table 12.2 "Presentation Components and Their Functions" lists the five main parts or components of any presentatio[1].

1. n (McLean, S., 2003)

Table 12.2 Presentation Components and Their Functions

Component	Function
Attention Statement	Raise interest and motivate the listener
Introduction	Communicate a point and common ground
Body	Address key points
Conclusion	Summarize key points
Residual Message	Communicate central theme, moral of story, or main point

You will need to address the questions to establish relevance and meet the audience's needs. The five parts of any speech will serve to help you get organized.

Sample Speech Guidelines

Imagine that you have been assigned to give an informative presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 12.3 "Sample Speech Guidelines" and apply them to your presentation.

Table 12.3 Sample Speech Guidelines

1. Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you, research it, and report your findings in your speech.
2. Purpose	Your general purpose, of course, is to inform. But you need to formulate a more specific purpose statement that expresses a point you have to make about your topic—what you hope to accomplish in your speech.
3. Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and perhaps any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information.
4. Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. Use visual aids!
5. Organization	1. Write a central idea statement that expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. 2. Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea. 3. Finally, prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech.
6. Introduction	Develop an opening that will 1. get the attention and interest of your listeners, 2. express your central idea or message, 3. lead into the body of your speech.
7. Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
8. Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously (not reading but speaking), using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

Key Takeaways

Informative presentations illustrate, explain, describe, and instruct the audience on topics and processes.

Exercises

1. Write a brief summary of a class or presentation you personally observed recently; include what you learned. Compare with classmates.
2. Search online for an informative speech or presentation that applies to business or industry. Indicate one part or aspect of the presentation that you thought was effective and one you would improve. Provide the link to the presentation in your post or assignment.
3. Pick a product or service and come up with a list of five points that you could address in a two-minute informative speech. Place them in rank order and indicate why.
4. With the points discussed in this chapter in mind, observe someone presenting a speech. What elements of their speech could you use in your speech? What elements would you not want to use? Why? Compare with a classmate.

12.8 Presentations to Persuade

We are more easily persuaded, in general, by the reasons that we ourselves discovers than by those which are given to us by others.
–Pascal

For every sale you miss because you're too enthusiastic, you will miss a hundred because you're not enthusiastic enough.
–Zig Ziglar

Getting Started

Introductory Exercises

1. Please list three things that you recently purchased, preferably in the last twenty-four hours—the things can be items or services. Decide which purchase on your list stands out as most important to you and consider why you made that purchase decision. See if you can list three reasons. Now pretend you are going to sell that same item or service to a friend—would the three reasons remain the same, or would you try additional points for them to consider? Compare your results with a classmate.

2. Please think of one major purchase you made in the past year. It should be significant to you, and not a daily or monthly purchase. Once you made the purchase decision and received the item (e.g., a car), did you notice similar cars on the roads? Did you pay attention to details like color, modifications, or reports in the popular press about quality? Did you talk to your friends about it? What kind of information did you pay attention to—information that reinforced your purchase decision, or information that detracted from your appreciation of your newly acquired possession? Discuss your responses with classmates.

No doubt there has been a time when you wanted something from your parents, your supervisor, or your friends, and you thought about how you were going to present your request. But do you think about how often people—including people you have never met and never will meet—want something from you? When you watch television, advertisements reach out for your attention, whether you watch them or not. When you use the Internet, pop-up advertisements often appear. Living in the United States, and many parts of the world, means that you have been surrounded, even inundated, by persuasive messages. Mass media in general and television in particular make a significant impact you will certainly recognize.

Consider these facts:

- The average person sees between four hundred and six hundred ads per day—that is forty million to fifty million by the time he or she is sixty years old. One of every eleven commercials has a direct message about beauty (Raimondo M., 2010).
- By age eighteen, the average American teenager will have spent more time watching television—25,000 hours—than learning in a classroom (Ship, J., 2005).
- An analysis of music videos found that nearly one-fourth of all MTV videos portray overt violence, with attractive role models being aggressors in more than 80 percent of the violent videos (DuRant, R. H., 1997).
- Forty percent of nine- and ten-year-old girls have tried to lose weight, according to an ongoing study funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (Body image and nutrition: Fast facts., 2009).
- A 1996 study found that the amount of time an adolescent watches soaps, movies, and music videos is associated with their degree of body dissatisfaction and desire to be thin [2].
- Identification with television stars (for girls and boys), models (girls), or athletes (boys) positively correlated with body dissatisfaction[3]
- At age thirteen, 53 percent of American girls are "unhappy with their bodies." This grows to 78 percent by the time they reach seventeen[4].
- By age eighteen, the average American teenager will witness on television 200,000 acts of violence, including 40,000 murder[5].

Mass communication contains persuasive messages, often called propaganda, in narrative form, in stories and even in presidential speeches. When President Bush made his case for invading Iraq, his speeches incorporated many of the techniques we'll cover in this chapter. Your local city council often involves dialogue, and persuasive speeches, to determine zoning issues, resource allocation,

2. (Tiggemann, M. and Pickering, A. S., 1996)
3. (Hofschire, L. J. and Greenberg, B. S., 2002).
4. (Brumber, J. J., 1997)
5. s (Huston, A. C., et al., 1992)

and even spending priorities. You yourself have learned many of the techniques by trial and error and through imitation. If you ever wanted the keys to your parents' car for a special occasion, you used the principles of persuasion to reach your goal.

12.9 What Is Persuasion?

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of persuasion.
2. Describe similarities and differences between persuasion and motivation.

Persuasion is an act or process of presenting arguments to move, motivate, or change your audience. Aristotle taught that rhetoric, or the art of public speaking, involves the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion (Covino, W. A. and Jolliffe, D. A., 1995). In the case of President Obama, he may have appealed to your sense of duty and national values. In persuading your parents to lend you the car keys, you may have asked one parent instead of the other, calculating the probable response of each parent and electing to approach the one who was more likely to adopt your position (and give you the keys). Persuasion can be implicit or explicit and can have both positive and negative effects. In this chapter we'll discuss the importance of ethics, as we have in previous chapters, when presenting your audience with arguments in order to motivate them to adopt your view, consider your points, or change their behavior.

Motivation is distinct from persuasion in that it involves the force, stimulus, or influence to bring about change. Persuasion is the process, and motivation is the compelling stimulus that encourages your audience to change their beliefs or behavior, to adopt your position, or to consider your arguments. Why think of yourself as fat or thin? Why should you choose to spay or neuter your pet? Messages about what is beautiful, or what is the right thing to do in terms of your pet, involve persuasion, and the motivation compels you to do something.

Another way to relate to motivation also can be drawn from the mass media. Perhaps you have watched programs like *Law and Order*, *Cold Case*, or *CSI* where the police detectives have many of the facts of the case, but they search for motive. They want to establish motive in the case to provide the proverbial "missing piece of the puzzle." They want to know why someone would act in a certain manner. You'll be asking your audience to consider your position and provide both persuasive arguments and motivation for them to contemplate. You may have heard a speech where the speaker tried to persuade you, tried to motivate you to change, and you resisted the message. Use this perspective to your advantage and consider why an audience should be motivated, and you may find the most compelling examples or points. Relying on positions like "I believe it, so you should too," "Trust me, I know what is right," or "It's the right thing to do" may not be explicitly stated but may be used with limited effectiveness. Why should the audience believe, trust, or consider the position "right?" Keep an audience-centered perspective as you consider your persuasive speech to increase your effectiveness.

You may think initially that many people in your audience would naturally support your position in favor of spaying or neutering your pet. After careful consideration and audience analysis, however, you may find that people are more divergent in their views. Some audience members may already agree with your view, but others may be hostile to the idea for various reasons. Some people may be neutral on the topic and look to you to consider the salient arguments. Your audience will have a range of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs across a range from hostile to agreement.

Rather than view this speech as a means to get everyone to agree with you, look at the concept of measurable gain, a system of assessing the extent to which audience members respond to a persuasive message. You may reinforce existing beliefs in the members of the audience that agree with you and do a fine job of persuasion. You may also get hostile members of the audience to consider one of your arguments, and move from a hostile position to one that is more neutral or ambivalent. The goal in each case is to move the audience members toward your position. Some change may be small but measurable, and that is considered gain. The next time a hostile audience member considers the issue, they may be more open to it. Figure 12.1 "Measurable Gain" is a useful diagram to illustrate this concept.

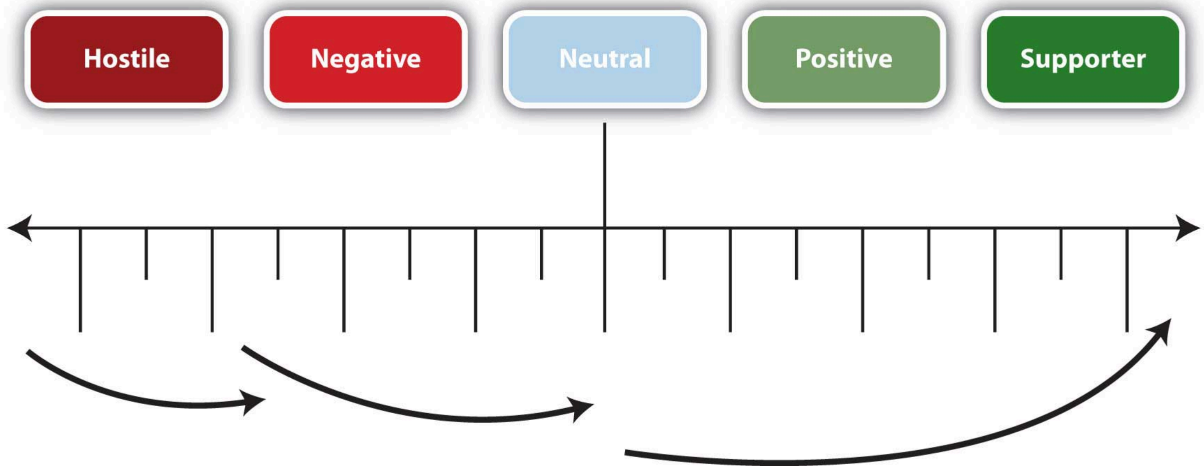


Figure 12.1 Measurable Gain

Edward Hall also underlines this point when discussing the importance of context. The situation in which a conversation occurs provides a lot of meaning and understanding for the participants in some cultures. In Japan, for example, the context, such as a business setting, says a great deal about the conversation and the meaning to the words and expressions within that context. In the United States, however, the concept of a workplace or a business meeting is less structured, and the context offers less meaning and understanding.

Cultures that value context highly are aptly called high-context cultures. Those that value context to a lesser degree are called low-context cultures. These divergent perspectives influence the process of persuasion and are worthy of your consideration when planning your speech. If your audience is primarily high-context, you may be able to rely on many cultural norms as you proceed, but in a low-context culture, like the United States, you'll be expected to provide structure and clearly outline your position and expectations. This ability to understand motivation and context is key to good communication, and one we will examine throughout this chapter.

Key Takeaways

Persuasion is the act of presenting arguments for change, while motivation involves the force to bring about change. The concept of measurable gain assesses audience response to a persuasive message.

Exercises

1. Select an online advertisement that you find particularly effective or ineffective. Why does it succeed, or fail, in persuading you to want to buy the advertised product? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.
2. Think of a social issue, widely held belief, or political position where change has occurred in your lifetime, or where you would like to see change happen. What kinds of persuasion and motivation were involved—or would need to happen—to produce measurable gain? Explain your thoughts to a classmate.
3. Think of a time when someone tried to persuade you to do something you did not want to do. Did their persuasion succeed? Why or why not? Discuss the event with a classmate.

12.10 Principles of Persuasion

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and demonstrate how to use six principles of persuasion.

What is the best way to succeed in persuading your listeners? There is no one "correct" answer, but many experts have studied persuasion and observed what works and what doesn't. Social psychologist Robert Cialdini offers us six principles of persuasion that are powerful and effective:

1. Reciprocity
2. Scarcity
3. Authority
4. Commitment and consistency
5. Consensus
6. Liking

You will find these principles both universal and adaptable to a myriad of contexts and environments. Recognizing when each principle is in operation will allow you to leverage the inherent social norms and expectations to your advantage, and enhance your sales position.

Principle of Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the mutual expectation for exchange of value or service. In all cultures, when one person gives something, the receiver is expected to reciprocate, even if only by saying "thank you." There is a moment when the giver has power and influence over the receiver, and if the exchange is dismissed as irrelevant by the giver the moment is lost. In business this principle has several applications. If you are in customer service and go out of your way to meet the customer's need, you are appealing to the principle of reciprocity with the knowledge that all humans perceive the need to reciprocate—in this case, by increasing the likelihood of making a purchase from you because you were especially helpful. Reciprocity builds trust and the relationship develops, reinforcing everything from personal to brand loyalty. By taking the lead and giving, you build in a moment where people will feel compelled from social norms and customs to give back.

Principle of Scarcity

You want what you can't have, and it's universal. People are naturally attracted to the exclusive, the rare, the unusual, and the unique. If they are convinced that they need to act now or it will disappear, they are motivated to action. Scarcity is the perception of inadequate supply or a limited resource. For a sales representative, scarcity may be a key selling point—the particular car, or theater tickets, or pair of shoes you are considering may be sold to someone else if you delay making a decision. By reminding customers not only of what they stand to gain but also of what they stand to lose, the representative increases the chances that the customer will make the shift from contemplation to action and decide to close the sale.

Principle of Authority

Trust is central to the purchase decision. Whom does a customer turn to? A salesperson may be part of the process, but an endorsement by an authority holds credibility that no one with a vested interest can ever attain. Knowledge of a product, field, trends in the field, and even research can make a salesperson more effective by the appeal to the principle of authority. It may seem like extra work to educate your customers, but you need to reveal your expertise to gain credibility. We can borrow a measure of credibility by relating what experts have indicated about a product, service, market, or trend, and our awareness of competing viewpoints allows us insight that is valuable to the customer. Reading the manual of a product is not sufficient to gain expertise—you have to do extra homework. The principal of authority involves referencing experts and expertise.

Principle of Commitment and Consistency

Oral communication can be slippery in memory. What we said at one moment or another, unless recorded, can be hard to recall. Even a handshake, once the symbol of agreement across almost every culture, has lost some of its symbolic meaning and social regard. In many cultures, the written word holds special meaning. If we write it down, or if we sign something, we are more likely to follow through. By extension, even if the customer won't be writing anything down, if you do so in front of them, it can appeal to the principle of commitment and consistency and bring the social norm of honoring one's word to bear at the moment of purchase.

Principle of Consensus

Testimonials, or first person reports on experience with a product or service, can be highly persuasive. People often look to each other when making a purchase decision, and the herd mentality is a powerful force across humanity: if "everybody else" thinks this product is great, it must be great. We often choose the path of the herd, particularly when we lack adequate information. Leverage testimonials from clients to attract more clients by making them part of your team. The principle of consensus involves the tendency of the individual to follow the lead of the group or peers.

Principle of Liking

Safety is the twin of trust as a foundation element for effective communication. If we feel safe, we are more likely to interact and communicate. We tend to be attracted to people who communicate to us that they like us, and who make us feel good about ourselves. Given a choice, these are the people with whom we are likely to associate. Physical attractiveness has long been known to be persuasive, but similarity is also quite effective. We are drawn to people who are like us, or who we perceive ourselves to be, and often make those judgments based on external characteristics like dress, age, sex, race, ethnicity, and perceptions of socioeconomic status. The principle of liking involves the perception of safety and belonging in communication.

Key Takeaways

A persuasive message can succeed through the principles of reciprocity, scarcity, authority, commitment and consistency, consensus, and liking.

Exercises

1. Think of a real-life example of the principle of scarcity being used in a persuasive message. Were you the one trying to persuade someone, or were you the receiver of the scarcity message? Was the message effective? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
2. Do you think the principle of consensus often works—are people often persuaded to buy things because other people own that item, or are going to buy it? Are you susceptible to this kind of persuasion? Think of some examples and discuss them with classmates.
3. Do people always use reason to make decisions? Support your opinion and discuss it with classmates.
4. Make a list of five or six people you choose to associate with—friends, neighbors, and coworkers, for example. Next to each person's name, write the characteristics you have in common with that person. Do you find that the principle of liking holds true in your choice of associates? Why or why not? Discuss your findings with your classmates.

12.11 Functions of the Presentation to Persuade

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and demonstrate the effective use of five functions of speaking to persuade.

What does a presentation to persuade do? There is a range of functions to consider, and they may overlap or you may incorporate more than one as you present. We will discuss how to

- stimulate,
- convince,
- call to action,
- increase consideration, and
- develop tolerance of alternate perspectives.

We will also examine how each of these functions influences the process of persuasion.

Stimulate

When you focus on stimulation as the goal or operational function of your speech, you want to reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring them to the forefront. Perhaps you've been concerned with global warming for quite some time. Many people in the audience may not know about the melting polar ice caps and the loss of significant ice shelves in Antarctica, including part of the Ross Ice Shelf, an iceberg almost 20 miles wide and 124 miles long, more than twice the size of Rhode Island. They may be unaware of how many ice shelves have broken off, the 6 percent drop in global phytoplankton (the basis of many food chains), and the effects of the introduction of fresh water to the oceans. By presenting these facts, you will reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring the issue to the surface. You might consider the foundation of common ground and commonly held beliefs, and then introduce information that a mainstream audience may not be aware of that supports that common ground as a strategy to stimulate.

Convince

In a persuasive speech, the goal is to change the attitudes, beliefs, values, or judgments of your audience. If we look back at the idea of motive, in this speech the prosecuting attorney would try to convince the jury members that the defendant is guilty beyond reasonable doubt. He or she may discuss motive, present facts, all with the goal to convince the jury to believe or find that his or her position is true. In the film *The Day After Tomorrow*, Dennis Quaid stars as a paleoclimatologist who unsuccessfully tries to convince the U.S. vice president that a sudden climate change is about to occur. In the film, much like real life, the vice president listens to Quaid's position with his own bias in mind, listening for only points that reinforce his point of view while rejecting points that do not.

Audience members will also hold beliefs and are likely to involve their own personal bias. Your goal is to get them to agree with your position, so you will need to plan a range of points and examples to get audience members to consider your topic. Perhaps you present Dennis Quaid's argument that loss of the North Atlantic Current will drastically change our climate, clearly establishing the problem for the audience. You might cite the review by a professor, for example, who states in reputable science magazine that the film's depiction of a climate change has a chance of happening, but that the timetable is more on the order of ten years, not seven days as depicted in the film. You then describe a range of possible solutions. If the audience comes to a mental agreement that a problem exists, they will look to you asking, "What are the options?" Then you may indicate a solution that is a better alternative, recommending future action.

Call to Action

A call to action features a clear response for the audience. In this speech, you are calling your audience to action. You are stating that it's not about stimulating interest to reinforce and accentuate beliefs, or convincing an audience of a viewpoint that you hold, but instead that you want to see your listeners change their behavior. If you were in sales at Toyota, you might incorporate our previous example on global warming to reinforce, and then make a call to action (make a purchase decision), when presenting the Prius hybrid (gas-electric) automobile. The economics, even at current gas prices, might not completely justify the difference in price between a hybrid and a nonhybrid car. However, if you as the salesperson can make a convincing argument that choosing a hybrid car is the right and responsible decision, you may be more likely to get the customer to act. The persuasive speech that focuses on action often generates curiosity, clarifies a problem, and as we have seen, proposes a range of solutions. They key difference here is there is a clear link to action associated with the solutions.

Figure 12.2. P T – The poster is not…but are you ? – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Solutions lead us to considering the goals of action. These goals address the question, "What do I want the audience to do as a result of being engaged by my speech?" The goals of action include adoption, discontinuance, deterrence, and continuance.

Adoption means the speaker wants to persuade the audience to take on a new way of thinking, or adopt a new idea. Examples could include buying a new product, voting for a new candidate, or deciding to donate blood. The key is that the audience member adopts, or takes on, a new view, action, or habit.

Discontinuance involves the speaker persuading the audience to stop doing something what they have been doing, such as smoking. Rather than take on a new habit or action, the speaker is asking the audience member to stop an existing behavior or idea. As such, discontinuance is in some ways the opposite of adoption.

Deterrence is a call action that focuses on persuading audience not to start something if they haven't already started. Perhaps many people in the audience have never tried illicit drugs, or have not gotten behind the wheel of a car while intoxicated. The goal of action in this case would be to deter, or encourage the audience members to refrain from starting or initiating the behavior.

Finally, with continuance, the speaker aims to persuade the audience to continue doing what they have been doing, such as reelect a candidate, keep buying product, or staying in school to get an education.

A speaker may choose to address more than one of these goals of action, depending on the audience analysis. If the audience is largely agreeable and supportive, you may find continuance to be one goal, while adoption is secondary.

These goals serve to guide you in the development of solution steps. Solution steps involve suggestions or ways the audience can take action after your speech. They often proceed from national to personal level, or the inverse. Audience members appreciate a clear discussion of the problem in a persuasive speech, but they also appreciate solutions. You might offer a national solution that may be viewed as unworkable, but your solution on a personal level may be more realistic, such as considering an alternate point of view or making a small donation to a worthy cause.

Increase Consideration

Perhaps you know that your audience is not open to emotional appeals that involve the fear of global warming, so you choose to base your persuasive speech on something they are more open to: the economic argument and the relative cost of car ownership. In this speech, you want to increase consideration on the part of the audience whose members either hold hostile views or perhaps are neutral and simply curious. You might be able to compare and contrast competing cars and show that the costs over ten years are quite similar, but that the Prius has additional features that are the equivalent of a bonus, including high gas mileage. You might describe tax incentives for ownership, maintenance schedules and costs, and resale value. Your arguments and their support aim at increasing the audience's consideration of your position. You won't be asking for action in this presentation, but a corresponding increase of consideration may lead the customer to that point at a later date.

Develop Tolerance of Alternate Perspectives

Finally, you may want to help your audience develop tolerance of alternate perspectives and viewpoints. Perhaps your audience, as in the previous example, is interested in purchasing a car and you are the lead salesperson on that model. As you listen, and do your informal audience analysis, you may learn that horsepower and speed are important values to this customer. You might raise the issue of torque versus horsepower and indicate that the "uumph" you feel as you start a car off the line is torque. Many hybrid and even electric vehicles have great torque, as their systems involve fewer parts and less friction than a corresponding internal combustion-transaxle system. You goal is to help your audience develop tolerance, but not necessarily acceptance, of alternate perspectives. A traditional way of measuring speed has always been how fast a car can go from zero to sixty miles per hour.

You are essentially indicating that there are two relevant factors to consider when discussing speed (horsepower and torque), and asking the customer to consider the alternate perspective. Lots of horsepower might be all right for high speeds, but by raising the issue of their normal driving, they might learn that what counts day in and day out for driving is torque, not horsepower. By starting from common ground, and introducing a related idea, you are persuading your audience to consider an alternate perspective.

Key Takeaways

A persuasive speech may stimulate thought, convince, call to action, increase consideration, or develop tolerance of alternate perspectives.

Exercises

1. Select a commercial for a product or service you do not believe you would ever buy. Evaluate the commercial according to the principles of persuasion described in this section. Does it use more than one principle? Is any principle effective on you as an audience member? If you could change the commercial to increase its persuasive appeal to yourself as a customer, what changes would you make? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Which do you think is a more difficult challenge, discontinuance or deterrence? Why? Give some examples and discuss them with your classmates.

3. Do you think persuasion by continuance is necessary? Or would people continue a given behavior regardless of any persuasive messages? Think of an example and discuss it with your classmates.
4.

12.12 Meeting the Listener's Basic Needs

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe several basic needs that people seek to fulfill when they communicate.

In this section we will examine why we communicate, illustrating how meeting the listener's basic needs is central to effective communication. It's normal for the audience to consider why you are persuading them, and there is significant support for the notion that by meeting the audience's basic needs, whether they are a customer, colleague, or supervisor, you will more effectively persuade them to consider your position.

Not all oral presentations involve taking a position, or overt persuasion, but all focus on the inherent relationships and basic needs within the business context. Getting someone to listen to what you have to say involves a measure of persuasion, and getting that person to act on it might require considerable skill. Whether you are persuading a customer to try a new product or service, or informing a supplier that you need additional merchandise, the relationship is central to your communication. The emphasis inherent in our next two discussions is that we all share this common ground, and by understanding that we share basic needs, we can better negotiate meaning and achieve understanding.

Table 12.1 "Reasons for Engaging in Communication" presents some reasons for engaging in communication. As you can see, the final item in the table indicates that we communicate in order to meet our needs. What are those needs? We will discuss them next.

Table 12.1 Reasons for Engaging in Communication

Review	**Why We Engage in Communication**
Gain Information	We engage in communication to gain information. This information can involve directions to an unknown location, or a better understanding about another person through observation or self-disclosure.
Understand Communication Contexts	We also want to understand the context in which we communication, discerning the range between impersonal and intimate, to better anticipate how to communicate effectively in each setting.
Understand Our Identity	Through engaging in communication, we come to perceive ourselves, our roles, and our relationships with others.
Meet Our Needs	We meet our needs through communication.

Maslow's Hierarchy

If you have taken courses in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, or perhaps sociology in the past, you may have seen Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Psychologist Abraham Maslow provides seven basic categories for human needs, and arranges them in order of priority, from the most basic to the most advanced.

Figure 12.3 Maslow's Hierarchy

In this figure, we can see that we need energy, water, and air to live. Without any of these three basic elements, which meet our physiological needs (1), we cannot survive. We need to meet them before anything else, and will often sacrifice everything else to get them. Once we have what we need to live, we seek safety (2). A defensible place, protecting your supply lines for your most basic needs, could be your home. For some, however, home is a dangerous place that compromises their safety. Children and victims of domestic violence need shelter to meet this need. In order to leave a hostile living environment, people may place the well-being and safety of another over their own needs, in effect placing themselves at risk. An animal would fight for its own survival above all else, but humans can and do acts of heroism that directly contradict their own self-interest. Our own basic needs motivate us, but sometimes the basic needs of others are more important to us than our own.

We seek affection from others once we have the basics to live and feel safe from immediate danger. We look for a sense of love and belonging (3). All needs in Maslow's model build on the foundation of the previous needs, and the third level reinforces our need to be a part of a family, community, or group. This is an important step that directly relates to business communication. If a person feels safe at your place of business, they are more likely to be open to communication. Communication is the foundation of the business relationship, and without it, you will fail. If they feel on edge, or that they might be pushed around, made to feel stupid, or even unwanted, they will leave and your business will disappear. On the other hand, if you make them feel welcome, provide multiple ways for them to learn, educate themselves, and ask questions in a safe environment, you will form relationships that transcend business and invite success.

Once we have been integrated in a group, we begin to assert our sense of self and self-respect, addressing our need for self-esteem (4). Self-esteem is essentially how we feel about ourselves. Let's say you are a male, but you weren't born with a "fix-it" gene. It's nothing to be ashamed of, but for many men it can be hard to admit. We no longer live in a time when we have to build our own houses or learn about electricity and plumbing as we grow up, and if it is not part of your learning experience, it is unreasonable to expect that you'll be handy with a wrench from the first turn.

The do-it-yourself chain Home Depot may have recognized how this interest in home repair is paired with many men's reluctance to admit their lack of experience. They certainly turned it into an opportunity. Each Saturday around the country, home repair clinics on all sorts of tasks, from cutting and laying tile to building a bird house, are available free to customers at Home Depot stores. You can participate, learn, gain mastery of a skill set, and walk out of the store with all the supplies you need to get the job done. You will also now know someone (the instructor, a Home Depot employee) whom you can return to for follow-up questions. Ultimately, if you don't succeed in getting the job done right, they will help you arrange for professional installation. This model reinforces safety and familiarity, belonging to a group or perceiving a trustworthy support system, and the freedom to make mistakes. It's an interactive program that squarely addresses one of customers' basic of human needs.

Maslow discusses the next level of needs in terms of how we feel about ourselves and our ability to assert control and influence over our lives. Once we are part of a group and have begun to assert ourselves, we start to feel as if we have reached our potential and are actively making a difference in our own world. Maslow calls this self-actualization (5). Self-actualization can involve reaching your full potential, feeling accepted for who you are, and perceiving a degree of control or empowerment in your environment. It may mean the freedom to go beyond building the bird house to the tree house, and to design it yourself as an example of self-expression.

As we progress beyond these levels, our basic human curiosity about the world around us emerges. When we have our basic needs met, we do not need to fear losing our place in a group or access to resources. We are free to explore and play, discovering the world around us. Our need to know (6) motivates us to grow and learn. You may have taken an elective art class that sparked your interest in a new area, or your started a new sport or hobby, like woodworking. If you worked at low-paying jobs that earned you barely enough to meet your basic needs, you may not be able to explore all your interests. You might be too exhausted after sixty or seventy hours a week on a combination of the night shift and the early morning shift across two jobs. If you didn't have to work as many hours to meet your more basic needs, you'd have time to explore your curiosity and address the need to learn. Want to read a good book? You'd have the time. Want to take a watercolor class? Sounds interesting. If, however, we are too busy hunting and gathering food, there is little time for contemplating beauty.

Beyond curiosity lies the aesthetic need to experience beauty (7). Form is freed from function, so that a wine bottle opener can be appreciated for its clever design that resembles a rabbit's head instead of simply how well it works to remove the cork. The appreciation of beauty transcends the everyday, the usual; it becomes exceptional. You may have walked in a building or church and become captivated by the light, the stained-glass windows, or the design. That moment that transcends the mundane, that stops you in your tracks, comes close to describing the human appreciation for the aesthetic, but it's really up to you.

We can see in Maslow's hierarchy how our most basic needs are quite specific, and as we progress through the levels, the level of abstraction increases until ultimately we are freed from the daily grind to contemplate the meaning of a modern painting. As we increase our degree of interconnectedness with others, we become interdependent and, at the same time, begin to express independence and individuality. As a speaker, you may seek the safety of the familiar, only to progress with time and practice to a point where you make words your own.

Your audience will share with you a need for control. You can help meet this need by constructing your speech with an effective introduction, references to points you've discussed, and a clear conclusion. The introduction will set up audience expectations of points you will consider, and allow the audience to see briefly what is coming. Your internal summaries, signposts, and support of your main points all serve to remind the audience what you've discussed and what you will discuss. Finally, your conclusion answers the inherent question, "Did the speaker actually talk about what they said they were going to talk about?" and affirms to the audience that you have fulfilled your objectives.

Social Penetration Theory

The field of communication draws from many disciplines, and in this case, draws lessons from two prominent social psychologists. Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor articulated the social penetration theory, which describes how we move from superficial talk to intimate and revealing talk (Altman, I. and Taylor, D., 1973). Altman and Taylor discuss how we attempt to learn about others so that we can better understand how to interact (Altman, I. and Taylor, D., 1973). With a better understanding of others and with more information, we are in a better position to predict how they may behave, what they may value, or what they might feel in specific situations. We usually gain this understanding of others without thinking about it through observation or self-disclosure. In this model, often called the "onion model," we see how we start out on superficial level, but as we peel away the layers, we gain knowledge about the other person that encompasses both breadth and depth.

Figure 12.4 Altman and Taylor's Social Penetration Model[6]

We come to know more about the way a person perceives a situation (breadth), but also gain perspective into how they see the situation through an understanding of their previous experiences (depth). Imagine these two spheres, which represent people,

6. Source: Adapted from Altman and Taylor's social penetration model (Altman, I and Taylor, D., 1973)

coming together. What touches first? The superficial level. As the two start to overlap, the personal levels may touch, then the intimate level, and finally the core levels may even touch. Have you ever known a couple—perhaps your parents or grandparents—who have been together for a very long time? They know each other's stories and finish each other's sentences. They might represent the near overlap, where their core values, attitudes, and beliefs are similar through a lifetime of shared experiences.

Figure 12.5 American Foreign Service Manual Iceberg Model

We move from public to private information as we progress from small talk to intimate conversations. Imagine an onion. The outer surface can be peeled away, and each new layer reveals another until you arrive at the heart of the onion. People interact on the surface, and only remove layers as trust and confidence grows.

Another way to look at it is to imagine an iceberg. How much of the total iceberg can you see from the surface of the ocean? Not much. But once you start to look under the water, you gain an understanding of the large size of the iceberg, and the extent of its depth. We have to go beyond superficial understanding to know each other, and progress through the process of self-disclosure to come to know and understand one another. See Figure 12.5 "American Foreign Service Manual Iceberg Model" for an illustration of an "iceberg model" adapted from the American Foreign Service Manual[7]. This model has existed in several forms since the 1960s, and serves as a useful illustration of how little we perceive of each other with our first impressions and general assumptions.

Key Takeaways

7. (American Foreign Service Manual, 1975)

We are motivated to communicate in order to gain information, get to know one another, better understand our situation or context, come to know ourselves and our role or identity, and meet our fundamental interpersonal needs.

Exercises

1. Consider your life in relation to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. To what degree do you feel you have attained the different levels in the hierarchy? Two or three years ago, were you at the same level where you currently are, or has your position in the hierarchy changed? In what ways do you expect it to change in the future? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates.
2. Think of someone you have met but do not know very well. What kinds of conversations have you had with this person? How might you expect your conversations to change if you have more opportunities to get better acquainted? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
3. Think of a conversation you have had within the past day. What were the reasons for having that conversation? Can you relate it to the reasons for engaging in conversation listed in Table 14.1 "Reasons for Engaging in Communication"? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
4. Write a brief paragraph about getting to know someone. Discuss whether, in your experience, it followed the social penetration theory. Share and compare with classmates.

12.13 Making an Argument

Learning Objectives

- Label and discuss three components of an argument.
- Identify and provide examples of emotional appeals.

According to the famous satirist Jonathan Swift, "Argument is the worst sort of conversation." You may be inclined to agree. When people argue, they are engaged in conflict and it's usually not pretty. It sometimes appears that way because people resort to fallacious arguments or false statements, or they simply do not treat each other with respect. They get defensive, try to prove their own points, and fail to listen to each other.

But this should not be what happens in persuasive argument. Instead, when you make an argument in a persuasive speech, you will want to present your position with logical points, supporting each point with appropriate sources. You will want to give your audience every reason to perceive you as an ethical and trustworthy speaker. Your audience will expect you to treat them with respect, and to present your argument in way that does not make them defensive. Contribute to your credibility by building sound arguments and using strategic arguments with skill and planning.

In this section, we will briefly discuss the classic form of an argument, a more modern interpretation, and finally seven basic arguments you may choose to use. Imagine that each is a tool in your toolbox, and that you want to know how to use each effectively. Know that people who try to persuade you, from telemarketers to politics, usually have these tools at hand.

Let's start with a classical rhetorical strategy, as shown in Table 12.2 "Classical Rhetorical Strategy". It asks the rhetorician, speaker, or author to frame arguments in six steps.

Table 12.2 Classical Rhetorical Strategy

1. Exordium	Prepares the audience to consider your argument
2. Narration	Provides the audience with the necessary background or context for your argument
3. Proposition	Introduces your claim being argued in the speech
4. Confirmation	Offers the audience evidence to support your argument
5. Refutation	Introduces to the audience and then discounts or refutes the counterarguments or objections
6. Peroration	Your conclusion of your argument

The classical rhetorical strategy is a standard pattern and you will probably see it in both speech and English courses. The pattern is useful to guide you in your preparation of your speech and can serve as a valuable checklist to ensure that you are prepared. While this formal pattern has distinct advantages, you may not see it used exactly as indicated here on a daily basis. What may be more familiar to you is Stephen Toulmin's rhetorical strategy that focuses on three main elements, shown in Table 12.3 "Toulmin's Three-Part Rhetorical Strategy".

Table 12.3 Toulmin's Three-Part Rhetorical Strategy

Element	Description	Example
1. Claim	Your statement of belief or truth	It is important to spay or neuter your pet.
2. Data	Your supporting reasons for the claim	Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized annually.
3. Warrant	You create the connection between the claim and the supporting reasons	Pets that are spayed or neutered do not reproduce, preventing the production of unwanted animals.

Toulmin's rhetorical strategy is useful in that it makes the claim explicit, clearly illustrating the relationship between the claim and the data, and allows the listener to follow the speaker's reasoning. You may have a good idea or point, but your audience will be curious and want to know how you arrived at that claim or viewpoint. The warrant often addresses the inherent and often unspoken question, "Why is this data so important to your topic?" and helps you illustrate relationships between information for your audience. This model can help you clearly articulate it for your audience.

Argumentation Strategies: GASCAP/T

Here is useful way of organizing and remembering seven key argumentative strategies:

1. Argument by Generalization
2. Argument by Analogy
3. Argument by Sign
4. Argument by Consequence

5. Argument by Authority
6. Argument by Principle
7. Argument by Testimony

Richard Fulkerson notes that a single strategy is sufficient to make an argument some of the time, but more common is an effort to combine two or more strategies to increase your powers of persuasion. He organized the argumentative strategies in this way to compare the differences, highlight the similarities, and allow for their discussion. This model, often called by its acronym GASCAP, is a useful strategy to summarize six key arguments and is easy to remember. In Table 14.4 "GASCAP/T Strategies" we have adapted it, adding one more argument that is often used in today's speeches and presentations: the argument by testimony. This table presents each argument, provides a definition of the strategy and an example, and examines ways to evaluate each approach.

Table 12.4. GASCAP/T Strategies

	Argument by	Claim	Example	E
G	Generalization	Whatever is true of a good example or sample will be true of everything like it or the population it came from.	If you can vote, drive, and die for your country, you should also be allowed to buy alcohol.	S a
A	Analogy	Two situations, things or ideas are alike in observable ways and will tend to be alike in many other ways	Alcohol is a drug. So is tobacco. They both alter perceptions, have an impact physiological and psychological systems, and are federally regulated substances.	V e r
C	Cause	If two conditions always appear together, they are causally related.	The U.S. insurance industry has been significantly involved in state and national legislation requiring proof of insurance, changes in graduated driver's licenses, and the national change in the drinking age from age 18 to age 21.	V T I
A	Authority	What a credible source indicates is probably true.	According to the National Transportation and Safety Board, older drivers are increasingly involved in motor vehicle accidents.	I h
P	Principle	An accepted or proper truth	The change in the drinking age was never put to a vote. It's not about alcohol, it's about our freedom of speech in a democratic society.	I t c
T	Testimony	Personal experience	I've lost friends from age 18 to 67 to alcohol. It impacts all ages, and its effects are cumulative. Let me tell you about two friends in particular.	I S

Evidence

Now that we've clearly outlined several argument strategies, how do you support your position with evidence or warrants? If your premise or the background from which you start is valid, and your claim is clear and clearly related, the audience will naturally turn their attention to "prove it." This is where the relevance of evidence becomes particularly important. Here are three guidelines to consider in order to insure your evidence passes the "so what?" test of relevance in relation to your claim. Make sure your evidence is:

1. Supportive Examples are clearly representative, statistics accurate testimony authoritative, and information reliable.
2. Relevant Examples clearly relate to the claim or topic, and you are not comparing "apples to oranges."
3. Effective Examples are clearly the best available to support the claim, quality is preferred to quantity, there are only a few well-chosen statistics, facts or data.

Appealing to Emotions

While we've highlighted several points to consider when selecting information to support your claim, know that Aristotle strongly preferred an argument based in logic over emotion. Can the same be said for your audience, and to what degree is emotion and your appeal to it in your audience a part of modern life?

Emotions are a psychological and physical reaction, such as fear or anger, to stimuli that we experience as a feeling. Our feelings or emotions directly impact our own point of view and readiness to communicate, but also influence how, why, and when we say things. Emotions influence not only how you say what you say, but also how you hear and what you hear. At times, emotions can be challenging to control. Emotions will move your audience, and possibly even move you, to change or act in certain ways. Marketing experts are famous for creating a need or associating an emotion with a brand or label in order to sell it. You will speak the language of your audience in your document, and may choose to appeal to emotion, but you need to consider the strategic use as a tool that has two edges.

Aristotle indicated the best, and most preferable, way to persuade an audience was through the use of logic, free of emotion. He also recognized that people are often motivated, even manipulated, by the exploitation of their emotions. In our modern context, we still engage this debate, demanding to know the facts separate from personal opinion or agenda, but see the use of emotion used to sell products. If we think of the appeal to emotion as a knife, we can see it has two edges. One edge can cut your audience, and the other can cut you. If you advance an appeal to emotion in your document on spaying and neutering pets, and discuss the millions of unwanted pets that are killed each year, you may elicit an emotional response. If you use this approach repeatedly, your audience may grow weary of it, and it will lose its effectiveness. If you change your topic to the use of animals in research, the same strategy may apply, but repeated attempts at engaging an emotional response may backfire on you, in essence "cutting" you, and produce a negative response, called emotional resistance.

Emotional resistance involves getting tired, often to the point of rejection, of hearing messages that attempt to elicit an emotional response. Emotional appeals can wear out the audience's capacity to receive the message. As Aristotle outlined, ethos (credibility), logos (logic) and pathos (passion, enthusiasm and emotional response) constitute the building blocks of any document. It's up to you to create a balanced document, where you may appeal to emotion, but choose to use it judiciously.

On a related point, the use of an emotional appeal may also impair your ability to write persuasively or effectively. If you choose to present an article to persuade on the topic of suicide, and start with a photo of your brother or sister that you lost to suicide, your emotional response may cloud your judgment and get in the way of your thinking. Never use a personal story, or even a story of someone you do not know, if the inclusion of that story causes you to lose control. While it's important to discuss relevant topics, including suicide, you need to assess you own relationship to the message. Your documents should not be an exercise in therapy and you will sacrifice ethos and credibility, even your effectiveness, if you "lose it" because you are really not ready to discuss the issue.

As we saw in our discussion of Altman and Taylor, most relationships form from superficial discussions and grow into more personal conversations. Consider these levels of self-disclosure when planning your speech to persuade in order to not violate conversational and relational norms.

Now that we've outlined emotions and their role in a speech in general and a speech to persuade specifically, it's important recognize the principles about emotions in communication that serve us well when speaking in public. DeVito offers us five key principles to acknowledge the role emotions play in communication and offer guidelines for their expression.

Emotions Are Universal

Emotions are a part of every conversation or interaction that we have. Whether or not you consciously experience them while communicating with yourself or others, they influence how you communicate. By recognizing that emotions are a component in all communication interactions, we can place emphasis on understanding both the content of the message and the emotions that influence how, why, and when the content is communicated.

The context, which includes your psychological state of mind, is one of the eight basic components of communication. Expression of emotions is important, but requires the three Ts: tact, timing, and trust. If you find you are upset and at risk of being less than diplomatic, or the timing is not right, or you are unsure about the level of trust, then consider whether you can effectively communicate your emotions. By considering these three Ts, you can help yourself express your emotions more effectively.

Emotional Feelings and Emotional Expression Are Not the Same

Emotions are often communicated through nonverbal gestures and actions.

Experiencing feelings and actually letting someone know you are experiencing them are two different things. We experience feeling in terms of our psychological state, or state of mind, and in terms of our physiological state, or state of our body. If we experience anxiety and apprehension before a test, we may have thoughts that correspond to our nervousness. We may also have an increase in our pulse, perspiration, and respiration (breathing) rate. Our expression of feelings by our body influences our nonverbal communication, but we can complement, repeat, replace, mask, or even contradict our verbal messages. Remember that we can't tell with any degree of accuracy what other people are feeling simply through observation, and neither can they tell what we are feeling. We need to ask clarifying questions to improve understanding. With this in mind, plan for a time to provide responses and open dialogue after the conclusion of your speech.

Figure 12.6. Becky Wetherington – Stress – CC BY 2.0.

Emotions Are Communicated Verbally and Nonverbally

You communicate emotions not only through your choice of words but also through the manner in which you say those words. The words themselves communicate part of your message, but the nonverbal cues, including inflection, timing, space, and paralanguage can modify or contradict your spoken message. Be aware that emotions are expressed in both ways and pay attention to how verbal and nonverbal messages reinforce and complement each other.

Emotional Expression Can Be Good and Bad

Expressing emotions can be a healthy activity for a relationship and build trust. It can also break down trust if expression is not combined with judgment. We're all different, and we all experience emotions, but how we express our emotions to ourselves and others can have a significant impact on our relationships. Expressing frustrations may help the audience realize your point of view and see things as they have never seen them before. However, expressing frustrations combined with blaming can generate defensiveness and decrease effective listening. When you're expressing yourself, consider the audience's point of view, be specific about your concerns, and emphasize that your relationship with your listeners is important to you.

Emotions Are Often Contagious

Have you ever felt that being around certain people made you feel better, while hanging out with others brought you down? When we interact with each other, some of our emotions can be considered contagious. If your friends decide to celebrate, you may get caught up in the energy of their enthusiasm. Thomas Joiner noted that when one college roommate was depressed, it took less than three weeks for the depression to spread to the other roommate (Joiner, T., 1994). It is important to recognize that we influence each other with our emotions, positively and negatively. Your emotions as the speaker can be contagious, so use your enthusiasm to raise the level of interest in your topic. Conversely, you may be subject to "catching" emotions from your audience. Your listeners may have just come from a large lunch and feel sleepy, or the speaker who gave a speech right before you may have addressed a serious issue like suicide. Considering the two-way contagious action of emotions means that you'll need to attend to the emotions that are present as you prepare to address your audience.

Key Takeaways

Everyone experiences emotions, and as a persuasive speaker, you can choose how to express emotion and appeal to the audience's emotions.

Exercises

1. Think of a time when you have experienced emotional resistance. Write two or three paragraphs about your experience. Share your notes with the class.
2. Which is the more powerful, appeal to reason or emotion? Discuss your response with an example.
3. Select a commercial or public service announcement that uses an emotional appeal. Using the information in this section, how would you characterize the way it persuades listeners with emotion? Is it effective in persuading you as a listener? Why or why not? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
4. Find an example of an appeal to emotion in the media. Review and describe it in two to three paragraphs and share with your classmates.

12.14 Speaking Ethically and Avoiding Fallacies

Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate the importance of ethics as part of the persuasion process.

2. Identify and provide examples of eight common fallacies in persuasive speaking.

What comes to mind when you think of speaking to persuade? Perhaps the idea of persuasion may bring to mind propaganda and issues of manipulation, deception, intentional bias, bribery, and even coercion. Each element relates to persuasion, but in distinct ways. In a democratic society, we would hope that our Bill of Rights is intact and validated, and that we would support the exercise of freedom to discuss, consider and debate issues when considering change. We can recognize that each of these elements in some ways has a negative connotation associated with it. Why do you think that deceiving your audience, bribing a judge, or coercing people to do something against their wishes is wrong? These tactics violate our sense of fairness, freedom, and ethics.

Manipulation involves the management of facts, ideas or points of view to play upon inherent insecurities or emotional appeals to one's own advantage. Your audience expects you to treat them with respect, and deliberately manipulating them by means of fear, guilt, duty, or a relationship is unethical. In the same way, deception involves the use of lies, partial truths, or the omission of relevant information to deceive your audience. No one likes to be lied to, or made to believe something that is not true. Deception can involve intentional bias, or the selection of information to support your position while framing negatively any information that might challenge your belief.

Bribery involves the giving of something in return for an expected favor, consideration, or privilege. It circumvents the normal protocol for personal gain, and again is a strategy that misleads your audience. Coercion is the use of power to compel action. You make someone do something they would not choose to do freely. You might threaten punishment, and people may go along with you while the "stick" is present, but once the threat is removed, they will revert to their previous position, often with new antagonism toward the person or agency that coerced them. While you may raise the issue that the ends justify the means, and you are "doing it for the audience's own good," recognize the unethical nature of coercion.

As Martin Luther King Jr. stated in his advocacy of nonviolent resistance, two wrongs do not make a right. They are just two wrongs and violate the ethics that contribute to community and healthy relationships. Each issue certainly relates to persuasion, but you as the speaker should be aware of each in order to present an ethical persuasive speech. Learn to recognize when others try to use these tactics on you, and know that your audience will be watching to see if you try any of these strategies on them.

Eleven Points for Speaking Ethically

In his book *Ethics in Human Communication* (Johannesen, R., 1996), Richard Johannesen offers eleven points to consider when speaking to persuade. His main points reiterate many of the points across this chapter and should be kept in mind as you prepare, and present, your persuasive message.

Do not:

- use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims.
- intentionally use unsupported, misleading, or illogical reasoning.
- represent yourself as informed or an "expert" on a subject when you are not.
- use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand.
- ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it is actually not related.
- deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, by concealing self-interest, by concealing the group you represent, or by concealing your position as an advocate of a viewpoint.
- distort, hide, or misrepresent the number, scope, intensity, or undesirable features of consequences or effects.
- use "emotional appeals" that lack a supporting basis of evidence or reasoning.

- oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic, two-valued, either-or, polar views or choices.
- pretend certainty where tentativeness and degrees of probability would be more accurate.
- advocate something which you yourself do not believe in.

Aristotle said the mark of a good person, well spoken was a clear command of the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. He discussed the idea of perceiving the many points of view related to a topic, and their thoughtful consideration. While it's important to be able to perceive the complexity of a case, you are not asked to be a lawyer defending a client.

In your speech to persuade, consider honesty and integrity as you assemble your arguments. Your audience will appreciate your thoughtful consideration of more than one view, your understanding of the complexity, and you will build your ethos, or credibility, as you present your document. Be careful not to stretch the facts, or assemble them only to prove yourself, and instead prove the argument on its own merits. Deception, coercion, intentional bias, manipulation and bribery should have no place in your speech to persuade.

Avoiding Fallacies

Fallacies are another way of saying false logic. These rhetorical tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your speech in terms of substance and can actually detract from your effectiveness. There are several techniques or "tricks" that allow the speaker to rely on style without offering substantive argument, to obscure the central message, or twist the facts to their own gain. Here we will examine the eight classical fallacies. You may note that some of them relate to the ethical cautions listed earlier in this section. Eight common fallacies are presented in Table 12.5 "Fallacies". Learn to recognize these fallacies so they can't be used against you, and so that you can avoid using them with your audience.

Table 12.5 Fallacies

Fallacy	Definition	Example
1. Red Herring	Any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue, particularly by relating the issue to a common fear.	It's not just about the death penalty; it's about the victims and their rights. You wouldn't want to be a victim, but if you were, you'd want justice.
2. Straw Man	A weak argument set up to be easily refuted, distracting attention from stronger arguments	What if we released criminals who commit murder after just a few years of rehabilitation? Think of how unsafe our streets would be then!
3. Begging the Question	Claiming the truth of the very matter in question, as if it were already an obvious conclusion.	We know that they will be released and unleashed on society to repeat their crimes again and again.
4. Circular Argument	The proposition is used to prove itself. Assumes the very thing it aims to prove. Related to begging the question.	Once a killer, always a killer.
5. Ad Populum	Appeals to a common belief of some people, often prejudicial, and states everyone holds this belief. Also called the Bandwagon Fallacy, as people "jump on the bandwagon" of a perceived popular view.	Most people would prefer to get rid of a few "bad apples" and keep our streets safe.
6. Ad Hominem	"Argument against the man" instead of against his message. Stating that someone's argument is wrong solely because of something about the person rather than about the argument itself.	Our representative is a drunk and philanderer. How can we trust him on the issues of safety and family?
7. Non Sequitur	"It does not follow." The conclusion does not follow from the premises. They are not related.	Since the liberal antiwar demonstrations of the 1960s, we've seen an increase in convicts who got let off death row.
8. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc	"After this, therefore because of this," also called a coincidental correlation. It tries to establish a cause-and-effect relationship where only a correlation exists.	Violent death rates went down once they started publicizing executions.

Avoid false logic and make a strong case or argument for your proposition. Finally, here is a five-step motivational checklist to keep in mind as you bring it all together:

1. Get their attention
2. Identify the need
3. Satisfy the need
4. Present a vision or solution
5. Take action

This simple organizational pattern can help you focus on the basic elements of a persuasive message when time is short and your performance is critical.

Key Takeaways

Speaking to persuade should not involve manipulation, coercion, false logic, or other unethical techniques.

Exercises

1. Can persuasion be ethical? Why or why not? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.
2. Select a persuasive article or video from a Web site that you feel uses unethical techniques to persuade the audience. What techniques are being used? What makes them unethical? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
3. Find an example of a particularly effective scene where a character in your favorite television program is persuaded to believe or do something. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of the scene and why it was effective. Share and compare with classmates.
4. Find an example of a particularly ineffective scene where a character in your favorite television program is not persuaded to believe or do something. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of the scene and why it was ineffective. Share and compare with classmates.
5. Find an example of a fallacy in an advertisement and share it with the class.
6. Find an example of an effective argument in an advertisement and share it with the class.
7. Write a two- to three-paragraph description of a persuasive message that caused you to believe or do something. Share and compare your description with classmates.

12.15 Sample Persuasive Speech

Here is a generic, sample speech in an outline form with notes and suggestions.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the structural parts of a persuasive speech.

Attention Statement

Show a picture of a person on death row and ask the audience: does an innocent man deserve to die?

Introduction

Briefly introduce the man in an Illinois prison and explain that he was released only days before his impending death because DNA evidence (not available when he was convicted), clearly established his innocence.

A statement of your topic and your specific stand on the topic:

"My speech today is about the death penalty, and I am against it."

Introduce your credibility and the topic: "My research on this controversial topic has shown me that deterrence and retribution are central arguments for the death penalty, and today I will address each of these issues in turn."

State your main points.

"Today I will address the two main arguments for the death penalty, deterrence and retribution, and examine how the governor of one state decided that since some cases were found to be faulty, all cases would be stayed until proven otherwise."

Body

Information: Provide a simple explanation of the death penalty in case there are people who do not know about it. Provide clear definitions of key terms.

Deterrence: Provide arguments by generalization, sign, and authority.

Retribution: Provide arguments by analogy, cause, and principle.

Case study: State of Illinois, Gov. George Ryan. Provide an argument by testimony and authority by quoting: "You have a system right now…that's fraught with error and has innumerable opportunities for innocent people to be executed," Dennis Culloton, spokesman for the Governor, told the *Chicago Tribune*. "He is determined not to make that mistake."

Solution steps:

1. *National level*. "Stay all executions until the problem that exists in Illinois, and perhaps the nation, is addressed."
2. *Local level*. "We need to encourage our own governor to examine the system we have for similar errors and opportunities for innocent people to be executed."
3. *Personal level*. "Vote, write your representatives, and help bring this issue to the forefront in your community."

Conclusion

Reiterate your main points and provide synthesis; do not introduce new content.

Residual Message

Imagine that you have been assigned to give a persuasive presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 14.6 "Sample Speech Guidelines" and apply them to your presentation.

Table 14.6 Sample Speech Guidelines

1.Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you so much that you would like to influence the audience's attitudes and behavior toward it.
2. Purpose	Persuasive speakers may plan to secure behavioral changes, influence thinking, or motivate action in their audience. They may state a proposition of fact, value, definition, or policy. They may incorporate appeals to reason, emotion, and/or basic needs.
3. Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and perhaps any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information. You won't be able to convert everyone in the audience from a "no" to a "yes," but you might encourage a couple to consider "maybe." Audiences are more likely to change their behavior if it meets their needs, saves them money, involves a small change, or if the proposed change is approached gradually in the presentation.
4. Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. Consider information that the audience might want to know that contradicts or challenges your claims and be prepared for questions. Use visual aids to illustrate your message.
5. Organization	1. Write a central idea statement, which expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. 2. Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea. 3. Prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech, including solution steps or action items.
6. Introduction	Develop an opening that will 1. get the attention and interest of your listeners, 2. express your central idea/message, and 3. lead into the body of your speech.
7. Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
8. Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously, using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

Key Takeaway

A speech to persuade presents an attention statement, an introduction, the body of the speech with main points and supporting information, a conclusion, and a residual message.

Exercises

1. Apply this framework to your persuasive speech.
2. Prepare a three- to five-minute presentation to persuade and present it to the class.
3. Review an effective presentation to persuade and present it to the class.
4. Review an ineffective presentation to persuade and present it to the class
5.

12.16 Additional Resources

To listen to speeches from great figures in history, visit the History Channel's audio speech archive. http://www.history.com/speeches

What were the greatest speeches of the twentieth century? Find out here. http://gos.sbc.edu/top100.html

Visit this eHow link for a great video demonstrating how to remove ink stains from clothing. http://www.ehow.com/video_2598_remove-ink-stains.html

To improve your enunciation, try these exercises from the Mount Holyoke College site. http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/speech/enunciation.htm

The Merriam-Webster dictionary site provides a wealth of resources on words, their meanings, their origins, and audio files of how to pronounce them. http://www.merriam-webster.com

For information on adapting your speech for an audience or audience members with special needs, explore this index of resources compiled by Ithaca College. http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/disabilities/

Dr. Richard Felder of North Carolina State University presents this questionnaire to assess your learning styles. http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association offers an array of Web resources on ethics. http://www.asha.org/practice/ethics

Visit this site for a list informative topics for a business speech. http://smallbusiness.chron.com/ideas-informative-speech-topics-business-81465.html

Visit this eHow site to get ideas for an audience-oriented informative speech topic. http://www.ehow.com/how_2239702_choose-topic-informative-speech.html

Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, asks, "Which messages spur citizens to protect the environment?" January 25, 2007, at the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA); free downloads of MP3 and PDF transcripts are available. https://www.thersa.org/discover/audio/2014/09/small-changes-to-make-a-big-difference/

Justthink.org promotes critical thinking skills and awareness of the impact of images in the media among young people. http://www.change.org/organizations/just_think_foundation

Watch a YouTube video of a persuasive speech on becoming a hero. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYtm8uEo5vU

Watch a YouTube video of a persuasive speech on same-sex marriage. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cR4N8oEQR3c&feature=related

Professional speaker Ruth Sherman speaks persuasively about her book, *Get Them to See It Your Way, Right Away*. http://www.ruthsherman.com/video.asp

Visit this site for a video and other resources about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. http://www.abraham-maslow.com/m_motivation/Hierarchy_of_Needs.asp

Read an informative article on negotiating face-to-face across cultures by Stella Ting-Toomey, . https://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/forum/past_PRF/PRF_1999/intercultural-conflict-competence-eastern-and-western-lenses.html

Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides a guide to persuasive speaking strategies. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/04

Visit the Web site of talk show host Sean Hannity and assess his persuasive speaking techniques. http://www.hannity.com

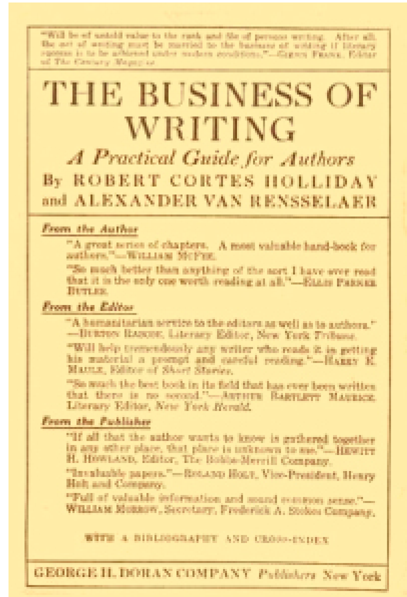
Visit the Web site of National Public Radio and assess the persuasive message of various radio programs. http://www.npr.org

UNIT 13 TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS

13.1 Format Overview

This learning unit includes information on formats, headings, sub headings, markers, chunking, and white space.

Information in reports needs to be formatted in a hierarchical structure. The first heading is the title of the report.


THE BUSINESS OF WRITING

A Practical Guide for Authors

By ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY and ALEXANDER VAN RENSSELAER

From the Author

"A great series of chapters. A most valuable hand-book for authors."—WILLIAM MCFEE.

"So much better than anything of the sort I have ever read that it is the only one worth reading at all."—ELLIS PARKER BUTLER.

From the Editor

"A humanitarian service to the editors as well as to authors." —BURTON RASCOE, Literary Editor, New York Tribune.

"Will help tremendously any writer who reads it in getting his material a prompt and careful reading."—HARRY E. MAULE, Editor of Short Stories.

"So much the best book in its field that has ever been written that there is no second."—ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE, Literary Editor, New York Herald.

From the Publisher

"If all that the author wants to know is gathered together in any other place, that place is unknown to me."—HEWITT H. HOWLAND, Editor, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

"Invaluable papers."—ROLAND HOLT, Vice-President, Henry Holt and Company.

"Full of valuable information and sound common sense."—WILLIAM MORROW, Secretary, Frederick A. Stokes Company.

WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CROSS-INDEX

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY *Publishers* New York

After this first heading the structure is a coordinated into four sections, so each section of a report shows the same order of information. Headings identify the sections of information: Major Headings; Division of Major Headings; Sub Division of Major Headings; Sub-Sub Division of Major Headings.

Not every report needs four headings. A report may have two sections, three sections, or four sections. However, a report cannot have more than four hierarchal sections. If your report needs more than four sections, you need to reorganize the information in the report.

Within each section, markers are used to identify specific points. Chunking and white space are used to make information more accessible. Markers can be bullets, numbers, underlining, bold font, italics, etc. Chunking is creating small sections of information, surrounded by white space. White space is empty space that separates sections of text.

When using bullets to mark several items, be sure to chunk items into groups. Lists of items that are continuously bulleted become solid text and the effect of marking information is lost.

See example:

Example – How to Use White Space in Technical Writing on the website eHow.

13.2 General Design Concepts

Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents

You build your communications out of *visual* elements: the dark marks of your words, sentences, and paragraphs against the light background of the page, as well as your drawings and graphs and tables. Your readers *see* the visual design of these elements before they read and understand your message. And what they see has a powerful effect on the success of your communications, on its usability and persuasiveness.

Here are ways that good design enhances usability.

- Good design helps readers understand your information.
- Good page design helps readers locate information quickly.
- Good design helps readers notice highly important content.

Here are some ways good design affects readers' attitudes, thereby increasing a communication's persuasiveness.

- Good design encourages readers to feel good about the communication itself.

- Good design encourages readers to feel good about the communication's subject matter.

A Reader-Centered Approach to Design

Because page design can have such a significant impact on your communication's usability and persuasiveness, you should approach design in the same reader-centered manner that you use when drafting text and graphics. Think continuously about your readers, including who they are, what they want from your communication, and the context in which they will be reading.

Design Elements of a Communication

It is helpful to think about the building blocks of a page design in the way that professional graphic designers do. When they look at a page, they see six basic elements.

- **Text.** Paragraphs and sentences.
- **Headings and titles.** Labels for sections of your communication.
- **Graphics.** Drawings, tables, photographs, and so on — including their captions.
- **White space.** Blank areas.
- **Headers and footers.** The items, such as page numbers, that occur at the top or bottom of each page in a multipage document.
- **Physical features.** These include paper, which may take many shapes and sizes, and bindings, which come in many forms.

CREATING GRAPHICS

Planning

1. Identify places where graphics will increase your communication's usability.
2. Identify places where graphics will increase your communication's persuasiveness.

Note: Make sure not to add graphics to areas that will alter the flow of the document/communication. Add graphics in places in between paragraphs or other logical breaks in the document.

Selecting

1. Select the types of graphics that will best support your readers' tasks.
2. Select the types of graphics that will effectively influence your readers' attitudes.
3. Select the types of graphics that will best support your case.

Designing

1. Design graphics that are easy to understand and use.
2. Design them to support your readers' tasks.
3. Design graphics that your readers will find persuasive.
4. Keep your graphics simple enough for easy use.
5. Label content clearly.
6. Provide your graphics with informative titles.
7. Address the graphics with a sort summary of results or caption about the graphic.

Using Color

1. Use colors to support your message.
2. Use color for emphasis, not decoration or too distracting from the body text.
3. Choose a color scheme, not just individual colors.
4. Provide high contrast between text and background.
5. Select colors with appropriate associations.
6. Limit the number of colors.

7. Use color to unify the overall communication.

Integrating with the Text

1. Introduce each graphic in the text first.
2. Tell your readers the conclusions you want them to draw from the graphic.
3. Provide all explanations your readers will need in order to understand and use each graphic.
4. Locate each graphic near its references.

Addressing an International Audience

1. Check your graphics with persons from other nations for clarity when possible.
2. Check your graphics with technology for problems when intra-converted between computer systems.

Using Graphics Ethically

1. Avoid elements that might mislead your readers.
2. Obtain permission from the copyright owner of each image that is not in the public domain.
3. Give credit to all involved in the development or research of the graphic.
4. Be sure the graphic will benefit the document overall and will not just add unnecessary clutter.

13.3 Brochure

Brochures are small promotional or informative documents ranging from a tri-folded piece of paper to a small collection of pages on a single topic. Typically, they are used to give external audiences information on products or services. Brochures rely on skillful design and use of graphics in addition to quality writing.

Rhetorical Context

Brochures can be written for a range of topics though you can broadly define them as a mix of informative and persuasive content. A brochure on how to use a service at your library might be mostly informative. A brochure about a local cancer support charity might be mostly informative but have persuasive elements to elicit donations. Brochures marketing a new product might be more persuasive but will still need to provide sufficient information to be convincing.

While often used to promote a product or service, brochures can also be used to give information to customers or clients as part of a larger marketing effort. For example, a yoga studio might give new members a brochure detailing basic postures and information on class times.

Given the range of content that can be present in a brochure, you'll want to carefully analyze your purpose and audience before you start crafting your brochure. Once you have a clear sense of your specific purpose and the basic needs of the audience, consider the following questions to help plan an appropriate level of detail and an effective design:

- How interested is my reader in this material?
- How will the material be distributed?
- What role does the brochure play?
- How will the brochure be read?

Knowing the readers' interest level can help you to determine appropriate depth when developing your content and can help you select organizational strategies that suit the engagement levels of different audiences. Understanding how the material will be distributed can help you to consider design choices for your brochure.

Much like with websites, there is a lot of variety in design for brochures. Something that may be very helpful for creating your own designs is to look at brochures you consider effective. Analyze and evaluate their purpose, content, and design to determine what is and is not effective. Such evaluations will help you to generate ideas for your own design.

How interested is my reader in this material?

Brochures are typically written for external audiences, some who are eager for the information, and others who you'll have to entice to take it and read it.

If your reader is eager for the information, you'll want to anticipate their likely questions, and make sure you provide all the information they would want. It's very important to be thorough when you have an eager reader—you don't want to disappoint their expectations.

If your reader is not eager for the information because they don't know why they would need it, you may want to aim for less detailed content. A less dense, skimmable page of content reduces the amount of reader work. They'll feel more open to reading if the document doesn't appear like a burden of reading. Lots of interesting images can also help keep these less interested readers engaged.

How will the material be distributed?

How the brochure will be distributed can have an impact on your design choices.

A brochure that will be placed on display for potential readers to pick up needs to have a large, clear title that makes the purpose of the brochure obvious to readers. This will help interested readers easily find the brochure. A clear and purposeful title may also lure other readers to examine the brochure even though they didn't seek it out. For these uninterested readers, an eye-catching front page can entice readers to pick up the brochure and read it.

For example, if your brochure is likely to be distributed by hand or displayed on a small stand, potential readers will almost always see the cover of the brochure first. If a brochure is going to be laying flat on a table or in another situation where the material could be flipped over by people passing by, you may want to make both the front and back visually appealing.

What role does the brochure play?

Usually a brochure is part of a larger communication or marketing effort and will provide readers with a means of getting more information or access to the product or service being discussed. This might be a website, phone number, or other means of contact. It might even include an address and location hours if the purpose is to entice readers to visit.

How will the brochure be read?

There are a variety of designs for brochures to meet the various purposes they serve. Some are multiple pages while others are a single page. Some single page brochures are folded in different ways.

To effectively reach your audience, you should carefully consider how much space you need and how best to break up your content using panels or pages. It may seem old-fashioned, but creating a blank version by folding or stapling some paper can help you visualize how a reader is going to navigate your brochure. Knowing how they are likely to navigate will help you know where to place key information when planning your layout and making design choices.

Also, while interested readers are likely to skim through the whole brochure, your design should draw in less interested readers. For all readers, your design choices need to help draw attention to key information. White space, headings, lines, colors, lists and many other design elements can help emphasize that key information to help readers easily access what's important and draw them into the document. If the emphasized details engage readers, they'll be more likely to read the rest of the brochure.

Conventions

Brochures should make use of design elements and graphics to not only draw reader's attention but also to make for a quick and easy read. Typically, space is at a premium with a brochure, particularly with ones made from a single folded sheet of paper, so the language needs to be concise and focused on the reader's needs and interests in relation to the topic. At the same time, you will want to balance use of white space and visuals so the material is not intimidating to readers.

As you produce any brochure, aim for the following features:

- Eye-catching and attractive colors and visuals
- A clear, engaging title
- Design that makes flow of the document clear
- Design that emphasizes key information
- Concentrated content that meets the needs of your reader
- A means for your reader to get more information (e.g. web address or email)
- Clear identification of the organization who produced the brochure

UNIT 14 WEBSITE DESIGN

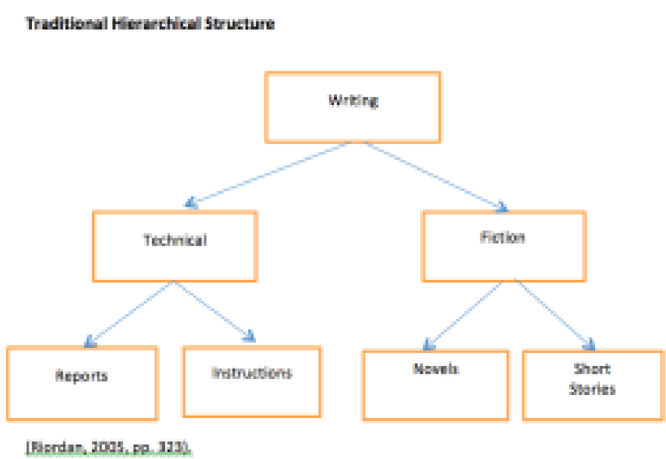
14.1 Websites Overview

Written communication is a significant and an important aspect of technical writing. It is your responsibility as a technical writer to know the accepted structure and format of various types of methods of written communication in order to provide readers with clear and easy access to information.

This module focuses on designing websites, affording easy access to information and respecting cross-cultural audiences.

14.2 Considerations for Website Writing

Daniel Riordan, in *Technical Report Writing Today*, reports that "[t]he web is one of the primary means of communication today[1]. Riordan adds that "[m]illions of people use it every day to find information, to purchase items, and to entertain themselve[2] A single web site can be information that is organized on one page or a single web site can be information that is organized over several pages[3]. Regardless of the amount information on a web site, the web design needs to give the reader clear and essay access to information just as with any document. As Riordan emphasis, unlike traditional documents in which a reader progresses through following a structured path from the beginning to the end, after reaching a Website's home page, a reader can navigate the site in may different directions. Therefore, special attention needs to be given to layout since each web mode does not have the traditional sub categories[4]:



In addition, more than the design of any other document, a web design needs to pay careful attention to addressing a cross-

1. (2005, p. 322)
2. s (2005, p. 322).
3. (Riordan, 2005)
4. (Riordan, 2005)

cultural audience since a website is not limited to specific space. Therefore, make sure to avoid using idioms and pronouns. It is almost impossible for other cultures to translate idioms; referencing pronouns to their intended nouns is especially difficult for non-English speakers. In addition, a major consideration for effective cross-cultural communication is the referencing of time formats, dates, weights and measurements, telephone number formats, address formats, currency, and paper size [5].

14.3 Website Design

Goals

Before designing a website it is important to set goals. What purpose is the website serving? Not all sites serve the same purpose. For example, a retail site will have very different goals than a nonprofit site.

Some common website goals are:

- Sales
- Marketing
- Update information
- Generate leads
- Distribute information

Goals, in any setting, are important to business success. By setting goals for one aspect of the business, in this case, the website, it will help in accomplishing other goals of the business, such as:

- Expanding the audience
- Increasing sales
- Connecting other businesses or other parts of the company
- General communication

Design Message

The design message is the image the organization wants to portray to the reader. This can also be called the brand. When creating the look of the website you must consider logos, colors, fonts, and images. These must all support the personality of the organization.

5. (Riordan, 2005)

Communicating the brand is something that is becoming more prevalent in the workplace. Consistency is needed everywhere within a business so that the company can portray a unified front–and believe in it. Giving web pages a consistent look will help define it as a cohesive website and will make it easier to navigate. Since companies are building their workplaces around the "theme" or the "brand", there is no reason that the website should not be done in the same manner. In fact, it is necessary for brand identification, therefore helping the company advance and succeed. A consistent brand and image also build trust and value for a company.

Some important items to consider when communicating the brand are:

- The brand, whether communicated through the website or the customer service, must be consistent
- The brand should be found everywhere–there are no limits to exposure of brands
- Short and simple is always the best route
- You are the brand and the brand is you. If your brand does not reflect the values and beliefs of the company, it most certainly should not be on your website.

Recognizing Your Audience

Knowing your audience will help you to make better decisions when it comes to deciding which browsers to support and which new technologies to endorse. Before designing a new website, it would be helpful to look into the likely browsers, computer user knowledge, and connection speeds of the audience you are addressing. In redesigning a website that already exists, you can review the past site usage information so that you are providing improvements to the site where it is needed most.

There are several different guidelines that should be used when designing websites. Here are common site types:

- academic and scientific sites should have additional focus on how the site functions in graphics-free browsing environments
- consumer audience websites should pay special attention to site performance and presentation
- a controlled environment where a specific browser is being used, as in a corporate environment, is where it is best to use all that the website has to offer. Employees usually attend training to learn how to use these sites and the designer can use the browsers full potential.
- gaming websites is where you can assume that the users will have the latest plug-ins and browsers and are quite technologically savvy

You can also take a balanced approach to web design. This type of design integrates the latest web technologies, but implements them in a way that is still functional to those that have older browsers.

Examining the Site's Purpose

Figuring out how the site will be used in another important step in website design. Those who use the internet usually fall into two categories:

- those who seek information
- those who search the internet for entertainment

For the informational sites, you may want to consider the technology of the client or use more general approach in design. For the sites of those seeking entertainment, more cutting-edge technology can be used to better the experience of the user when they are accessing your site.

There are options for those who want to use the latest technology for their websites, but want to make it available to everyone. For this situation, you can use a browser detector to serve alternate version depending on the type of browser the user has. This allows you to use the latest technology and still recognize users that have older browsers.

Testing Your Site

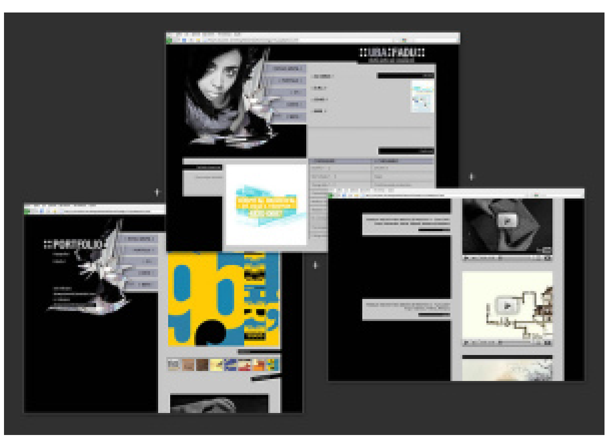
Test your website on many different browsers and browser versions. Doing this before going live will help off-set problems you may encounter before it is available to the public. Professional web design firms run their sites through an intense quality assurance phase. If this is not a feasible task, you can make your site available on a private test site. You can then run your own quality assurance test throughout the following browsers:

- Acquaintances' browser
- Corporate office browser
- Different ISPs

Website pages will appear different depending on the environment it is viewed on. The overall idea of this testing phase is to make sure that the information is being presented clearly and there are not any overt problems.

Content

Content is one of the most important reasons for even creating a website in the first place. If you think about it, a website with no content has no purpose. A website with no purpose is wasted space on the internet.



When considering content for your website, be sure to think of the following items:

- What is the goal of the website?
- Who is the website trying to reach?
- How much time to people have to spend reading information on the website?
- How did individuals reach this website?
- What is the most important information to the reader?
- What questions do the readers have?
- What action is the reader supposed to take after reading the website content?

Another aspect to consider about website content is how it will be searched within different search engines. Key words are needed throughout your website to make sure that the website is found by people who are looking for specific information. It is important to be specific with words, and use them multiple times, so that search engine robots find the word and place it high on the results list.

Content must also be age and audience appropriate. Age appropriate is hard to determine on the internet since it is something that can be accessed by everyone who knows how to use a computer. Content on websites, however, still must be age appropriate so that the right audience is reading the right material. Age appropriateness also falls under appropriateness in general of making sure that private information does not become public on the internet. Audience appropriate means that the content of the website is serving the people with the right information at the correct level of reading to which the intended readers will understand.

With companies becoming more interested in the usability of their websites, positions are being created specifically for content writing. A website content writer is someone who specifically writes information for websites. This is written in a different voice than academic writing so that a web surfer will stay interested in the website, and therefore the information.

Creating a Home Page

Your home page will be the most visited page on your website. Your home page may not always have what your viewers are looking for, so if you have something that will draw them in to make them *want* look further for their information. You will have ten seconds to draw your customers into your site, or else they will hit the "back" button and will begin to look elsewhere. Your home page should be able to load quickly. The ten seconds you have to draw the customers into your site begins when they click on the link to your site. If it takes five seconds for your site to load, you only have a few seconds left to draw customers further. Here are some tips to help your site download quicker:

- Keep media images small
  - limit images to no more than 5 to 10KB
  - pages should not be more than 30KB total per page
- Avoid using ads from external websites on your home page that may slow down the loading time. You cannot control how fast another server will serve its content.
- Write your HTML in sections so that when the bottom of the page is still loading, your customers can read the top sections of your home page.

Another important point about home pages it to **never stop modifying it**. Reviewing your log files once your website is up and working can help you make your home page more user friendly. Updating the links or the colors may improve the appeal or ease of use to your site. Remember that everything can be changed, and you don't have to settle with something if it's working.

Compatibility

Features do not always display the same way in different Web browsers. It can be useful to check a created page using more than just one browser, to ensure that the page displays correctly for a wider audience. Completed HTML code can be validated by visiting validator.w3.org. Saved HTML code can be uploaded and checked for accuracy. Any issues with the syntax of the HTML will be listed, as well as suggestions for changing the errors. This eliminates the need for a person to search their own code for errors after attempting to display it in a browser.

Design Considerations

Usability

Usability is defined as the ease of using the website. This could be for the intended audience of the website (see Audience), or it could be determined by the industry or business standards needed for websites. Usability of websites has gone through different definition changes with the evolution of the internet. In its early years, many people did not know how to navigate through websites or read the information provided. This made the website unusable. Now, people look for the easiest possible access to whatever information is needed.

Usability means Communication

Websites are a form of visual communication, serving multiple purposes. Websites can be informative, persuasive, long-term, advertising, or entertaining. Usability is determined based on the goals of the website.

If the website accomplishes its goals and communicates the necessary messages, it can therefore be considered usable.

Developing Usability

Starting to test a site before it is built will help avoid some problems before a lot of effort is put into the site. Plan on doing usability testing in focus groups to help you prepare for a better, more user friendly site. If you do not have access to a focus group, you can print out your ideas and share them with family and friends and ask for their insight. Some points to keep in mind when beginning your site are:

- Find out what people expect from your site. Customers may want something different than what you were preparing to build.
- Wording that you use will be important in how effective your site will be. If you begin testing early, you can find out what words relay your message better with your audience.
- Customers will provide you with good ideas. Testing with customers will give you ideas that you may not have thought of.
- Use descriptive headings, bold words, and bullet lists for easy reading
- Incorporate links and resources for more information
- Add pictures, charts, and graphs to enhance communication
- Avoid adding unnecessary information, pictures, sounds, or colors that are more distracting than helpful
- Test the website with audiences to determine usefulness

Testing is key to building a website. You must be willing to listen to the input of others, friends or potential customers, so you'll have a better site from the start.

Appearance

Appearance should be aesthetically pleasing. One that is easy to look at and maneuver. Tasks (what the user has come to this page looking for, such as an email address or information about an event) that are most important and or most commonly sought should be the main **focal points** of a web page. Whether it be certain colors driving that importance, or size, or placement on the page, even directional line guiding you to that point, the important tasks must not become secondary. *In other words*, they should stand out more, not become secondary to an image or a background. Everything on your site should have a purpose, a reason for being where it is and looking the way it does.

Pictures and colors are important and interesting, but far less important than the **content**. This is true for any web page. The user must not get confused upon entrance to a site. They should know where they need to click (and understand what will come from that click) and not be distracted by images. Unless it's intended, images should be minimal and only help PUSH the contents importance, not overwhelm the page. As such, it is the web designers job to make sure that doesn't happen. Be it by **Layout** (see layout) or by visual distractions, forced eye movement using line or color, or by any other means deemed worthy by the designer, the content should be seen first, images second or third.

Visability

Visibility could be considered the most important aspect of website design. People must first find the website before they can view it. Most often people find websites through search engines.

Here are some tips to increase visibility:

- Add text to pictures
- Check the html code for errors
- Use relevant title tags
- Use navigation that all internet users are able to view
- Get rid of duplicate content
- Do not use hidden text

Layout

The layout of a website should be as simple as possible. Extra fluff will only distract the user and cause confusion. You want your site to be visually pleasing, but first and foremost, understandable. The user is at your site for a reason, if the layout isn't successful, the user will most likely leave the page and look for their information elsewhere.

Things to keep in mind while creating your layout:

- Start with a wireframe; use simple boxes and lines to organize your page. Pictures should be an afterthought.
- Think of what you want the user to see first and what is the most important. Make those the biggest, the boldest, the most colorful, anything you can think of to draw attention (but be careful not to overwhelm your users)
- Always remember, as accustomed, most cultures read from left to right, up then down
    - Put your logo in the **UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER** to draw the user into the rest of your page
    - Put your least important info (contacts, outside links, site map, related info, etc.) in the bottom left hand corner. People wont miss it, but they will have gone through the rest of the page before wandering into that corner. This prevents the viewer from seeing things they may not be looking for
- Try to draw your viewer through your page at a downward diagonal from the upper left hand corner to the bottom right hand

corner. If this is the way you design your information, your viewer will see that the things in that diagonal first. Then they will proceed to see any other information you have placed strategically throughout your page

- If you're new to wed design, I'd advise sticking to a custom layout with **title** in the upper left, **tabs** across the top left (leave space under the logo before you insert your tabs, logo's need room to prosper), **scroll bar** down the right side, **buttons** are semi 3D (afford clicking, let the user know "hey, I'm clickable, I have more information about this on another page." People scan for things that stand out, if something doesn't look clickable, no one will try to click on it)

These are just some basics. There are far more things to think about before achieving a successful web page, but this is a starting point.

Be Search Engine Friendly

Title Tags

The title tag plays an important role in any web page. The text that is placed inside the title tag becomes the name of the page, which can be seen in the browser toolbar. For example, if you are looking at Google's website, the title of the page will simple be "Google." Titles are helpful because they allow the user to easily see what websites they have open by simple looking at the tabs in their web browser. The title tag also provides a title for the page when it is added to favorites and displays a title for the page in search-engine results.

In HTML, the title tag lives inside the head tag. Similar to all other HTML tags, it is opened with <title> and closed with </title>. Between the two tags, the creator of the HTML document can place whatever text they think best identifies the web page they are creating. For example, the Google title would be written as <title>Google</title>.

Body Tags

The body tag defines the body of an HTML document. This is where all of the content of an HTML document is placed. This includes text, links, images, tables, lists, and anything else that the page needs. Everything that can be seen when looking at a web page is inside of the body tag.

While the body tag is written in the same manner as all other HTML tags, it almost always is more than one line. For example:

```
<body>
Document content
</body>
```

Each line in the body is usually a single element. For example, one line might be a link and the next line is a picture. Splitting the body in to multiple lines in this way makes writing and editing the HTML much easier because it makes everything easier to see individually. In addition, lines can be indented to make the document even easier to read and edit. For example:

```
<body>
    <h1>Heading</h1>
</body>
```

This also helps the creator of the HTML document easily see if all the tags are properly opened and closed. While splitting the HTML into different lines and indenting accordingly is recommended, it is not required.

ALT Tags

META Tags

The <meta> tag provides metadata, or information, about the HTML page. Some things commonly found in the <meta> tag are the page description, keywords, author, date created, and any other data that the author wishes to be included with the document. While it is never visible on the web page itself, it can be seen and used by computers and search engines. The <meta> tag is always placed in the <head> element of an HTML document.

Unlike many other tags in HTML, the <meta> tag has no end tag. That is, all of the information included in the tag is placed within the brackets. For example:

<meta name=”keywords” content=”HTML, CSS” />

In this example, the <meta> tag is telling the browser that the keywords for the HTML document are HTML and CSS. The name and content fields can be any information that the author wants to include. If the author wished to include the date the document was created, he or she could write

<meta name=”created” content=”3/28/2012″ />

This makes the <meta> tag very valuable when one is creating and organizing multiple HTML documents.

The <meta> tag can also tell browsers to perform certain tasks, such as reload the page. To do this, one would simply write:

<meta http-equiv=”refresh” content=”30″ />

This tells the browser to reload the page every 30 seconds. In addition to this, the <meta> tag can also tell the browser how to handle cookies and specify the text direction, and many other things.

14.4 Page Design

Design pages to facilitate scanning by using headings, subheadings, columns; learn special page design considerations for the Web.

You can enhance readability by giving some thought to the design of your documents. By using headers, lists, bullets, and other design elements, you can reveal your organization to the reader and emphasize key points. Below are page design guidelines you should consider when writing print or online documents. Your design can underscore your message. Be sure to consider these guidelines in the context of design principles.

Design Pages to Facilitate Scanning

According to usability research conducted by Sun Microsystems, “Seventy-nine percent of Web users scan pages; they do not read word-by-word.” [more]. This finding suggests that you should design documents so they can be scanned by your readers.

You can create more scannable documents by:

1. Following a deductive organization (i.e., putting purpose, significance, and results in your introduction).
2. Using page-design principles to emphasize the message and organization (e.g., using bullets, lists, and illustrations to highlight key points).

Use Design Elements to Highlight Your Message

In the example below, notice how your eye is drawn to the blue header and the boxed elements. In these spaces, you can highlight the important part of your message.

Headings

For some genres of documents, headings would be considered too impersonal or too technical. For example, you certainly don't want to see headings and bullets used in a suspense novel. Increasingly, however, headings are used to help readers scan documents.

Even vague headings like Introduction, Results, and Discussion can be useful: They give readers a sense of what is covered within the section. Better yet, descriptive titles cue your readers about your stance on the content of sections. For example, rather than Introduction, Results, and Discussion, you could write "Why Are Headings Important."

As previously discussed, highly skilled readers tend to scan through documents on first reading, noting the content of your headings. This gives them a sense of your overall message. An additional advantage of headings is that they create additional white space.

Word processing programs enable you to highlight text and then define text as a level 1 heading, level 2 heading, and so on. Using style tags you can change the size or color of the heading. The advantage of using style tags is that you can change all level 1 headings with ease rather than going through and changing every level 1 heading. In other words, if you tagged text 15 times as an H1, and then you edited the look of that heading, your changes would ripple through the text, changing all 15 headers. Additionally, Microsoft Word and Corel Word Perfect can use the style tags as hyperlinks.

Results from readability research indicate that readers have difficulties with more than three levels of headings. When you use more than three levels of headings, readers become confused. Also ensure that all of your headings are equal grammatically. For example, headings can all be questions, verb phrases, or noun phrases, yet you cannot mix together questions, verb phrases, and noun phrases.

Level 1 Heading
Level 2 Heading
Level 3 Heading

- Bullets

Many readers and writers love bullets. Some people even claim they think in bullets. Bullets create emphasis. They focus the reader's eye on the bulleted material and they break up textual space.

Using a word processor, you can easily adjust the look and feel of bullets, making them ornate or simple. Again, it's best to use the bullet style tag so that you transform the look and feel of your bullets with a single key stroke as opposed to needing to reformat each bullet separately.

Below is a humorous translation from *Moby Dick* to illustrate the "get to the point" technical style of the Web to literary discourse:

"Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off — then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can."[6]	I go to sea when I: • Feel depressed or melancholy • Stop in front of coffin warehouses • Follow funerals • Have a powerful urge to knock people's hats off[7]

Lists

Lists share all of the positive attributes of bullets: They create the white space readers love, placing emphasis by drawing the reader's eye to what you want to highlight. Yet lists are appropriate when a series of steps is being presented. Unlike bullets, lists imply you complete item 1 before moving on to item 2.

Using lists and numbering sections of documents is very common in legal and technical genres where more than one person is writing the document or where litigation may follow.Once again, use the style tag for lists in order to have control over your document.

Special Page Design Considerations for the Web

Have you ever wondered why many books and magazines have narrow text columns? Alternatively, why are so many Web pages short, about screen length?

Readability research has found that impatient readers don't want to turn their heads back and forth to read. They want to scan the document, reading straight down the page without any head nodding! Impatient readers don't want to use scroll bars, either.
Of course, readers' interactions with texts are in a state of flux. Some readers may actually prefer long documents because they can be easily printed. However, as a general rule, researchers in the field of usability analysis and interface design suggest that you limit your content to properly fill the screen page of a monitor set to

- Maximum width = 640 pixels
- Maximum height = 480 pixels

Of course, modern monitors, powered by computers with video boards, may be set to display many more pixels on a page. The standard, in fact, is probably moving to

6. Source: Moby Dick by Herman Melville
7. Source: This example is adapted from Kathy Henning's Writing for Readers Who Scan

- Maximum width = 1024 pixels
- Maximum height = 768 pixels

14.5 Pictures and Photographs

Use pictures and photographs to catch the eye of your audience.

The expression "a picture is worth a thousand words" is more than a truism. Images can convey powerful emotion. Images can illustrate a process or capture a moment with precision (such as a tight end catching the football on the goal line).

People who shun principles of design, who argue words alone should be sufficient, are really not in touch with the expectations of today's readers. Perhaps because today's readers are bombarded with information, they tend to be especially receptive to pictures and photographs.

Select appropriate images

Images are not inherently good. In fact, images can be detracting. You don't want to pour images into a document that are unrelated to your subject. Because readers' focus will be drawn to the images, be sure they are appropriate to your audience and purpose. Consider below two excellent examples of images.

Environmental Web sites, such as The Nature Conservancy or The Sierra Club, use beautiful images from nature to help stimluate action. Consider, for example, the EPA's Draft Report on the Environment. Take a minute to click through this report, while noting how the top banner image changes to provide a visual representation of the topic under discussion (land, water, air, etc.)

It is interesting to note that the U.S. Census Bureau has set the main graphic to change every minute on its default page, Population Estimates, perhaps trying to "humanize" the population explosion.

The following summarizes common graphic formats, distinguishing bitmap images from vector images.

What are bitmap images?

GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format) and **JPEGs** (Joint Photographic Experts Group) are bitmaps; they use pixels to display colors. In other words, bitmaps use a grid of squares, and each square, each pixel, can represent a color.

Different computer monitors have different numbers of bits they can display for each pixel. A bit is the smallest amount of information stored by a computer. For example, a 2-bit monitor can display two colors for each pixel–either black or white. An 8-bit monitor can dedicate 8 bits of memory to each pixel to represent a color, whereas 24-bit images use 24 bits of memory for each pixel to represent a color. While monitors differ, you can typically count on a monitor having between 72 to 100 pixels per inch. As technology evolves, the quality of monitors will expand, and so, too, will the quality of graphics.

When you plan to represent an image on a page that will be printed, you need it saved in at least 300 dpi (dots per inch).

Number of Bits/Pixels	Colors Displayed
8-bit image	256 colors
16-bit image	65+ thousand
24-bit image	16+ million colors

When users make a bitmap image larger, the computer guesses where to put new pixels between the old pixels, resulting in a blurry image.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)

Developed by Compuserve Information Service in the 1980s, GIFs are the most common format of Web graphics on the Internet. GIFs can present 8 bits or 256 colors, using the Internet color palette. Because they do not display millions of colors, GIFs can download fairly quickly. Conventional GIFs download one pixel at a time, while interlaced GIFs display the overall image fairly early in the download, giving the reader a blurry image of the graphic, and then move from blurry to sharp as the image downloads.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)

JPEGs provide a superior image to GIFs because they can display 24-bit, true-color images. While GIFs have 8 bits of memory dedicated to displaying a color for each pixel, JPEGs have 24 bits of memory dedicated to displaying a color for each pixel. Thus, photographs and drawings can be rendered more accurately by JPEGs.

JPEG files are larger than GIF files, yet you can typically choose different compression file sizes in graphic applications. For example, you can make JPEG file sizes 100 times smaller than the original file size. Each time you compress an image, you erase information, so you need to be careful that you do not so overly compress an image that it becomes worthless. JPEG compression tends to degrade computer-generated graphics.

PNG (Portable Network Graphic)

According to Web Graphics and Presentations, PNGs were designed for the Internet to have all of the benefits of GIFs, yet to

- Provide superior compression and interlacing. GIFs can display the outlines of an image once it receives 50% of the information from the file. In contrast, a PNG image is recognizable once 25% of the image is available.
- Create smaller files. PNG files are 5 to 25% smaller than equivalent GIF files.
- Allow users more than one color for a transparent background.
- Compensate for differences in gamma–that is, the level of contrast in an image. PNGs can be displayed equivalently on Macintosh and PC platforms.

At this point, however, PNG files cannot display animated images.

What are vector images?

Vector images use geometrically defined shapes such as lines, arcs, or polygons, which are used to represent images as opposed to pixels. When vector images are enlarged, they do not degrade. The computer doesn't need to guess about where to add additional pixels. Instead, the geometric shapes are simply scaled in larger or smaller formats, without blurriness.

Vector images are useful to display graphs, charts, and diagrams. They allow users to focus in on a part of the diagram, to magnify some part of the image. Vector images are generated by spreadsheet programs, 3D applications like AutoCAD.

What are image maps?

An image map is a map that has embedded links. In other words, as you move your mouse over an image, you can access links. The following is an image map.

Learn NC: An image map of North Carolina, this map is linked to a database on NC educational resources

14.6 Typography

Understand design principles that are important for both paper and Web documents.

Font selection matters. Even the font you display your documents in can have powerful consequences. Some fonts can distract readers from your message while others draw in the reader's eye, bringing the reader's focus to your text.

1. What are the Font Families?
2. What is the Difference between Serif and Sans Serif Fonts?
3. How Should You Mix Different Font Families?
4. Strategies

What are the Font Families?

"Fontophiles" tend to have different names for font families. Below are some of the more commonly defined "font families" (see left column) and a discussion of their uses.

What is the Difference Between Serif and Sans Serif Fonts?

Serif Fonts

Serif fonts have little tails (serifs) at the ends of each letter. Serif fonts include Times New Roman, Courier New, New York, New Century Schoolbook, and Palatino.

Serif fonts provide a more traditional, conservative appearance. Readers prefer Serif fonts when large text blocks are displayed. Times New Roman is one of the most popular Serif fonts because it is very legible on the computer screen and prints very well.

Sans Serif

In French, "sans" means without. Sans Serif fonts lack little tails at the ends of each letter. Sans Serif fonts include Arial, Geneva, Helvetica, and Comic Sans MS.

Readers find Sans Serif fonts to be less readable than Serif fonts, so writers seldom use them to set long blocks of texts. Used in contrast to Serif fonts, Sans Serif fonts can catch a reader's eye. Knowing this, advertisers use Sans Serif fonts to set headlines and call out text.

How Should You Mix Different Font Families?

Mixing font families can be tricky. If you include too many disparate fonts, the page will appear to lack focus (see example below). Readers may tell you your document reads like a puzzle. It's giving mixed messages:

How Should You Mix Different Font Families?

Mixing font families can be tricky. If you include too many disparate fonts, the page will appear to lack focus (see example below). Readers may tell you your document reads like a puzzle. It's giving mixed messages:

Designers typically advise that you should use no more than *one Serif* and not more than one *Sans Serif* font for each page. Even when you limit yourself to two fonts, you can create considerable variation by bold face, underlining, italicizing, or adjusting the size of a font.[8]

14.7 Video

Add video to enrich or supplant printed texts.

New communication technologies enable authors to incorporate streaming multimedia into their webs.
Writers may provide video to:

1. Underscore the content of the print text, illustrating key concepts. For example, an agency hoping to secure funds for hungry people could show video of their living conditions.
2. Illustrate the content of the printed text. A researcher could provide video of people he or she interviewed. A technical writer could provide a screen-movie to show users how to complete instructions.
3. Inform or persuade people who respond more positively to an engaging speaker than printed texts.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=83

Feeding America Tampa Bay PSA

Video Formats

Currently, three "players" are available for free that can play digital movies on your computer:

1. Windows Media Player. This player is a Microsoft tool so it prefers the Microsoft format (.avi), yet it will play movies in a variety of formats, including Quicktime.
2. Real Player. When you got to Real.Com's site, you may need to hunt around for a while before finding the free Real Player.
3. Quicktime Player. Although Quicktime was originally designed to play Macintosh-platform movies, it now plays Windows-oriented movies as well.

Examples Online Video

As computers begin to become more entertainment devices, users will increasingly look for good video from their computers. Eventually, video will become more integrated into writing spaces. Below are some videos used for pedagogical purposes.

1. Taylor's Student Projects. Includes many student-produced documentaries.

8. Typography. Authored by: Joseph Moxley. Provided by: University of South Florida. Located at: http://writingcommons.org/open-text/writing-processes/format/principles-of-design/113-typography. Project: Writing Commons. License: CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives

2. Writing Instruction Videos. Watch practices and listen to experts in the field of teaching writing.
3. House Hippo Movie. Created by Concerned Children's Advertisers, this movie is designed to teach students to be critical of TV advertising and Web sources.
4. Health Video. See videos on hundreds of health issues.

Microsoft Screen Movies. Screen movies show users how to use software, as illustrated by the samples below.

- Microsoft Office XP Components: Pivot Tables (Select movie strip to view the movie)
- Pivot Tables in Excel
- Principles of Design Video.

UNIT 15 RESEARCH

15.1 INFORMATION LITERACY

What does it mean to be information literate? Simply stated, information literate individuals "know how to find, evaluate and use information effectively."[1]

In college, you typically find, evaluate, and use information to satisfy the requirements of an assignment. Assignments often specify what kind of information you need and what tools you should use – or avoid – in your research. For example, your professor may specify that you need three peer-reviewed resources from academic articles and that you should not cite Wikipedia in your final paper. However, in life beyond college – especially the work world – you may not have that kind of specific guidance. You need to be information literate in order to plan and perform your own research efficiently, effectively, and with the needs of your audience in mind.

You might be thinking, "Research? I've got that covered. That's what the Internet is for, right?" In fact, it is much more than doing a simple search engine query and reviewing the first ten results it returns. A 2012 study by Project Information Literacy (PIL) interviewed 33 employers and found that they were dissatisfied with the research skills of recently graduated hires. Employers cited recent graduates' over-reliance on online search tools and the first page of results as reasons for their dissatisfaction. Research performed by recent graduates was too superficial and lacked analysis and synthesis of multiple types of information from a variety of sources.[2]

Learning Objectives

- how to identify different information formats;
- where to conduct your research;
- how to search effectively;
- how to evaluate sources you find

15.2 INFORMATION FORMATS

Traditionally, information has been organized in different formats, usually because of the time it takes to gather and publish the information. For example, the purpose of news reporting is to inform the public about the basic facts of an event. This information needs to be disseminated quickly, so it is published daily in print, online, on broadcast television, and radio media.

Today, publication of information in traditional formats continues as well as in constantly evolving formats on the Internet. These new information formats can include electronic journals, e-books, news websites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites. The coexistence of all of these information formats is messy and chaotic, and the process for finding relevant information is not always clear.

One way to make some sense out of the current information universe is to understand thoroughly traditional information formats.

You can then understand the concepts inherent in the information formats found online. There are some direct correlations such as books and journal articles, but there are also some newer formats like tweets that didn't exist until recently.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INFORMATION SOURCES

Primary sources allow researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research.

Examples of primary sources are interviews, letters, emails, Tweets, Facebook posts, photographs, speeches, newspaper or magazine articles written at the time of an event, works of literature, lab notes, field research, and published scientific research.

Secondary sources analyze, review, or summarize information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. Secondary sources analyze the primary sources.

Examples of secondary sources are journal articles, books, literature reviews, literary criticism, meta-analyses of scientific studies, documentaries, biographies, and textbooks.

Sometimes the line between primary and secondary sources blurs. For example, although newspapers and news websites contain primary source material, they also contain secondary source material. For example, an article published on November 6, 2012 about the results of the US presidential election would be a primary source, because it was written on the day of the event. However, an article published in the same paper two weeks later analyzing how the successful candidate raised money for his campaign would be a secondary source.

Table 15.1. Examples of primary and secondary sources for technical writing

Primary	Secondary
Interview with subject matter expert	Documentary on an issue or problem
Survey data	News article about scientific study
Published scientific study	Literature review on a research topic

POPULAR, PROFESSIONAL, AND SCHOLARLY INFORMATION

At some point in your college career, you will be asked to find peer-reviewed resources on your research topic. Your professor may explain that these appear in scholarly journals. You may wonder what makes a scholarly journal article different from an article in a magazine, like *National Geographic* or *Sports Illustrated*.

Popular magazines like *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Rolling Stone* can be good sources for articles on recent events or pop-culture topics, while magazines like *Harper's*, *Scientific American*, and *The New Republic* will offer more in-depth articles on a wider range of subjects. The audience for these publications are readers who, although not experts, are knowledgeable about the issues presented.

Professional journals, also called trade journals, address an audience of professionals in a specific discipline or field. They report news and trends in a field, but not original research. They may also provide product or service reviews, job listings, and advertisements.

Scholarly journals provide articles of interest to experts or researchers in a discipline. An editorial board of respected scholars in a discipline (peers of the authors) reviews all articles submitted to a journal. They decide if the article provides a noteworthy contribution to the field and should be published. Scholarly journals contain few or no advertisements. Scholarly journal articles will include references of works cited and may also have footnotes or endnotes, all of which rarely appear in popular or professional publications.

Peer review is a widely accepted indicator of quality scholarship in a given discipline or field. Peer-reviewed (or refereed) journals are scholarly journals that only publish articles that have passed through this review process.

You can better understand peer-review by watching the video "Peer Review in 3 Minutes."

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=89

Table 15.2. Differences among magazines, professional journals, and scholarly journals

Example	Magazine	Trade/Professional	Academic Journal
Audience	General public	People employed in a field	Researchers, scholars, experts
Bibliography	No	Sometimes	Yes
Article length/ depth Structure	Overview Current events General interest articles	Articles will be of interest to those working in that field Purpose will be to offer advice and tips to those in the trade	Long and narrowly focused Specialized vocabulary Article structure will usually contain abstract, literature review, methodology, results, conclusion, references
Review policy	Magazine editor	Magazine editor and possibly a board	Editorial board/ scholars in the field Peer-reviewed
Author	Journalist or specialist	Someone working in the field	Researcher/expert in the field
Appearance	Glossy Many graphics Many advertisements	Glossy Advertising specific to that trade	Lengthy articles Often includes charts, graphs, statistics Little or no advertising

15.3 THE INFORMATION TIMELINE

Another difference in popular, professional, and scholarly sources lies in when information appears in these types of sources. Information about an event or issue appears in publications according to a predictable pattern known as the information timeline. Familiarity with the information timeline can help you best plan your research topics and where to search for information. For example, it typically takes several months to years for information about an event or issue to appear in scholarly publications. If you choose a topic that is very recent, you may have to rely more heavily on news media, popular magazines, and primary sources (such as interviews you conduct) for your research.

Table 15.3. The information timeline and typical sources.

Time:	Day of event	Days later	Weeks later	Months later	Year(s) later
Sources	Television, radio, web	Newspapers, TV, radio, web	Popular and mass market magazines	Professional and scholarly journals	Scholarly journals, books, conference proceedingsReference sources such as encyclopedias
Type of information	General: who, what, where (usually not why)	Varies, some articles include analysis, statistics, photographs, editorials, opinions	Still in reporting stage, general, editorial, opinions, statistics, photographsUsually no bibliography at this stage	Research results, detailed and theoretical discussionBibliography available at this stage	In-depth coverage of a topic, edited compilations of scholarly articles relating to a topicGeneral overview giving factual information Bibliography available
Locating tools	Web search tools, social networks	Web search tools, newspaper and periodical databases	Web search tools, newspaper and periodical databases	General and subject-specific databases	Library catalog, general and subject-specific databasesLibrary reference collection

15.4 THE RESEARCH CYCLE

Although information publication follows a linear timeline, the research process itself is not linear. For example, you might start by trying to read scholarly articles, only to discover that you lack the necessary background knowledge to use a scholarly article effectively. To increase your background information, you might consult an encyclopedia or a book on your topic. Or, you may encounter a statement in a newspaper editorial that inspires you to consult the scholarly literature to see if research supports the statement.

The important thing to remember is that you will probably start your research at different points and move around among resource types depending on the type of information you need.

15.5 RESEARCH TOOLS

DATABASES

Very often, you will want articles on your topic, and the easiest way to find articles is to use a research database – a specialized search engine for finding articles and other types of content. For example, if your topic is residential solar power, you can use a research database to look in thousands of journal titles at once and find the latest scientific and technical research articles – articles that don't always show up in your Google searches. Depending on the database you are using, you might also find videos, images, diagrams, or e-books on your topic, too. Most databases require subscriptions for access; check with your college, public, or corporate library to see what databases they subscribe to for you to use. Whether they are subscription-based or free, research databases contain records of journal articles, documents, book chapters, and other resources and are not tied to the physical items available at any one library. Many databases provide the full-text of articles and can be searched by keyword, subject, author, or title. A few databases provide just the citations for articles, but they usually also provide tools for you to find the full text in another database or request it through interlibrary loan. Databases are made up of records, and records contain fields, as explained below:

- Records: A record describes one information item (e.g., journal article, book chapter, image, etc.).
- Fields: These are part of the record, and they contain descriptions of specific elements of the information item such as the title, author, publication date, and subject.

Another aspect of databases to know about is controlled vocabulary. Look for the label subject term, subject heading or descriptor. Regardless of label, this field contains controlled vocabulary, which are designated terms or phrases for describing concepts. It's important because it pulls together all of the items in that database about one topic. For example, imagine you are searching for information on community colleges. Different authors may call community colleges by different names: junior colleges, two-year colleges, or technical colleges. If the controlled vocabulary term in the database you are searching is "community colleges," then your one search will pull up all results, regardless of what term the author uses.

Databases may seem intimidating at first, but you likely use databases in everyday life. For example, do you store contact information in your phone? If so, you create a record for everyone for whom you want to store information. In each of those records, you enter descriptions into fields: first and last name, phone number, email address, and physical address. If you wanted to organize your contacts, you might put them into groups of "work," "family," and "friends." That would be your controlled vocabulary for your own database of contacts.

GENERAL

Databases that contain resources for many subject areas are referred to as general or multidisciplinary databases. This means that they are good starting points for research because they allow you to search a large number of sources from a wide variety of disciplines. Content types in general databases often include a mix of professional publications, scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines, books, and multimedia.

Common general databases in academic settings include

- Academic Search Premier
- Academic OneFile
- JSTOR

SPECIALIZED

Databases devoted to a single subject are known as subject-specific or specialized databases. Often, they search a smaller number of journals or a specific type of content. Specialized databases can be very powerful search tools after you have selected a narrow research topic or if you already have a great deal of expertise in a particular area. They will help you find information you would not find in a general database. If you are not sure which specialized databases are available for your topic, check your library's website for subject guides, or ask a librarian.

Specialized databases may also focus on offering one specific content type like streaming films, music, images, statistics, or data sets.

Table 15.4. Examples of specialized databases and their subject focus

Database	Subject Focus
PsycInfo	Psychology
BioOne	Life Sciences
MEDLINE	Medicine/health
ARTstor	Fine arts images

LIBRARY CATALOGS

A library catalog is a database that contains all of the items located in a library as well as all of the items to which the library offers access, either in physical or online format. It allows you to search for items by title, author, subject, and keyword. Like research databases, library catalogs use controlled vocabulary to allow for powerful searching using specific terms or phrases.

If you locate a physical item in a catalog, you will need the call number to find the item in the library. A call number is like a street address for a book; it tells you exactly where the book is on the shelf. Most academic libraries will use the Library of Congress classification system, and the call numbers start with letters, followed by a mix of numbers and letters. In addition to helping you find a book, call numbers group items about a given topic together in a physical place.

Along with physical items, most libraries also provide access to scholarly e-books, streaming films, and e-journals via their catalogs. For students and faculty, these resources are usually available from any computer, meaning you do not have to go to the library and retrieve items from the shelf.

CONSORTIA AND INTERLIBRARY LOAN

In the course of your research you will almost certainly find yourself in a situation where you have a citation for a journal article or book that your institution's library doesn't have. There is a wealth of knowledge contained in the resources of academic and public libraries throughout the United States. Single libraries cannot hope to collect all of the resources available on a topic. Fortunately, libraries are happy to share their resources and they do this through consortia membership and interlibrary loan (ILL). Library consortia are groups of libraries that have special agreements with one another to loan materials to one another's users. Both academic and public libraries belong to consortia.

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) belongs to a consortium of 37 academic libraries in the Pacific Northwest called the Orbis Cascade Alliance, which sponsors a shared lending program called Summit. When you search the COCC Library Catalog, your results will include items from other Summit institutions, which you can request and have delivered to the COCC campus of your choice.

Interlibrary loan (ILL) allows you to borrow books, articles and other information resources regardless of where they are located. If you find an article when searching a database that COCC doesn't have full text access to, you can request it through the interlibrary loan program. If you cannot get a book or DVD from COCC or another Summit library, you could also request it through interlibrary loan. Interlibrary loan services are available at both academic and public libraries.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Another important source of information is the government. Official United States government websites end in .gov and provide a wealth of credible information, including statistics, technical reports, economic data, scientific and medical research, and, of course, legislative information. Unlike research databases, government information is typically freely available without a subscription.

USA.gov is a search engine for government information and is a good place to begin your search, though specialized search tools are also available for many topics. State governments also have their own websites and search tools that you might find helpful if your topic has a state-specific angle. If you get lost in searching government information, ask a librarian for help. They usually have special training and knowledge in navigating government information.

Table 15.5. Examples of specialized government sources and their subject focus

Specialized Government Source	Subject Focus
PubMed Central	Medicine/health
ERIC	Education
Congress.gov	Legislation and the legislative process

EXPERTS

People are a valuable, though often overlooked, source. This might be particularly appropriate if you are working on an emerging topic or a topic with local connections.

For personal interviews, there are specific steps you can take to obtain better results. Do some background work on the topic before contacting the person you hope to interview. The more familiarity you have with your topic and its terminology, the easier it will be to ask focused questions. Focused questions are important for effective research. Asking general questions because you think the specifics might be too detailed rarely leads to the best information. Acknowledge the time and effort someone is taking to answer your questions, but also realize that people who are passionate about subjects enjoy sharing what they know. Take the opportunity to ask experts about additional resources they would recommend.

For a successful, productive interview, review this list of Interview Tips before conducting your interview.

15.6 SEARCH STRATEGIES

Now that you know more about the research tools available to you, it's time to consider how to construct searches that will allow you to find the most relevant, useful results as efficiently as possible.

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE KEYWORDS

The single most important search strategy is to choose effective search terms. This may seem obvious, but it is too often overlooked, with deleterious consequences. When deciding what terms to use in a search, break down your topic into its main concepts. Do not enter an entire sentence or a full question. The best thing to do is to use the key concepts involved with your topic. In addition, think of synonyms or related terms for each concept. If you do this, you will have more flexibility when searching in case your first search term does not produce any or enough results. This may sound strange, since if you are looking for information using a Web search engine, you usually get too many results. Databases, however, contain fewer items than the entire web, and having alternative search terms may lead you to useful sources. Even in a search engine like Google, having terms you can combine thoughtfully will yield better results.

ADVANCED SEARCH TECHNIQUES

Once you have identified the concepts you want to search and have carefully chosen your keywords, think about how you will enter them into the search box of your selected search tool. Try the techniques below in both research databases and web search engines.

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

Boolean operators are a search technique that will help you

- focus your search, particularly when your topic contains multiple search terms
- connect various pieces of information to find exactly what you are looking for

There are three Boolean operators: AND, OR, and NOT. You capitalize Boolean operators to distinguish them from the words and, or, and not (words which most search engines ignore). It is also important to note that you should spell out AND rather than substituting commas, ampersands, or plus signs. Usually you should spell out NOT as well, except in Google, where you must use the minus sign (-).

AND

Use AND in a search to

- narrow your results
- tell the database that ALL search terms must be present in the resulting records

Example: cloning AND humans AND ethics

OR

Use OR in a search to accomplish the following:

- connect two or more similar concepts (synonyms)
- broaden your results, telling the database that any one of your search terms can be present in the resulting records

Example: (cloning OR genetics OR reproduction)

NOT

Use NOT in a search to

- exclude words from your search
- narrow your search, telling the database to ignore concepts that may be implied by your search terms

Example: cloning NOT sheep

Combining operators

You can combine the different Boolean operators into one search. The important thing to know when combining operators is to use parentheses around the terms connected with OR. This ensures that the database interprets your search query correctly.

Example: ethics AND (cloning OR genetics OR reproduction)

PHRASES

Web and research databases usually treat your search terms as separate words, meaning they look for each word appearing in a document, regardless of its location around the other words in your search term. Sometimes you may want to system to instead search for a specific phrase (a set of words that collectively describe your topic).

To do this, put the phrase in quotation marks, as in "community college."

With phrase searches, you will typically get fewer results than searching for the words individually, which makes it an effective way to focus your search.

TRUNCATION

Truncation, also called stemming, is a technique that allows you to search for multiple variations of a root word at once.

Most databases have a truncation symbol. The * is the most commonly used symbol, but !, ?, and # are also used. If you are not sure, check the help files.

To use truncation, enter the root of your word and end it with the truncation symbol.

Example: genetic* searches for genetic, genetics, genetically

15.7 EVALUATE SOURCES

Information sources vary in quality, and before you use a source in your academic assignments or work projects, you must evaluate them for quality. You want your own work to be of high quality, credible, and accurate, and you can only achieve that by having sources possess those same qualities.

Watch this video on evaluating sources for an overview of what credibility is, why it's important, and some of the criteria to look for when evaluating a source.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=89

Video: Evaluating Sources for Credibility by NCSU Libraries, CC: BY-NC-SA 3.0 US

There are five basic criteria for evaluating information. While it may seem like a lot to think about at first, after a little practice, you will find that you can evaluate sources quickly.

Here are the five basic criteria, with key questions and indicators to help you evaluate your source:

- Authority
    - Key Question: Is the person, organization, or institution responsible for the intellectual content of the information knowledgeable in that subject?
    - Indicators of authority: formal academic degrees, years of professional experience, active and substantial involvement in a particular area
- Accuracy

    - Key Question: How free from error is this piece of information?
    - Indicators of accuracy: correct and verifiable citations, information is verifiable in other sources from different authors/organizations, author is authority on subject
- Objectivity
    - Key Question: How objective is this piece of information?
    - Indicators of objectivity: multiple points of view are acknowledged and discussed logically and clearly, statements are supported with documentation from a variety of reliable sources, purpose is clearly stated
- Currency
    - Key Question: When was the item of information published or produced?
    - Indicators of currency: publication date, assignment restrictions (e.g., you can only use articles from the last 5 years), your topic and how quickly information changes in your field (e.g., technology or health topics will require very recent information to reflect rapidly changing areas of expertise)
- Audience
    - Key Question: Who is this information written for or this product developed for?
    - Indicators of audience: language, style, tone, bibliographies

When evaluating and selecting sources for an assignment or work project, compare your sources to one another in light of your topic. Imagine, for example, you are writing a paper about bicycle commuting. You have three sources about bicycle safety. One is written for children; one is for adult recreational bicyclers; and one is for traffic engineers. Your topic is specifically about building urban and suburban infrastructure to encourage bicycling, so the source written for traffic engineers is clearly more appropriate for your topic than the other two. Even if the other two are high-quality sources, they are not the most relevant sources for your specific topic.

Until you have practiced evaluating many sources, it can be a little difficult to find the indicators, especially in web sources.

Table 5.6. Locations where you might find indicators of quality in different types of sources

If you are looking for indications of…	In books see the…	In journals see the…	In websites see the…
Authority	Title page, Forward, Preface, Afterward, Dust Jackets, Bibliography	Periodical covers, Editorial Staff, Letters to the Editor, Abstract, Bibliography	URL, About Us, Publications, Appearance
Accuracy	Title page, Forward, Preface, Afterward, Periodical covers, Dust Jackets, Text, Bibliography	Periodical covers, Text, Bibliography	URL, About Us, Home page, Awards, Text
Objectivity	Forward, Preface, Afterward, Text, Bibliorgraphy	Abstracts, Text, Bibliography, Editorials, Letters to the Editor	About Us, Site Map, Text, Disclaimers, Membership/ Registration
Currency	Title page, copyright page, Bibliography	Title page, Bibliorgraphy, Abstracts	Home page, Copyright, What's New
Audience	Forward, Preface, Afterward	Letters to the editor, Editorial, Appearance	Home page, About, Mission, Disclaimer, Members only

When you have located and evaluated information for your paper, report, or project, you will use it to complete your work. A later chapter of this text will cover how to use it correctly and ethically.

---

1. American Library Association. (1989). Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential. ↲
2. Head, A.J. (2012). Learning Curve: How College Graduates Solve Problems Once They Join the Workforce. (Project Information Literacy Research Report: The Passage Series). Retrieved from http://projectinfolit.org/images/pdfs/pil_fall2012_workplacestudy_fullreport_revised.pdf. ↲

UNIT 16 PLAGIARISM AND CITATIONS

16.1 Citations

Citations are the way in which you give credit to others for their work and avoid committing plagiarism. They are also the way in which you join the professional or scholarly conversation on a given topic.

Watch this short video Citation: A (Very) Brief Introductionby NCSU Libraries, to learn more about why citations are important.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=95*

Citations come in two forms: in-text citations and full citations. There are many different citation styles. Two of the most common academic styles are American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA). For academic assignments, your instructor will usually specify which style you should use. Generally speaking, MLA is used more frequently in the humanities, while APA is used more commonly in the social sciences and sciences. However, some subjects may have their own discipline-specific citation types, such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) style for the mechanical engineering field. Whatever style you choose or are asked to use, remember to stick with it consistently throughout your report.

IN-TEXT CITATIONS

In-text citations are used within the text of your paper and indicate to your readers from which source listed in your works cited or bibliography you are extracting information or quotations. That way, even if you have multiple sources, it is always clear which source you are using at any given time. As with full citations, discussed below, format of in-text citations differs depending on which citation style you are using. APA uses the author-year format, while MLA uses the author-page number format. Other styles of in-text citation include footnotes or endnotes, in which continuously sequenced numbers refer the reader to a list of citations elsewhere in the document. Some examples are below.

APA

Students should choose their study locations carefully for best results (Lei, 2015).

MLA

Students should choose their study locations carefully for best results (Lei 197).

In-text citations should always have a corresponding full citation on the Works Cited or References page at the end of a paper.

FULL CITATIONS

Full citations generally have three major parts, though the order and formatting of these parts depends on the citation style you use.

Major parts

- Information about the person or body that created it – the author(s), editor(s), speaker(s), etc.
- Information that distinguishes the content of the specific work being cited – the title of an article, chapter, book, or presentation
- Information about the location or creation of the work – usually, where and when it was published or presented. This can include whether or not the work is part of a larger publication or series (volume and issue numbers), the number of printed pages it contains, or the web address (URL), and date it was accessed.

Below is an example of an article citation – the full citation for the in-text citation above – using MLA and APA styles. Notice the common elements that are present in both. You find the elements for a citation in the fields of a database or library catalog record or on the information item itself.

Author – Lei, Simon A.

Article Title – Variation in Study Patterns among College Students: A Review of Literature

Source Title – College Student Journal

Volume and Issue – Volume 49, Issue 2

Publication Date – 2015

Page Numbers – 195-198

APA

Lei, S. A. (2015). Variation in study patterns among college students: A review of literature. *College Student Journal, 49*(2), 195-198.

MLA

Lei, Simon A. "Variation in Study Patterns among College Students: A Review of Literature." *College Student Journal,* vol. 49, no. 2, 2015, pp. 195-198. *Academic Search Premier.* Accessed 27 May 2016.

Luckily, you do not need to memorize citation style formats. There are excellent online guides and tools that will help you cite sources correctly. Additionally, you can always ask your instructor or a librarian for help if you have a question or a difficult source to cite.

Online guides and tools to consult:

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): Invaluable for MLA, APA, and Chicago styles, this guide covers in-text citations, bibliography/works cited pages, and guidelines for citing many types of information sources.
- NSCC APA Citation Guide — NSCC citation guide, handouts and student support information.
- NSCC MLA Guide
- Citation Builder: From the University of North Carolina, the Citation Builder is an automated form for creating citations. You select the style, enter the information, and it generates a citation. It's always a good idea to double check these citation-generator tools!
- Zotero: Developed at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, Zotero is a sophisticated research management tool. You can use it to save and organize your sources and create citations. As a more sophisticated tool, it requires a little more time and efforts to learn, but the time is worth it when you're researching and writing a lot.

In addition to these tools, many research databases and library catalogs offer citation tools that help you create a citation for an item you've located using that service. Look for a button or link labeled cite or citation. Again, with these automatically-generated citations, be sure to double check it for accuracy. They aren't always correct.

16.2 PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own.

More formally stated it is the act of claiming language, ideas, opinions, theories, software code, artistic material, or anything else developed by another person without acknowledging that person as the source of the material.

In the world of cut and paste, it is incredibly easy to commit plagiarism and not even be aware of doing so. Regardless of whether it is intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is dishonest, unfair, and unethical.

There are serious consequences for both intentional and unintentional plagiarism. Ignorance is not an excuse. As a student, the consequences of plagiarism can range from the loss of credit for a course to expulsion from school. In the work world, the consequences of plagiarism can range from loss of your professional reputation to loss of your job and destruction of your career. As a student, you should be familiar with your school's academic integrity policies. As an example, NSCC publishes a student handbook that includes Student Rights and Responsibilities, which spells out the consequences for committing plagiarism at NSCC (see NSCC Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Community Standards Policy and Procedures).

Examples of plagiarism:

- Copying and pasting from a source into your work without attribution

- Purchasing a paper online or from another student
- Turning in the same work in two different classes (self-plagiarism)
- Failing to put quotation marks around direct quotes in your work
- Copying a diagram, image, graph, or photo into your work without referencing the source
- Copying and pasting text and changing just a few words or phrases to "put it into your own words," sometimes referred to as patch writing
- Using information gained in a personal interview or conversation without citing the source
- Failing to cite sources for any information that you used in your paper

Only information considered to be universally common knowledge, such as dates of important events and widely known facts, can be used without citing the source.

Credit must always be given to others for

- their words, either quoted or paraphrased
- their artistic material
- their research findings, analysis, and conclusions

The primary way to avoid plagiarism is to cite or list the sources you used in preparing your work. Citing sources is the way you tell your audience whose works you used and to give credit to the creators of those works. It has the side benefit of providing your audience with a bibliography of relevant items on that topic.

For more information see:

- NSCC Academic Integrity Guide
- NSCC Writing Centre Guide
- NSCC APA Guide 7th Edition

UNIT 17 WRITING BASICS

Learning Objectives

- Identify the components of a basic sentence.
- Identify the four most serious writing errors.

Imagine you are reading a book for school. You need to find important details that you can use for an assignment. However, when you begin to read, you notice that the book has very little punctuation. Sentences fail to form complete paragraphs and instead form one block of text without clear organization. Most likely, this book would frustrate and confuse you. Without clear and concise sentences, it is difficult to find the information you need.

For both students and professionals, clear communication is important. Whether you are typing an e-mail or writing a report, it is your responsibility to present your thoughts and ideas clearly and precisely. Writing in complete sentences is one way to ensure that you communicate well. This section covers how to recognize and write basic sentence structures and how to avoid some common writing errors.

COMPONENTS OF A SENTENCE

Clearly written, complete sentences require key information: a subject, a verb and a complete idea. A sentence needs to make sense on its own. Sometimes, complete sentences are also called independent clauses. A clause is a group of words that may make up a sentence. An independent clause is a group of words that may stand alone as a complete, grammatically correct thought. The following sentences show independent clauses.

We went to the store. We bought the ingredients on our list, and then we went home.	
Independent clause	We went to the store.
Independent clause	We bought the ingredients on our list
Independent clause	we went home.

All complete sentences have at least one independent clause. You can identify an independent clause by reading it on its own and looking for the subject and the verb.

SUBJECTS

When you read a sentence, you may first look for the subject, or what the sentence is about. The subject usually appears at the beginning of a sentence as a noun or a pronoun. A noun is a word that identifies a person, place, thing, or idea. A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun. Common pronouns are *I*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *you*, *they*, and *we*. In the following sentences, the subject is underlined once.

Malik is the project manager for this project. He will give us our assignments.

In these sentences, the subject is a person: *Malik*. The pronoun *He* replaces and refers back to *Malik*.

The computer lab is where we will work. It will be open twenty-four hours a day.

In the first sentence, the subject is a place: *computer lab*. In the second sentence, the pronoun *It* substitutes for *computer lab* as the subject.

The project will run for three weeks. It will have a quick turnaround.

In the first sentence, the subject is a thing: *project*. In the second sentence, the pronoun *It* stands in for the *project*.

TIP

In this chapter, please refer to the following grammar key:

Subjects are underlined once.

Verbs are underlined twice.

LV means linking verb, HV means helping verb, and V means action verb.

COMPOUND SUBJECTS

A sentence may have more than one person, place, or thing as the subject. These subjects are called compound subjects. Compound subjects are useful when you want to discuss several subjects at once.

Desmond and Maria have been working on that design for almost a year.

Books, magazines, and online articles are all good resources.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

You will often read a sentence that has more than one noun or pronoun in it. You may encounter a group of words that includes a preposition with a noun or a pronoun. Prepositions connect a noun, pronoun, or verb to another word that describes or modifies that noun, pronoun, or verb. Common prepositions include *in*, *on*, *under*, *near*, *by*, *with*, and *about*. A group of words that begin with a preposition is called a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and modifies or describes a word. It cannot act as the subject of a sentence. The following circled phrases are examples of prepositional phrases.


We went on a business trip. That restaurant with the famous pizza was on the way. We stopped for lunch.

VERBS

Once you locate the subject of a sentence, you can move on to the next part of a complete sentence: the verb. A verb is often an action word that shows what the subject is doing. A verb can also link the subject to a describing word. There are three types of verbs that you can use in a sentence: action verbs, linking verbs, or helping verbs.

ACTION VERBS

A verb that connects the subject to an action is called an action verb. An action verb answers the question *what is the subject doing?* In the following sentences, the words underlined twice are action verbs.

The dog barked at the jogger.

He gave a short speech before we ate.

LINKING VERBS

A verb can often connect the subject of the sentence to a describing word. This type of verb is called a linking verb because it links the subject to a describing word. In the following sentences, the words underlined twice are linking verbs.

The coat was old and dirty.

The clock seemed broken.

If you have trouble telling the difference between action verbs and linking verbs, remember that an action verb shows that the subject is doing something, whereas a linking verb simply connects the subject to another word that describes or modifies the subject. A few verbs can be used as either action verbs or linking verbs.

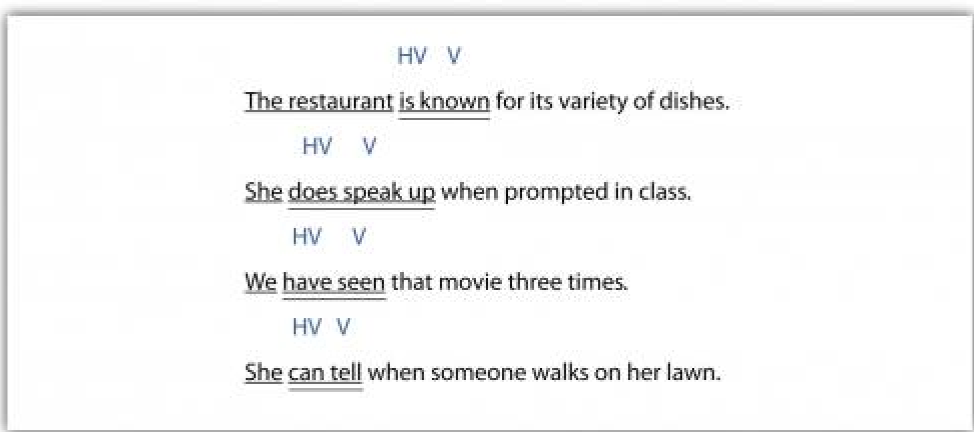
Action Verb: The boy looked for his glove.

Linking Verb: The boy looked tired.

Although both sentences use the same verb, the two sentences have completely different meanings. In the first sentence, the verb describes the boy's action. In the second sentence, the verb describes the boy's appearance.

HELPING VERBS

A third type of verb you may use as you write is a helping verb. Helping verbs are verbs that are used with the main verb to describe a mood or tense. Helping verbs are usually a form of *be*, *do*, or *have*. The word *can* is also used as a helping verb.



TIP

Whenever you write or edit sentences, keep the subject and verb in mind. As you write, ask yourself these questions to keep yourself on track:

Subject: Who or what is the sentence about?

Verb: Which word shows an action or links the subject to a description?

SENTENCE STRUCTURE, INCLUDING FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS

Now that you know what makes a complete sentence—a subject and a verb—you can use other parts of speech to build on this basic structure. Good writers use a variety of sentence structures to make their work more interesting. This section covers different sentence structures that you can use to make longer, more complex sentences.

SENTENCE PATTERNS

Six basic subject-verb patterns can enhance your writing. A sample sentence is provided for each pattern. As you read each sentence, take note of where each part of the sentence falls. Notice that some sentence patterns use action verbs and others use linking verbs.

SUBJECT–VERB

SUBJECT–LINKING VERB–NOUN

SUBJECT–LINKING VERB–ADJECTIVE

S LV ADJ
Computers are expensive.

SUBJECT–VERB–ADVERB

S V ADV
Computers calculate quickly.

SUBJECT–VERB–DIRECT OBJECT

When you write a sentence with a direct object (DO), make sure that the DO receives the action of the verb.

S V DO
Sally rides a motorcycle.

SUBJECT–VERB–INDIRECT OBJECT–DIRECT OBJECT

In this sentence structure, an indirect object explains *to whom* or *to what* the action is being done. The indirect object is a noun or pronoun, and it comes before the direct object in a sentence.

S V IO DO
My coworker gave me the reports.

FRAGMENTS

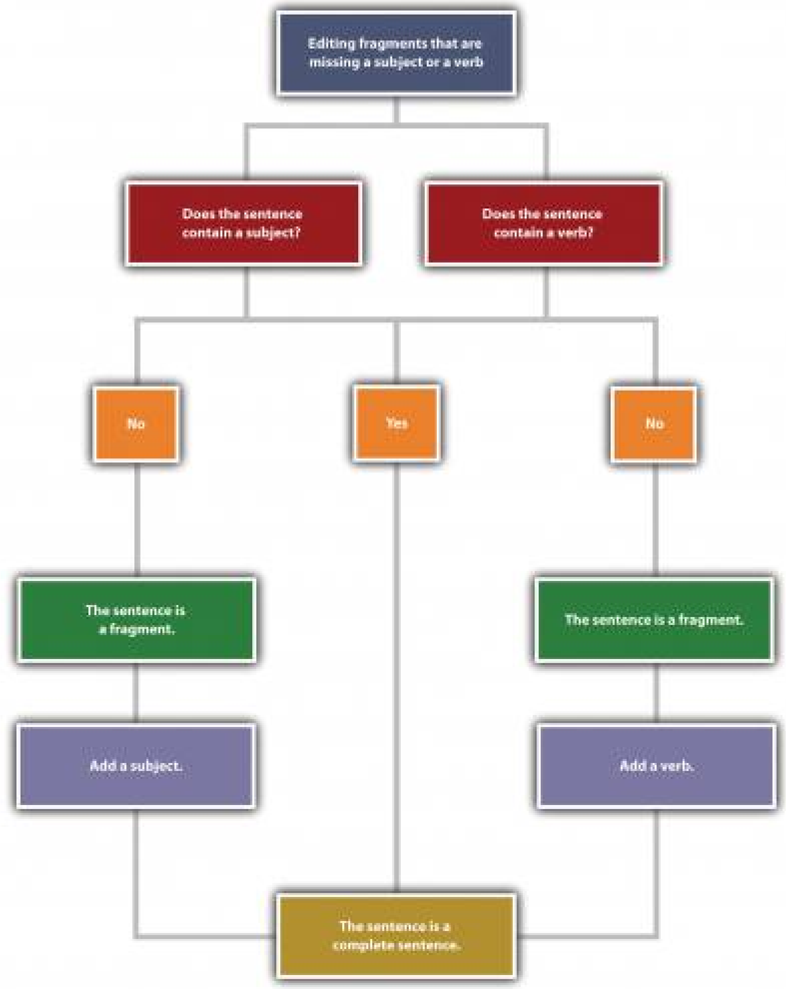
The sentences you have encountered so far have been independent clauses. As you look more closely at your past writing assignments, you may notice that some of your sentences are not complete. A sentence that is missing a subject or a verb is called a fragment. A fragment may include a description or may express part of an idea, but it does not express a complete thought.

Fragment: Children helping in the kitchen.

Complete sentence: Children helping in the kitchen **often make a mess**.

You can easily fix a fragment by adding the missing subject or verb. In the example, the sentence was missing a verb. Adding *often make a mess* creates an S-V-N sentence structure.

Figure 17.1 Editing Fragments That Are Missing a Subject or a Verb



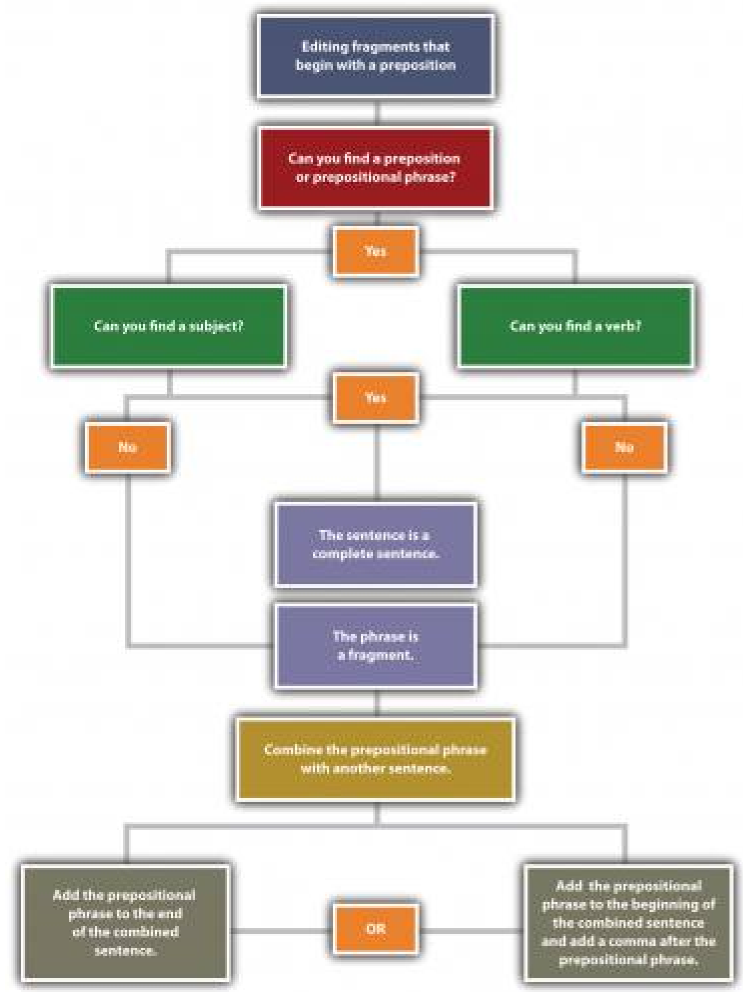
See whether you can identify what is missing in the following fragments.
Fragment: Told her about the broken vase.
Complete sentence: *I* told her about the broken vase.
Fragment: The store down on Main Street.
Complete sentence: The store down on Main Street *sells music*.

COMMON SENTENCE ERRORS

Fragments often occur because of some common error, such as starting a sentence with a preposition, a dependent word, an infinitive, or a gerund. If you use the six basic sentence patterns when you write, you should be able to avoid these errors and thus avoid writing fragments.

When you see a preposition, check to see that it is part of a sentence containing a subject and a verb. If it is not connected to a complete sentence, it is a fragment, and you will need to fix this type of fragment by combining it with another sentence. You can add the prepositional phrase to the end of the sentence. If you add it to the beginning of the other sentence, insert a comma after the prepositional phrase.

Figure 17.2 Editing Fragments That Begin with a Preposition



Example A

Incorrect: After walking over two miles, John remembered his wallet.

Correct: After walking over two miles, John remembered his wallet.

Correct: John remembered his wallet ~~After~~ walking over two miles.

Example B

Incorrect: The dog growled in the vacuum cleaner. When it was switched on.

Correct: When the vacuum cleaner was switched on, the dog growled.

Correct: The dog growled at the vacuum clean ~~When~~ it was switched on.

Clauses that start with a dependent word—such as *since*, *because*, *without*, or *unless*—are similar to prepositional phrases. Like prepositional phrases, these clauses can be fragments if they are not connected to an independent clause containing a subject and a verb. To fix the problem, you can add such a fragment to the beginning or end of a sentence. If the fragment is added at the beginning of a sentence, add a comma.

Incorrect: Because we lost power. The entire family overslept.

Correct: Because we lost power, the entire family overslept.

Correct: The entire family overslept ~~Because~~ because we lost power.

Incorrect: He has been seeing a physical therapist. Since his accident.

Correct: Since his accident, he has been seeing a physical therapist.

Correct: He has been seeing a physical therapist ~~Since~~ since his accident.

Incorrect: Because we lost power. The entire family overslept.

Correct: Because we lost power, the entire family overslept.

Correct: The entire family overslept ~~Because~~ because we lost power.

Incorrect: He has been seeing a physical therapist. Since his accident.

Correct: Since his accident, he has been seeing a physical therapist.

Correct: He has been seeing a physical therapist ~~Since~~ since his accident.

When you encounter a word ending in *-ing* in a sentence, identify whether or not this word is used as a verb in the sentence. You may also look for a helping verb. If the word is not used as a verb or if no helping verb is used with the *-ing* verb form, the verb is being used as a noun. An *-ing* verb form used as a noun is called a gerund.

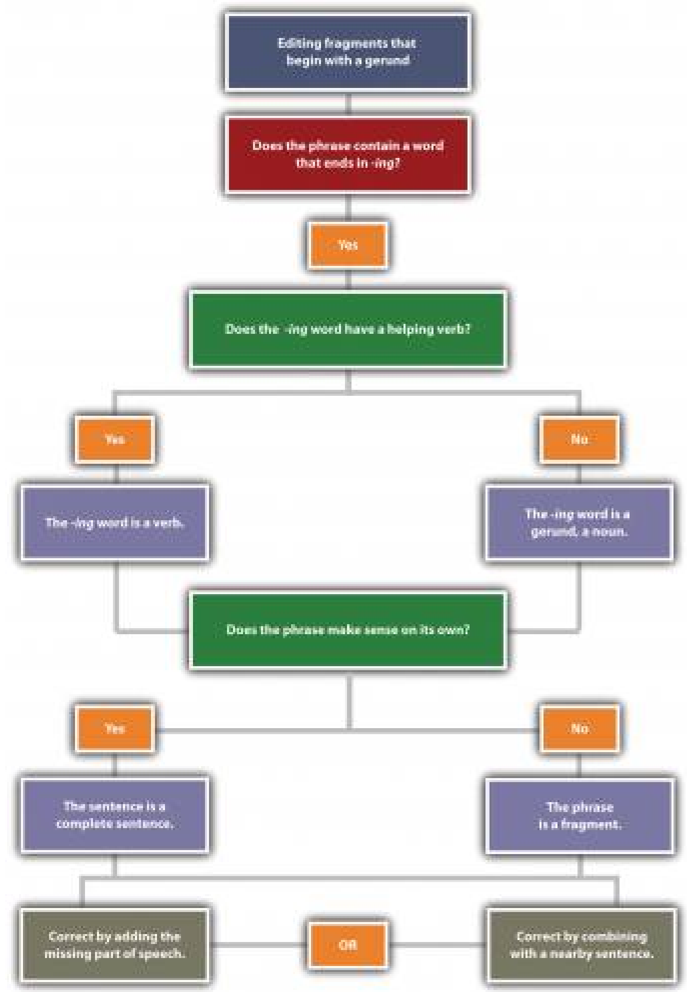
HV V

Verb: I was working on homework until midnight.

Noun: Working until midnight makes me tired the next morning.

Once you know whether the *-ing* word is acting as a noun or a verb, look at the rest of the sentence. Does the entire sentence make sense on its own? If not, what you are looking at is a fragment. You will need to either add the parts of speech that are missing or combine the fragment with a nearby sentence.

Figure 17.3 Editing Fragments That Begin with Gerunds



Incorrect: Taking deep breaths. Saul prepared for his presentation.

Correct: *T*aking deep breaths**,** Saul prepared for his presentation.

Correct: Saul prepared for his presentation. He *was taking* deep breaths.

Incorrect: Congratulating the entire team. Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

Correct: *She was c*ongratulating the entire team. Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

Correct: Congratulating the entire team**,** Sarah raised her glass to toast their success.

Another error in sentence construction is a fragment that begins with an infinitive. An infinitive is a verb paired with the word *to*; for example, *to run*, *to write*, or *to reach*. Although infinitives are verbs, they can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. You can correct a fragment that begins with an infinitive by either combining it with another sentence or adding the parts of speech that are missing.

Incorrect: We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes. To reach the one thousand mark.

Correct: We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes *to* reach the one thousand mark.

Correct: We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes. *We wanted to* reach the one thousand mark.

RUN-ON SENTENCES

Just as short, incomplete sentences can be problematic, lengthy sentences can be problematic too. Sentences with two or more independent clauses that have been incorrectly combined are known as run-on sentences. A run-on sentence may be either a fused sentence or a comma splice.

Fused sentence: A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes played all over the yard.

Comma splice: We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

When two complete sentences are combined into one without any punctuation, the result is a fused sentence. When two complete sentences are joined by a comma, the result is a comma splice. Both errors can easily be fixed.

PUNCTUATION

One way to correct run-on sentences is to correct the punctuation. For example, adding a period will correct the run-on by creating two separate sentences.

Run-on: There were no seats left, we had to stand in the back.

Correct: There were no seats left. ~~we~~ We had to stand in the back.

Using a semicolon between the two complete sentences will also correct the error. A semicolon allows you to keep the two closely related ideas together in one sentence. When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that both parts of the sentence are independent clauses. For more information on semicolons, see Section 1.4.2 "Capitalize Proper Nouns".

Run-on: The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Complete sentence: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

When you use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses, you may wish to add a transition word to show the connection between the two thoughts. After the semicolon, add the transition word and follow it with a comma. For more information on transition words, see Chapter 7 "The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?".

Run-on: The project was put on hold we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Complete sentence: The project was put on hold; *however*, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

You can also fix run-on sentences by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction. A coordinating conjunction acts as a link between two independent clauses.

TIP

These are the seven coordinating conjunctions that you can use: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. Use these words appropriately when you want to link the two independent clauses. The acronym *FANBOYS*will help you remember this group of coordinating conjunctions.

Run-on: The new printer was installed, no one knew how to use it.

Complete sentence: The new printer was installed**,** *but* no one knew how to use it.

DEPENDENT WORDS

Adding dependent words is another way to link independent clauses. Like the coordinating conjunctions, dependent words show a relationship between two independent clauses.

Run-on: We took the elevator, the others still got there before us.
Complete sentence: *Although* we took the elevator, the others got there before us.
Run-on: Cobwebs covered the furniture, the room hadn't been used in years.
Complete sentence: Cobwebs covered the furniture *because* the room hadn't been used in years.

WRITING AT WORK

Figure 17.4 Sample e-mail

Dear Mr. Blankenship:

The invoice we received yesterday. From your office was dated February 25. This date is incorrect, the date should read February 28, attached is the original invoice with the incorrect date. Please correct the date and resend the invoice. We will be able to send the funds promptly. By the end of the day.

Sincerely,
Isabelle

Isabelle's e-mail opens with two fragments and two run-on sentences containing comma splices. The e-mail ends with another fragment. What effect would this e-mail have on Mr. Blankenship or other readers? Mr. Blankenship or other readers may not think highly of Isaebelle's communication skills or—worse—may not understand the message at all! Communications written in precise, complete sentences are not only more professional but also easier to understand. Before you hit the "send" button, read your e-mail carefully to make sure that the sentences are complete, are not run together, and are correctly punctuated.

Key Takeaways

- A sentence is complete when it contains both a subject and verb. A complete sentence makes sense on its own.
- Every sentence must have a subject, which usually appears at the beginning of the sentence. A subject may be a noun (a person, place, or thing) or a pronoun.
- A compound subject contains more than one noun.
- A prepositional phrase describes, or modifies, another word in the sentence but cannot be the subject of a sentence.
- A verb is often an action word that indicates what the subject is doing. Verbs may be action verbs, linking verbs, or helping verbs.
- Variety in sentence structure and length improves writing by making it more interesting and more complex.
- Focusing on the six basic sentence patterns will enhance your writing.
- Fragments and run-on sentences are two common errors in sentence construction.
- Fragments can be corrected by adding a missing subject or verb. Fragments that begin with a preposition or a dependent word can be corrected by combining the fragment with another sentence.

- Run-on sentences can be corrected by adding appropriate punctuation or adding a coordinating conjunction.

Exercises

1. Read the following sentences. Underline the subjects, and circle the prepositional phrases.

- The gym is open until nine o'clock tonight.
- We went to the store to get some ice.
- The student with the most extra credit will win a homework pass.
- Maya and Tia found an abandoned cat by the side of the road.
- The driver of that pickup truck skidded on the ice.
- Anita won the race with time to spare.
- The people who work for that company were surprised about the merger.
- Working in haste means that you are more likely to make mistakes.
- The soundtrack has over sixty songs in languages from around the world.
- His latest invention does not work, but it has inspired the rest of us.

2. Copy each sentence onto your own sheet of paper and underline the verb(s) twice. Name the type of verb(s) used in the sentence in the space provided (LV, HV, or V).

- The cat sounds ready to come back inside. ________
- We have not eaten dinner yet. ________
- It took four people to move the broken-down car. ________
- The book was filled with notes from class. ________
- We walked from room to room, inspecting for damages. ________
- Harold was expecting a package in the mail. ________
- The clothes still felt damp even though they had been through the dryer twice. ________
- The teacher who runs the studio is often praised for his restoration work on old masterpieces. ________

3. Use what you have learned so far to bring variety in your writing. Use the following lines or your own sheet of paper to write six sentences that practice each basic sentence pattern. When you have finished, label each part of the sentence (S, V, LV, N, Adj, Adv, DO, IO).

- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____

4. Find an article in a newspaper, a magazine, or online that interests you. Bring it to class or post it online. Then, looking

at a classmate's article, identify one example of each part of a sentence (S, V, LV, N, Adj, Adv, DO, IO). Please share or post your results.

5. Copy the following sentences onto your own sheet of paper and circle the fragments. Then combine the fragment with the independent clause to create a complete sentence.

- Working without taking a break. We try to get as much work done as we can in an hour.
- I needed to bring work home. In order to meet the deadline.
- Unless the ground thaws before spring break. We won't be planting any tulips this year.
- Turning the lights off after he was done in the kitchen. Robert tries to conserve energy whenever possible.
- You'll find what you need if you look. On the shelf next to the potted plant.
- To find the perfect apartment. Deidre scoured the classifieds each day.

6. A reader can get lost or lose interest in material that is too dense and rambling. Use what you have learned about run-on sentences to correct the following passages:

- The report is due on Wednesday but we're flying back from Miami that morning. I told the project manager that we would be able to get the report to her later that day she suggested that we come back a day early to get the report done and I told her we had meetings until our flight took off. We e-mailed our contact who said that they would check with his boss, she said that the project could afford a delay as long as they wouldn't have to make any edits or changes to the file our new deadline is next Friday.
- Anna tried getting a reservation at the restaurant, but when she called they said that there was a waiting list so she put our names down on the list when the day of our reservation arrived we only had to wait thirty minutes because a table opened up unexpectedly which was good because we were able to catch a movie after dinner in the time we'd expected to wait to be seated.
- Without a doubt, my favorite artist is Leonardo da Vinci, not because of his paintings but because of his fascinating designs, models, and sketches, including plans for scuba gear, a flying machine, and a life-size mechanical lion that actually walked and moved its head. His paintings are beautiful too, especially when you see the computer enhanced versions researchers use a variety of methods to discover and enhance the paintings' original colors, the result of which are stunningly vibrant and yet delicate displays of the man's genius.

WRITING APPLICATION

Using the six basic sentence structures, write one of the following:

1. A work e-mail to a coworker about a presentation.
2. A business letter to a potential employer.
3. A status report about your current project.
4. A job description for your résumé.

17.2 SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define subject-verb agreement.
- Identify common errors in subject-verb agreement.

In the workplace, you want to present a professional image. Your outfit or suit says something about you when meeting face-to-face, and your writing represents you in your absence. Grammatical mistakes in your writing or even in speaking make a negative impression on coworkers, clients, and potential employers. Subject-verb agreement is one of the most common errors that people make. Having a solid understanding of this concept is critical when making a good impression, and it will help ensure that your ideas are communicated clearly.

AGREEMENT

Agreement in speech and in writing refers to the proper grammatical match between words and phrases. Parts of sentences must agree, or correspond with other parts, in number, person, case, and gender.

- **Number.** All parts must match in singular or plural forms.
- **Person.** All parts must match in first person (*I*), second person (*you*), or third person (*he, she, it, they*) forms.
- **Case.** All parts must match in subjective (*I, you, he, she, it, they, we*), objective (*me, her, him, them, us*), or possessive (*my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, their, theirs, our, ours*) forms. For more information on pronoun case agreement, see Section 1.5.1 “Pronoun Agreement”.
- **Gender.** All parts must match in male or female forms.

Subject-verb agreement describes the proper match between subjects and verbs.

Because subjects and verbs are either singular or plural, the subject of a sentence and the verb of a sentence must agree with each other in number. That is, a singular subject belongs with a singular verb form, and a plural subject belongs with a plural verb form. For more information on subjects and verbs, see Section 1.1 “Sentence Writing”.

Singular: The cat jumps over the fence.

Plural: The cats jump over the fence.

REGULAR VERBS

Regular verbs follow a predictable pattern. For example, in the third person singular, regular verbs always end in *-s*. Other forms of regular verbs do not end in *-s*. Study the following regular verb forms in the present tense.

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I live.	We live.
Second Person	You live.	You live.
Third Person	He/She/It live*s*.	They live.

TIP

Add an *-es* to the third person singular form of regular verbs that end in *-sh*, *-x*, *-ch*, and *-s*. (I wish/He wishes, I fix/She fixes, I watch/It watches, I kiss/He kisses.)

Singular: I read every day.

Plural: We read every day.

In these sentences, the verb form stays the same for the first person singular and the first person plural.

Singular: You stretch before you go to bed.

Plural: You stretch before every game.

In these sentences, the verb form stays the same for the second person singular and the second person plural. In the singular form, the pronoun *you* refers to one person. In the plural form, the pronoun *you* refers to a group of people, such as a team.

Singular: My mother walks to work every morning.

In this sentence, the subject is *mother*. Because the sentence only refers to one mother, the subject is singular. The verb in this sentence must be in the third person singular form.

Plural: My friends like the same music as I do.

In this sentence, the subject is *friends*. Because this subject refers to more than one person, the subject is plural. The verb in this sentence must be in the third person plural form.

TIP

Many singular subjects can be made plural by adding an *-s*. Most regular verbs in the present tense end with an *–s* in the third person singular. This does not make the verbs plural.

Singular subject, singular verb: The cat races across the yard.

Plural subject, plural verb: The cats race across the yard.

IRREGULAR VERBS

Not all verbs follow a predictable pattern. These verbs are called irregular verbs. Some of the most common irregular verbs are *be*, *have*, and *do*. Learn the forms of these verbs in the present tense to avoid errors in subject-verb agreement.

BE

Study the different forms of the verb *to be* in the present tense.

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I am.	We are.
Second Person	You are.	You are.
Third Person	He/She/It is.	They are.

HAVE

Study the different forms of the verb *to have* in the present tense.

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I have.	We have.
Second Person	You have.	You have.
Third Person	He/She/It has.	They have.

DO

Study the different forms of the verb *to do* in the present tense.

	Singular Form	Plural Form
First Person	I do.	We do.
Second Person	You do.	You do.
Third person	He/She/It does.	They do.

ERRORS IN SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Errors in subject-verb agreement may occur when

- a sentence contains a compound subject;
- the subject of the sentence is separate from the verb;
- the subject of the sentence is an indefinite pronoun, such as *anyone* or *everyone*;
- the subject of the sentence is a collective noun, such as *team* or *organization*;
- the subject appears after the verb.

Recognizing the sources of common errors in subject-verb agreement will help you avoid these errors in your writing. This section covers the subject-verb agreement errors in more detail.

COMPOUND SUBJECTS

A compound subject is formed by two or more nouns and the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor*. A compound subject can be made of singular subjects, plural subjects, or a combination of singular and plural subjects.

Compound subjects combined with *and* take a plural verb form.

Two singular subjects: Alicia and Miguel ride their bikes to the beach.

Two plural subjects: The girls and the boys ride their bikes to the beach.

Singular and plural subjects: Alicia and the boys ride their bikes to the beach.

Compound subjects combined with *or* and *nor* are treated separately. The verb must agree with the subject that is nearest to the verb.

Two singular subjects: Neither Elizabeth nor Rianna wants to eat at that restaurant.

Two plural subjects: Neither the kids nor the adults want to eat at that restaurant.

Singular and plural subjects: Neither Elizabeth nor the kids want to eat at that restaurant.

Plural and singular subjects: Neither the kids nor Elizabeth wants to eat at that restaurant.

Two singular subjects: Either you or Jason takes the furniture out of the garage.

Two plural subjects: Either you or the twins take the furniture out of the garage.

Singular and plural subjects: Either Jason or the twins take the furniture out of the garage.

Plural and singular subjects: Either the twins or Jason takes the furniture out of the garage.

TIP

If you can substitute the word *they* for the compound subject, then the sentence takes the third person plural verb form.

SEPARATION OF SUBJECTS AND VERBS

As you read or write, you may come across a sentence that contains a phrase or clause that separates the subject from the verb. Often, prepositional phrases or dependent clauses add more information to the sentence and appear between the subject and the verb. However, the subject and the verb must still agree.

If you have trouble finding the subject and verb, cross out or ignore the phrases and clauses that begin with prepositions or dependent words. The subject of a sentence will never be in a prepositional phrase or dependent clause.

The following is an example of a subject and verb separated by a prepositional phrase:

The students with the best grades win the academic awards.

The puppy under the table is my favorite.

The following is an example of a subject and verb separated by a dependent clause:

The car that I bought has power steering and a sunroof.

The representatives who are courteous sell the most tickets.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

Indefinite pronouns refer to an unspecified person, thing, or number. When an indefinite pronoun serves as the subject of a sentence, you will often use a singular verb form.

However, keep in mind that exceptions arise. Some indefinite pronouns may require a plural verb form. To determine whether to use a singular or plural verb with an indefinite pronoun, consider the noun that the pronoun would refer to. If the noun is plural, then use a plural verb with the indefinite pronoun. View the chart to see a list of common indefinite pronouns and the verb forms they agree with.

Indefinite Pronouns That Always Take a Singular Verb	Indefinite Pronouns That Can Take a Singular or Plural Verb
anybody, anyone, anything	All
each	Any
everybody, everyone, everything	None
much	Some
many	
nobody, no one, nothing	
somebody, someone, something	

Singular: Everybody in the kitchen sings along when that song comes on the radio.

The indefinite pronoun *everybody* takes a singular verb form because *everybody* refers to a group performing the same action as a single unit.

Plural: All the people in the kitchen sing along when that song comes on the radio.

The indefinite pronoun *all* takes a plural verb form because *all* refers to the plural noun *people*. Because *people*is plural, *all* is plural.

Singular: All the cake is on the floor.

In this sentence, the indefinite pronoun *all* takes a singular verb form because *all* refers to the singular noun *cake*. Because *cake* is singular, *all* is singular.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A collective noun is a noun that identifies more than one person, place, or thing and considers those people, places, or things one singular unit. Because collective nouns are counted as one, they are singular and require a singular verb. Some commonly used collective nouns are *group*, *team*, *army*, *flock*, *family*, and *class*.

Singular: The class is going on a field trip.

In this sentence, *class* is a collective noun. Although the class consists of many students, the class is treated as a singular unit and requires a singular verb form.

THE SUBJECT FOLLOWS THE VERB

You may encounter sentences in which the subject comes after the verb instead of before the verb. In other words, the subject of the sentence may not appear where you expect it to appear. To ensure proper subject-verb agreement, you must correctly identify the subject and the verb.

HERE OR THERE

In sentences that begin with *here* or *there*, the subject follows the verb.

Here is my wallet!

There are thirty dolphins in the water.

If you have trouble identifying the subject and the verb in sentences that start with *here* or *there*; it may help to reverse the order of the sentence so the subject comes first.

My wallet is here!

Thirty dolphins are in the water.

QUESTIONS

When you ask questions, a question word (*who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, or *how*) appears first. The verb and then the subject follow.

Who are the people you are related to?

When am I going to go to the grocery store?

TIP

If you have trouble finding the subject and the verb in questions, try answering the question being asked.

When am I going to the grocery store? I am going to the grocery store tonight!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Parts of sentences must agree in number, person, case, and gender.
- A verb must always agree with its subject in number. A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.
- Irregular verbs do not follow a predictable pattern in their singular and plural forms. Common irregular verbs are *to be*, *to have*, and *to do*.
- A compound subject is formed when two or more nouns are joined by the words *and*, *or*, or *nor*.
- In some sentences, the subject and verb may be separated by a phrase or clause, but the verb must still agree with the subject.
- Indefinite pronouns, such as *anyone*, *each*, *everyone*, *many*, *no one*, and *something*, refer to unspecified people or objects. Most indefinite pronouns are singular.
- A collective noun is a noun that identifies more than one person, place, or thing and treats those people, places, or things one singular unit. Collective nouns require singular verbs.
- In sentences that begin with *here* and *there*, the subject follows the verb.
- In questions, the subject follows the verb.

EXERCISES

1. On your own sheet of paper, write the correct verb form for each of the following sentences.

- I (brush/brushes) my teeth twice a day.
- You (wear/wears) the same shoes every time we go out.
- He (kick/kicks) the soccer ball into the goal.
- She (watch/watches) foreign films.
- Catherine (hide/hides) behind the door.
- We (want/wants) to have dinner with you.
- You (work/works) together to finish the project.
- They (need/needs) to score another point to win the game.
- It (eat/eats) four times a day.
- David (fix/fixes) his own motorcycle.

2. Complete the following sentences by writing the correct present tense form of *be*, *have*, or *do*. Use your own sheet of paper to complete this exercise.

- I ________ sure that you will succeed.
- They ________ front-row tickets to the show.
- He ________ a great Elvis impersonation.
- We ________ so excited to meet you in person!
- She ________ a fever and a sore throat.
- You ________ not know what you are talking about.
- You ________ all going to pass this class.
- She ________ not going to like that.
- It ________ appear to be the right size.
- They ________ ready to take this job seriously.

3. Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following sentences. If there are no errors in subject-verb agreement, write *OK*. Copy the corrected sentence or the word *OK* on your own sheet of notebook paper.

- My family are moving to California.

____

- Here is the lake I told you about.

____

- There is the newspapers I was supposed to deliver.

____

- Which room is bigger?

____

- When are the movie going to start?

____

- My sister and brother cleans up after themselves.

____

- Some of the clothes is packed away in the attic.

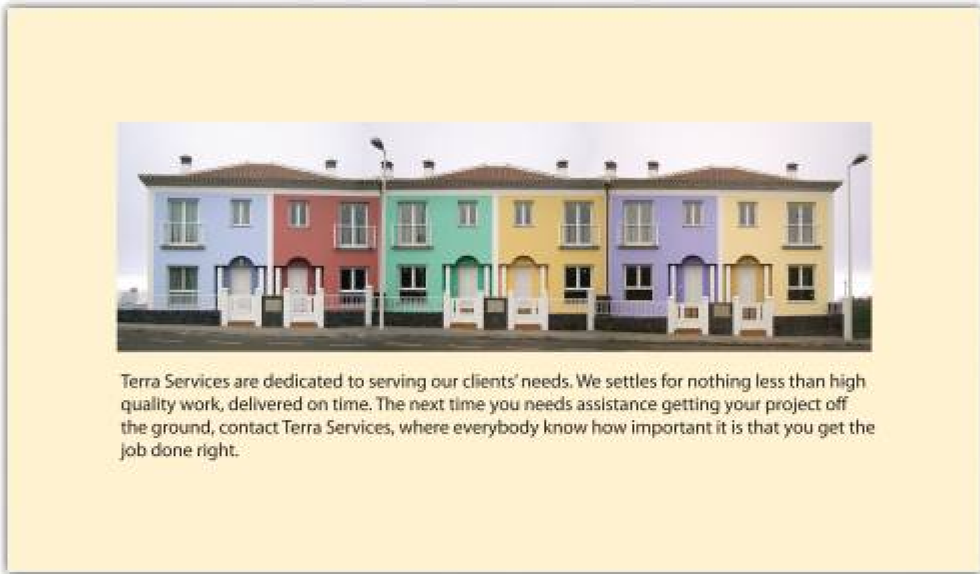
____

4. Correct the errors in subject-verb agreement in the following paragraph. Copy the paragraph on a piece of notebook paper and make corrections.

- Dear Hiring Manager,I feels that I am the ideal candidate for the receptionist position at your company. I has three years of experience as a receptionist in a company that is similar to yours. My phone skills and written communication is excellent. These skills, and others that I have learned on the job, helps me understand that every person in a company helps make the business a success. At my current job, the team always say that I am very helpful. Everyone appreciate when I go the extra mile to get the job done right. My current employer and coworkers feels that I am an asset to the team. I is efficient and organized. Is there any other details about me that you would like to know? If so, please contact me. Here are my résumé. You can reach me by e-mail or phone. I looks forward to speaking with you in person.Thanks,Felicia Fellini

WRITING AT WORK

Figure 1.5 Advertisement



Imagine that you are a prospective client and that you saw this ad online. Would you call Terra Services to handle your next project? Probably not! Mistakes in subject-verb agreement can cost a company business. Paying careful attention to grammatical details ensures professionalism that clients will recognize and respect.

WRITING APPLICATION

Use your knowledge of subject-verb agreement to write one of the following:

1. An advertisement for a potential company
2. A memo to all employees of a particular company
3. A cover letter describing your qualifications to a potential employer

Be sure to include at least the following:

- One collective noun
- One irregular verb
- One question

17.3 VERB TENSE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Use the correct regular verb tense in basic sentences.
- Use the correct irregular verb tense in basic sentences.

Suppose you must give an oral presentation about what you did last summer. How do you make it clear that you are talking about the past and not about the present or the future? Using the correct verb tense can help you do this.

It is important to use the proper verb tense. Otherwise, your listener might judge you harshly. Mistakes in tense often leave a listener or reader with a negative impression.

REGULAR VERBS

Verbs indicate actions or states of being in the past, present, or future using tenses. Regular verbs follow regular patterns when shifting from the present to past tense. For example, to form a past-tense or past-participle verb form, add *-ed* or *-d* to the end of a verb. You can avoid mistakes by understanding this basic pattern.

Verb tense identifies the time of action described in a sentence. Verbs take different forms to indicate different tenses. Verb tenses indicate

- an action or state of being in the present,
- an action or state of being in the past,
- an action or state of being in the future.

Helping verbs, such as *be* and *have,* also work to create verb tenses, such as the future tense.

Present Tense: Tim walks to the store. (Singular subject)

Present Tense: Sue and Kimmy walk to the store. (Plural subject)

Past Tense: Yesterday, they walked to the store for milk. (Plural subject)

Future Tense: Tomorrow, Kimmy will walk to the store to buy some bread. (Singular subject)

IRREGULAR VERBS

The past tense of irregular verbs is not formed using the patterns that regular verbs follow. Study Table 1.1 "Irregular Verbs", which lists the most common irregular verbs.

TIP

The best way to learn irregular verbs is to memorize them. With the help of a classmate, create flashcards of irregular verbs and test yourselves until you master them.

Table 1.1 Irregular Verbs

Simple Present	Past	Simple Present	Past
be	was, were	lose	lost
become	became	make	made
begin	began	mean	meant
blow	blew	meet	met
break	broke	pay	paid
bring	brought	put	put
build	built	quit	quit
burst	burst	read	read
buy	bought	ride	rode
catch	caught	ring	rang
choose	chose	rise	rose
come	came	run	ran
cut	cut	say	said
dive	dove (dived)	see	saw
do	did	seek	sought
draw	drew	sell	sold
drink	drank	send	sent
drive	drove	set	set
eat	ate	shake	shook
fall	fell	shine	shone (shined)
feed	fed	shrink	shrank (shrunk)
feel	felt	sing	sang
fight	fought	sit	sat
find	found	sleep	slept
fly	flew	speak	spoke
forget	forgot	spend	spent
forgive	forgave	spring	sprang
freeze	froze	stand	stood
get	got	steal	stole
give	gave	strike	struck
go	went	swim	swam
grow	grew	swing	swung
have	had	take	took
hear	heard	teach	taught
hide	hid	tear	tore
hold	held	tell	told

Simple Present	Past	Simple Present	Past
hurt	hurt	think	thought
keep	kept	throw	threw
know	knew	understand	understood
lay	laid	wake	woke
lead	led	wear	wore
leave	left	win	won
let	let	wind	wound

Here we consider using irregular verbs.

Present Tense: Lauren keeps all her letters.

Past Tense: Lauren kept all her letters

Future Tense: Lauren will keep all her letters.

MAINTAINING CONSISTENT VERB TENSE

Consistent verb tense means the same verb tense is used throughout a sentence or a paragraph. As you write and revise, it is important to use the same verb tense consistently and to avoid shifting from one tense to another unless there is a good reason for the tense shift. In the following box, see whether you notice the difference between a sentence with consistent tense and one with inconsistent tense.

Inconsistent tense:

The crowd starts cheering as Melina approached the finish line.

Consistent tense:

The crowd started cheering as Melina approached the finish line.

Consistent tense: The crowd starts cheering as Melina approaches the finish line.

TIP

In some cases, clear communication will call for different tenses. Look at the following example:

When I was a teenager, I wanted to be a firefighter, but now I am studying computer science.

If the time frame for each action or state is different, a tense shift is appropriate.

WRITING AT WORK

Read the following excerpt from a work e-mail:

I would like to highlight an important concern that comes up after our meeting last week. During the meeting, we agree to conduct a series of interviews over the next several months in which we hired new customer service representatives. Before we do that, however, I would like to review your experiences with the Customer Relationship Management Program. Please suggest a convenient time next week for us to meet so that we can discuss this important matter.

The inconsistent tense in the e-mail will very likely distract the reader from its overall point. Most likely, your coworkers will not correct your verb tenses or call attention to grammatical errors, but it is important to keep in mind that errors such as these do have a subtle negative impact in the workplace.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Verb tense helps you express when an event takes place.
- Regular verbs follow regular patterns when shifting from present to past tense.
- Irregular verbs do not follow regular, predictable patterns when shifting from present to past tense.
- Using consistent verb tense is a key element to effective writing.

EXERCISES

1. Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct form of the verb in simple present, simple past, or simple future tenses. Write the corrected sentence on your own sheet of paper.

- The Dust Bowl (is, was, will be) a name given to a period of very destructive dust storms that occurred in the United States during the 1930s.
- Historians today (consider, considered, will consider) The Dust Bowl to be one of the worst weather of events in American history.
- The Dust Bowl mostly (affects, affected, will affect) the states of Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.
- Dust storms (continue, continued, will continue) to occur in these dry regions, but not to the devastating degree of the 1930s.
- The dust storms during The Dust Bowl (cause, caused, will cause) irreparable damage to farms and the environment for a period of several years.
- When early settlers (move, moved, will move) into this area, they (remove, removed, will remove) the natural prairie grasses in order to plant crops and graze their cattle.
- They did not (realize, realized, will realize) that the grasses kept the soil in place.
- There (is, was, will be) also a severe drought that (affects, affected, will affect) the region.
- The worst dust storm (happens, happened, will happen) on April 14, 1935, a day called Black Sunday.
- The Dust Bowl era finally came to end in 1939 when the rains (arrive, arrived, will arrive).
- Dust storms (continue, continued, will continue) to affect the region, but hopefully they will not be as destructive as the storms of the 1930s.

2. Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct form of the irregular verb in simple present, simple past, or simple future tense. Copy the corrected sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

- Marina finally (forgived, forgave, will forgive) her sister for snooping around her room.
- The house (shook, shaked, shakes) as the airplane rumbled overhead.
- I (buyed, bought, buy) several items of clothing at the thrift store on Wednesday.
- She (put, putted, puts) the lotion in her shopping basket and proceeded to the checkout line.
- The prized goose (layed, laid, lay) several golden eggs last night.
- Mr. Batista (teached, taught, taughted) the class how to use correct punctuation.
- I (drink, drank, will drink) several glasses of sparkling cider instead of champagne on New Year's Eve next year.
- Although Hector (growed, grew, grows) three inches in one year, we still called him "Little Hector."
- Yesterday our tour guide (lead, led, will lead) us through the maze of people in Times Square.
- The rock band (burst, bursted, bursts) onto the music scene with their catchy songs.

3. On your own sheet of paper, write a sentence using the correct form of the verb tense shown below.

- Throw (past)
- Paint (simple present)
- Smile (future)
- Tell (past)
- Share (simple present)

4. Edit the following paragraph by correcting the inconsistent verb tense. Copy the corrected paragraph onto your own sheet of paper.

In the Middle Ages, most people lived in villages and work as agricultural laborers, or peasants. Every village has a "lord," and the peasants worked on his land. Much of what they produce go to the lord and his family. What little food was leftover goes to support the peasants' families. In return for their labor, the lord offers them protection. A peasant's day usually began before sunrise and involves long hours of backbreaking work, which includes plowing the land, planting seeds, and cutting crops for harvesting. The working life of a peasant in the Middle Ages is usually demanding and exhausting.

WRITING APPLICATION

- Tell a family story. You likely have several family stories to choose from, but pick the one that you find most interesting to write about. Use as many details as you can in the telling. As you write and proofread, make sure your all your verbs are correct and the tenses are consistent.

17.4 CAPITALIZATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Learn the basic rules of capitalization.
- Identify common capitalization errors.

Text messages, casual e-mails, and instant messages often ignore the rules of capitalization. In fact, it can seem unnecessary to capitalize in these contexts. In other, more formal forms of communication, however, knowing the basic rules of capitalization and using capitalization correctly gives the reader the impression that you choose your words carefully and care about the ideas you are conveying.

CAPITALIZE THE FIRST WORD OF A SENTENCE

Incorrect: the museum has a new butterfly exhibit.

Correct: The museum has a new butterfly exhibit.

Incorrect: cooking can be therapeutic.

Correct: Cooking can be therapeutic.

CAPITALIZE PROPER NOUNS

Proper nouns—the names of specific people, places, objects, streets, buildings, events, or titles of individuals—are always capitalized.

Incorrect: He grew up in harlem, new york.

Correct: He grew up in Harlem, New York.

Incorrect: The sears tower in chicago has a new name.

Correct: The Sears Tower in Chicago has a new name.

TIP

Always capitalize nationalities, races, languages, and religions. For example, American, African American, Hispanic, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and so on.

Do not capitalize nouns for people, places, things, streets, buildings, events, and titles when the noun is used in general or common way. See the following chart for the difference between proper nouns and common nouns.

Common Noun	**Proper Noun**
museum	The Art Institute of Chicago
theater	Apollo Theater
country	Malaysia
uncle	Uncle Javier
doctor	Dr. Jackson
book	*Pride and Prejudice*
college	Smith College
war	the Spanish-American War
historical event	The Renaissance

CAPITALIZE DAYS OF THE WEEK, MONTHS OF THE YEAR, AND HOLIDAYS

Incorrect: On wednesday, I will be traveling to Austin for a music festival.

Correct: On Wednesday, I will be traveling to Austin for a music festival.

Incorrect: The fourth of july is my favorite holiday.

Correct: The Fourth of July is my favorite holiday.

CAPITALIZE TITLES

Incorrect: The play, *fences*, by August Wilson is one of my favorites.

Correct: The play, *Fences*, by August Wilson is one of my favorites.

Incorrect: The president of the United States will be speaking at my university.

TIP

Computer-related words such as "Internet" and "World Wide Web" are usually capitalized; however, "e-mail" and "online" are never capitalized.

WRITING AT WORK

Did you know that, if you use all capital letters to convey a message, the capital letters come across like shouting? In addition, all capital letters are actually more difficult to read and may annoy the reader. To avoid "shouting" at or annoying your reader, follow the rules of capitalization and find other ways to emphasize your point.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Learning and applying the basic rules of capitalization is a fundamental aspect of good writing.
- Identifying and correcting errors in capitalization is an important writing skill.

EXERCISES

1. On your own sheet of paper, write five proper nouns for each common noun that is listed. The first one has been done for you.

Common noun: river

1. Nile River

Common noun: musician

Common noun: magazine

Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2. Edit the following sentences by correcting the capitalization of the titles or names.

- The prince of england enjoys playing polo.
- "Ode to a nightingale" is a sad poem.
- My sister loves to read magazines such as the new yorker.
- *The house on Mango street* is an excellent novel written by Sandra Cisneros.
- My physician, dr. alvarez, always makes me feel comfortable in her office.

3. Edit the following paragraphs by correcting the capitalization.

david grann's *the lost City of Z* mimics the snake-like winding of the amazon River. The three distinct Stories that are introduced are like twists in the River. First, the Author describes his own journey to the amazon in the present day, which is contrasted by an account of percy fawcett's voyage in 1925 and a depiction of James Lynch's expedition in 1996. Where does the river lead these explorers? the answer is one that both the Author and the reader are hungry to discover.

The first lines of the preface pull the reader in immediately because we know the author, david grann, is lost in the amazon. It is a compelling beginning not only because it's thrilling but also because this is a true account of grann's experience. grann has dropped the reader smack in the middle of his conflict by admitting the recklessness of his decision to come to this place. the suspense is further perpetuated by his unnerving observation that he always considered himself A Neutral Witness, never getting personally involved in his stories, a notion that is swiftly contradicted in the opening pages, as the reader can clearly perceive that he is in a dire predicament—and frighteningly involved.

WRITING APPLICATION

Write a one-page biography. Make sure to identify people, places, and dates and use capitalization correctly.

17.5 PRONOUNS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify pronouns and their antecedents.
- Use pronouns and their antecedents correctly.

If there were no pronouns, all types of writing would be quite tedious to read. We would soon be frustrated by reading sentences like *Bob said that Bob was tired* or *Christina told the class that Christina received an A.*Pronouns help a writer avoid constant repetition. Knowing just how pronouns work is an important aspect of clear and concise writing.

PRONOUN AGREEMENT

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of (or refers back to) a noun or another pronoun. The word or words a pronoun refers to is called the antecedent of the pronoun.

1. *Lani* complained that *she* was exhausted.
    - *She* refers to *Lani*.
    - *Lani* is the antecedent of *she*.
2. *Jeremy* left the party early, so I did not see *him* until Monday at work.

- *Him* refers to Jeremy.
- *Jeremy* is the antecedent of *him*.

3. *Crina and Rosalie* have been best friends ever since *they* were freshman in high school.

    - *They* refers to *Crina and Rosalie*.
    - *Crina and Rosalie* is the antecedent of *they*.

Pronoun agreement errors occur when the pronoun and the antecedent do not match or agree with each other. There are several types of pronoun agreement.

AGREEMENT IN NUMBER

If the pronoun takes the place of or refers to a singular noun, the pronoun must also be singular.
Incorrect: If a *student* (singular) wants to return a book to the bookstore, *they* (plural) must have a receipt.
Correct: If a *student* (singular) wants to return a book to the bookstore, *he or she* must have a receipt.
If it seems too wordy to use *he or she*, change the antecedent to a plural noun.
Correct: If *students* (plural) want to return a book to the bookstore, *they* (plural) must have a receipt.

AGREEMENT IN PERSON

	Singular Pronouns			Plural Pronouns		
First Person	I	me	my (mine)	we	us	our (ours)
Second Person	you	you	your (yours)	you	you	your (your)
Third Person	he, she, it	him, her, it	his, her, its	they	them	their (theirs)

If you use a consistent person, your reader is less likely to be confused.
Incorrect: When a *person* (third) goes to a restaurant, *you* (second) should leave a tip.
Correct: When a *person* (third) goes to a restaurant, *he or she* (third) should leave a tip.
Correct: When *we* (first) go to a restaurant, *I* (first) should leave a tip.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS AND AGREEMENT

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific person or thing and are usually singular. Note that a pronoun that refers to an indefinite singular pronoun should also be singular. The following are some common indefinite pronouns.

Common Indefinite Pronouns				
all	each one	few	nothing	several
any	each other	many	one	some
anybody	either	neither	one another	somebody
anything	everybody	nobody	oneself	someone
both	everyone	none	other	something
each	everything	no one	others	anyone

Incorrect: *Everyone* (singular) should do what *they* (plural) can to help.

Correct: *Everyone* (singular) should do what *he or she* (singular) can to help.

Incorrect: *Someone* (singular) left *their* (plural) backpack in the library.

Correct: *Someone* (singular) left *his or her* (singular) backpack in the library.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Collective nouns suggest more than one person but are usually considered singular. Look over the following examples of collective nouns.

Common Collective Nouns		
audience	faculty	public
band	family	school
class	government	society
committee	group	team
company	jury	tribe

Incorrect: Lara's *company* (singular) will have *their* (plural) annual picnic next week.

Correct: Lara's *company* (singular) will have *its* (singular) annual picnic next week.

SUBJECT AND OBJECT PRONOUNS

Subject pronouns function as subjects in a sentence. Object pronouns function as the object of a verb or of a preposition.

Singular Pronouns		Plural Pronouns	
Subject	**Object**	**Subject**	**Object**
I	me	we	us
you	you	you	you
he, she, it	him, her, it	they	them

The following sentences show pronouns as subjects:

1. *She* loves the Blue Ridge Mountains in the fall.
2. Every summer, *they* picked up litter from national parks.

The following sentences show pronouns as objects:

1. Marie leaned over and kissed *him*.
2. Jane moved *it* to the corner.

TIP

Note that a pronoun can also be the object of a preposition.

Near *them*, the children played.

My mother stood between *us*.

The pronouns *us* and *them* are objects of the prepositions *near* and *between*. They answer the questions *near* whom? And *between* whom?

Compound subject pronouns are two or more pronouns joined by a conjunction or a preposition that function as the subject of the sentence.

The following sentences show pronouns with compound subjects:

Incorrect: *Me and Harriet* visited the Grand Canyon last summer.

Correct: *Harriet and I* visited the Grand Canyon last summer.

Correct: Jenna accompanied *Harriet and me* on our trip.

TIP

Note that object pronouns are never used in the subject position. One way to remember this rule is to remove the other subject in a compound subject, leave only the pronoun, and see whether the sentence makes sense. For example, *Me visited the Grand Canyon last summer* sounds immediately incorrect.

Compound object pronouns are two or more pronouns joined by a conjunction or a preposition that function as the object of the sentence.

Incorrect: I have a good feeling about *Janice and I*.

Correct: I have a good feeling about *Janice and me*.

It is correct to write *Janice and me*, as opposed to *me and Janice*. Just remember it is more polite to refer to yourself last.

WRITING AT WORK

In casual conversation, people sometimes mix up subject and object pronouns. For instance, you might say, "Me and Donnie went to a movie last night." However, when you are writing or speaking at work or in any other formal situation, you need to remember the distinctions between subject and object pronouns and be able to correct yourself. These subtle grammar corrections will enhance your professional image and reputation.

WHO VERSUS WHOM

Who or *whoever* is always the subject of a verb. Use *who* or *whoever* when the pronoun performs the action indicated by the verb.

Who won the marathon last Tuesday?

I wonder *who* came up with that terrible idea!

On the other hand, *whom* and *whomever* serve as objects. They are used when the pronoun does *not* perform an action. Use *whom* or *whomever* when the pronoun is the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition.

Whom did Frank marry the third time? (direct object of verb)

From *whom* did you buy that old record player? (object of preposition)

TIP

If you are having trouble deciding when to use *who* and *whom*, try this trick. Take the following sentence:

Who/Whom do I consider my best friend?

Reorder the sentence in your head, using either *he* or *him* in place of *who* or *whom*.

I consider *him* my best friend.

I consider *he* my best friend.

Which sentence sounds better? The first one, of course. So the trick is, if you can use *him*, you should use *whom*.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Pronouns and their antecedents need to agree in number and person.
- Most indefinite pronouns are singular.
- Collective nouns are usually singular.
- Pronouns can function as subjects or objects.
- Subject pronouns are never used as objects, and object pronouns are never used as subjects.
- *Who* serves as a subject of a verb.
- *Whom* serves as an object of a sentence or the object of a preposition.

EXERCISES

1. Edit the following paragraph by correcting pronoun agreement errors in number and person.

Over spring break I visited my older cousin, Diana, and they took me to a butterfly exhibit at a museum. Diana and I have been close ever since she was young. Our mothers are twin sisters, and she is inseparable! Diana knows how much I love butterflies, so it was their special present to me. I have a soft spot for caterpillars too. I love them because something about the way it transforms is so interesting to me. One summer my grandmother gave me a butterfly growing kit, and you got to see the entire life cycle of five Painted Lady butterflies. I even got to set it free. So when my cousin said they wanted to take me to the butterfly exhibit, I was really excited!

2. Complete the following sentences by selecting the correct pronoun. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper. Then circle the noun the pronoun replaces.

- In the current economy, nobody wants to waste ________ money on frivolous things.
- If anybody chooses to go to medical school, ________ must be prepared to work long hours.
- The plumbing crew did ________ best to repair the broken pipes before the next ice storm.
- If someone is rude to you, try giving ________ a smile in return.
- My family has ________ faults, but I still love them no matter what.
- The school of education plans to train ________ students to be literacy tutors.

- The commencement speaker said that each student has a responsibility toward ________.
- My mother's singing group has ________ rehearsals on Thursday evenings.
- No one should suffer ________ pains alone.
- I thought the flock of birds lost ________ way in the storm.

3. Revise the following sentences in which the subject and object pronouns are used incorrectly. Copy the revised sentence onto your own sheet of paper. Write a C for each sentence that is correct.

- Meera and me enjoy doing yoga together on Sundays.
- She and him have decided to sell their house.
- Between you and I, I do not think Jeffrey will win the election.
- Us and our friends have game night the first Thursday of every month.
- They and I met while on vacation in Mexico.
- Napping on the beach never gets boring for Alice and I.
- New Year's Eve is not a good time for she and I to have a serious talk.
- You exercise much more often than me.
- I am going to the comedy club with Yolanda and she.
- The cooking instructor taught her and me a lot.

4. Complete the following sentences by adding *who* or *whom*. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

- ________ hit the home run?
- I remember ________ won the Academy Award for Best Actor last year.
- To ________ is the letter addressed?
- I have no idea ________ left the iron on, but I am going to find out.
- ________ are you going to recommend for the internship?
- With ________ are you going to Hawaii?
- No one knew ________ the famous actor was.
- ________ in the office knows how to fix the copy machine?
- From ________ did you get the concert tickets?
- No one knew ________ ate the cake mom was saving.

WRITING APPLICATION

Write about what makes an ideal marriage or long-term relationship. Provide specific details to back up your assertions. After you have written a few paragraphs, go back and proofread your paper for correct pronoun usage.

17.6 ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify adjectives and adverbs.
- Use adjectives and adverbs correctly.

Adjectives and adverbs are descriptive words that bring your writing to life.

ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

An adjective is a word that describes a noun or a pronoun. It often answers questions such as *which one*, *what kind*, or *how many?*

1. The *green* sweater belongs to Iris.
2. She looks *beautiful*.

    - In sentence 1, the adjective *green* describes the noun *sweater*.
    - In sentence 2, the adjective *beautiful* describes the pronoun *she*.

    An adverb is a word that describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs frequently end in *-ly*. They answer questions such as *how*, *to what extent*, *why*, *when*, and *where*.
3. Bertrand sings *horribly*.
4. My sociology instructor is *extremely* wise.
5. He threw the ball *very* accurately.

    - In sentence 3, *horribly* describes the verb *sings*. How does Bertrand sing? He sings *horribly*.
    - In sentence 4, *extremely* describes the adjective *wise*. How *wise* is the instructor? *Extremely* wise.
    - In sentence 5, *very* describes the adverb *accurately*. How *accurately* did he throw the ball? *Very*accurately.

COMPARATIVE VERSUS SUPERLATIVE

Comparative adjectives and adverbs are used to compare two people or things.

1. Jorge is *thin*.
2. Steven is *thinner* than Jorge.

- Sentence 1 describes Jorge with the adjective *thin*.
- Sentence 2 compares Jorge to Steven, stating that Steven is *thinner*. So *thinner* is the comparative form of *thin*.

Form comparatives in one of the following two ways:

1. If the adjective or adverb is a one syllable word, add *-er* to it to form the comparative. For example, *big*, *fast*, and *short* would become *bigger*, *faster*, and *shorter* in the comparative form.
2. If the adjective or adverb is a word of two or more syllables, place the word *more* in front of it to form the comparative. For example, *happily*, *comfortable*, and *jealous* would become *more happily*, *more comfortable*, and *more jealous* in the comparative.

Superlative adjectives and adverbs are used to compare more than two people or two things.

1. Jackie is the *loudest* cheerleader on the squad.
2. Kenyatta was voted the *most confident* student by her graduating class.

- Sentence 1 shows that Jackie is not just *louder* than one other person, but she is the *loudest* of all the cheerleaders on the squad.
- Sentence 2 shows that Kenyatta was voted the *most confident* student of all the students in her class.

Form superlatives in one of the following two ways:

1. If the adjective or adverb is a one-syllable word, add *-est* to form the superlative. For example, *big*, *fast*, and *short* would become *biggest*, *fastest*, and *shortest* in the superlative form.
2. If the adjective or adverb is a word of two or more syllables, place the word *most* in front of it. For example, *happily*, *comfortable*, and *jealous* would become *most happily*, *most comfortable*, and *most jealous* in the superlative form.

TIP

Remember the following exception: If the word has two syllables and ends in *-y*, change the *-y* to an *-i* and add *-est*. For example, *happy* would change to *happiest* in the superlative form; *healthy* would change to *healthiest*.

IRREGULAR WORDS: GOOD, WELL, BAD, AND BADLY

Good, *well*, *bad*, and *badly* are often used incorrectly. Study the following chart to learn the correct usage of these words and their comparative and superlative forms.

		Comparative	**Superlative**
Adjective	good	better	best
Adverb	well	better	best
Adjective	bad	worse	worst
Adverb	badly	worse	worst

GOOD VERSUS WELL

Good is always an adjective—that is, a word that describes a noun or a pronoun. The second sentence is correct because *well* is an adverb that tells how something is done.

Incorrect: Cecilia felt that she had never done so *good* on a test.

Correct: Cecilia felt that she had never done so *well* on a test.

Well is always an adverb that describes a verb, adverb, or adjective. The second sentence is correct because *good* is an adjective that describes the noun *score*.

Incorrect: Cecilia's team received a *well* score.

Correct: Cecilia's team received a *good* score.

BAD VERSUS BADLY

Bad is always an adjective. The second sentence is correct because *badly* is an adverb that tells how the speaker did on the test.

Incorrect: I did *bad* on my accounting test because I didn't study.

Correct: I did *badly* on my accounting test because I didn't study.

Badly is always an adverb. The second sentence is correct because *bad* is an adjective that describes the noun *thunderstorm*.

Incorrect: The coming thunderstorm looked *badly*.

Correct: The coming thunderstorm looked *bad*.

BETTER AND WORSE

The following are examples of the use of *better* and *worse*:

Tyra likes sprinting *better* than long distance running.

The traffic is *worse* in Chicago than in Atlanta.

BEST AND WORST

The following are examples of the use of *best* and *worst*:

Tyra sprints *best* of all the other competitors.

Peter finished *worst* of all the runners in the race.

TIP

Remember *better* and *worse* compare two persons or things. *Best* and *worst* compare three or more persons or things.

WRITING AT WORK

The irregular words *good*, *well*, *bad*, and *badly* are often misused along with their comparative and superlative forms *better*, *best*, *worse*, and *worst*. You may not hear the difference between *worse* and *worst*, and therefore type it incorrectly. In a formal or business-like tone, use each of these words to write eight separate sentences. Assume these sentences will be seen and judged by your current or future employer.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Adjectives describe a noun or a pronoun.
- Adverbs describe a verb, adjective, or another adverb.
- Most adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective.
- Comparative adjectives and adverbs compare two persons or things.
- Superlative adjectives or adverbs compare more than two persons or things.
- The adjectives *good* and *bad* and the adverbs *well* and *badly* are unique in their comparative and superlative forms and require special attention.

EXERCISES

1. Complete the following sentences by adding the correct adjective or adverb from the list in the previous section. Identify the word as an adjective or an adverb (Adj, Adv).

- Frederick ________ choked on the piece of chicken when he saw Margaret walk through the door.
- His ________ eyes looked at everyone and everything as if they were specimens in a biology lab.
- Despite her pessimistic views on life, Lauren believes that most people have ________ hearts.
- Although Stefan took the criticism ________, he remained calm.
- The child developed a ________ imagination because he read a lot of books.
- Madeleine spoke ________ while she was visiting her grandmother in the hospital.
- Hector's most ________ possession was his father's bass guitar from the 1970s.
- My definition of a ________ afternoon is walking to the park on a beautiful day, spreading out my blanket, and losing myself in a good book.
- She ________ eyed her new coworker and wondered if he was single.
- At the party, Denise ________ devoured two pieces of pepperoni pizza and a several slices of ripe watermelon.

2. Edit the following paragraph by correcting the errors in comparative and superlative adjectives.

Our argument started on the most sunny afternoon that I have ever experienced. Max and I were sitting on my front stoop when I started it. I told him that my dog, Jacko, was more smart than his dog, Merlin. I could not help myself. Merlin never came when he was called, and he chased his tail and barked at rocks. I told Max that Merlin was the most dumbest dog on the block. I guess I was angrier about a bad grade that I received, so I decided to pick on poor little Merlin. Even though Max insulted Jacko too, I felt I had been more mean. The next day I apologized to Max and brought Merlin some of Jacko's treats. When Merlin placed his paw on my knee and licked my hand, I was the most sorry person on the block.

Share and compare your answers with a classmate.

3. Write *good*, *well*, *bad*, or *badly* to complete each sentence. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

- Donna always felt ________ if she did not see the sun in the morning.
- The school board president gave a ________ speech for once.
- Although my dog, Comet, is mischievous, he always behaves ________ at the dog park.
- I thought my back injury was ________ at first, but it turned out to be minor.
- Steve was shaking ________ from the extreme cold.
- Apple crisp is a very ________ dessert that can be made using whole grains instead of white flour.
- The meeting with my son's math teacher went very ________.
- Juan has a ________ appetite, especially when it comes to dessert.

- Magritte thought the guests had a ________ time at the party because most people left early.
- She ________ wanted to win the writing contest prize, which included a trip to New York.

4. Write the correct comparative or superlative form of the word in parentheses. Copy the completed sentence onto your own sheet of paper.

- This research paper is ________ (good) than my last one.
- Tanaya likes country music ________ (well) of all.
- My motorcycle rides ________ (bad) than it did last summer.
- That is the ________ (bad) joke my father ever told.
- The hockey team played ________ (badly) than it did last season.
- Tracey plays guitar ________ (well) than she plays the piano.
- It will go down as one of the ________ (bad) movies I have ever seen.
- The deforestation in the Amazon is ________ (bad) than it was last year.
- Movie ticket sales are ________ (good) this year than last.
- My husband says mystery novels are the ________ (good) types of books.

WRITING APPLICATION

Using the exercises as a guide, write your own ten-sentence quiz for your classmate(s) using the concepts covered in this section. Try to include two questions from each subsection in your quiz. Exchange papers and see whether you can get a perfect score.

17.7 MISPLACED AND DANGLING MODIFIERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify modifiers.
- Learn how to correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.

A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that clarifies or describes another word, phrase, or clause. Sometimes writers use modifiers incorrectly, leading to strange and unintentionally humorous sentences. The two common types of modifier errors are called misplaced modifiers and dangling modifiers. If either of these errors occurs, readers can no longer read smoothly. Instead, they become stumped trying to figure out *what* the writer meant to say. A writer's goal must always be to communicate clearly and to avoid distracting the reader with strange sentences or awkward sentence constructions. The good news is that these errors can be easily overcome.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

A misplaced modifier is a modifier that is placed too far from the word or words it modifies. Misplaced modifiers make the sentence awkward and sometimes unintentionally humorous.

Incorrect: She wore a bicycle helmet on her head *that was too large*.

Correct: She wore a bicycle helmet *that was too large* on her head.

- Notice in the incorrect sentence it sounds as if her head was too large! Of course, the writer is referring to the helmet, not to the person's head. The corrected version of the sentence clarifies the writer's meaning.

Look at the following two examples:

Incorrect: They bought a kitten for my brother *they call Shadow*.

Correct: They bought a kitten *they call Shadow* for my brother.

- In the incorrect sentence, it seems that the brother's name is *Shadow*. That's because the modifier is too far from the word it modifies, which is *kitten*.

Incorrect: The patient was referred to the physician *with stomach pains*.

Correct: The patient *with stomach pains* was referred to the physician.

- The incorrect sentence reads as if it is the physician who has stomach pains! What the writer means is that the patient has stomach pains.

TIP

Simple modifiers like *only*, *almost*, *just*, *nearly*, and *barely* often get used incorrectly because writers often stick them in the wrong place.

Confusing: Tyler *almost* found fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

Repaired: Tyler found *almost* fifty cents under the sofa cushions.

- How do you *almost* find something? Either you find it or you do not. The repaired sentence is much clearer.

DANGLING MODIFIERS

A dangling modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes something that has been left out of the sentence. When there is nothing that the word, phrase, or clause can modify, the modifier is said to dangle.

Incorrect: *Riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

Correct: As Jane was *riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

- In the incorrect sentence, *riding in the sports car* is dangling. The reader is left wondering who is riding in the sports car. The writer must tell the reader!

Incorrect: *Walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: As Jonas was *walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: The trees looked like spooky aliens as Jonas was *walking home at night*.

- In the incorrect sentence *walking home at night* is dangling. Who is walking home at night? Jonas. Note that there are two different ways the dangling modifier can be corrected.

Incorrect: To win the spelling bee, Luis and Gerard should join our team.
Correct: If we want to win the spelling bee this year, Luis and Gerard should join our team.

- In the incorrect sentence, *to win the spelling bee* is dangling. Who wants to win the spelling bee? We do!

TIP

The following three steps will help you quickly spot a dangling modifier:

1. Look for an *-ing* modifier at the beginning of your sentence or another modifying phrase:*Painting for three hours at night,* the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie. (*Painting* is the *-ing* modifier.)
2. Underline the first noun that follows it:*Painting for three hours at night,* the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie.
3. Make sure the modifier and noun go together logically. If they do not, it is very likely you have a dangling modifier.After identifying the dangling modifier, rewrite the sentence.*Painting for three hours at night, Maggie* finally finished the kitchen.

Key Takeaways

- Misplaced and dangling modifiers make sentences difficult to understand.
- Misplaced and dangling modifiers distract the reader.
- There are several effective ways to identify and correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.

Exercises

1. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the following sentences to correct the misplaced modifiers.

- The young lady was walking the dog on the telephone.
- I heard that there was a robbery on the evening news.
- Uncle Louie bought a running stroller for the baby that he called “Speed Racer.”
- Rolling down the mountain, the explorer stopped the boulder with his powerful foot.
- We are looking for a babysitter for our precious six-year-old who doesn’t drink or smoke and owns a car.

- The teacher served cookies to the children wrapped in aluminum foil.
- The mysterious woman walked toward the car holding an umbrella.
- We returned the wine to the waiter that was sour.
- Charlie spotted a stray puppy driving home from work.
- I ate nothing but a cold bowl of noodles for dinner.

2. Rewrite the following the sentences onto your own sheet of paper to correct the dangling modifiers.

- Bent over backward, the posture was very challenging.
- Making discoveries about new creatures, this is an interesting time to be a biologist.
- Walking in the dark, the picture fell off the wall.
- Playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.
- Packing for a trip, a cockroach scurried down the hallway.
- While looking in the mirror, the towel swayed in the breeze.
- While driving to the veterinarian's office, the dog nervously whined.
- The priceless painting drew large crowds when walking into the museum.
- Piled up next to the bookshelf, I chose a romance novel.
- Chewing furiously, the gum fell out of my mouth.
- 3. Rewrite the following paragraph correcting all the misplaced and dangling modifiers.I bought a fresh loaf of bread for my sandwich shopping in the grocery store. Wanting to make a delicious sandwich, the mayonnaise was thickly spread. Placing the cold cuts on the bread, the lettuce was placed on top. I cut the sandwich in half with a knife turning on the radio. Biting into the sandwich, my favorite song blared loudly in my ears. Humming and chewing, my sandwich went down smoothly. Smiling, my sandwich will be made again, but next time I will add cheese.Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

WRITING APPLICATION

See how creative and humorous you can get by writing ten sentences with misplaced and dangling modifiers. This is a deceptively simple task, but rise to the challenge. Your writing will be stronger for it. Exchange papers with a classmate, and rewrite your classmate's sentences to correct any misplaced modifiers.

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

17.8 VIDEO: EFFECTIVE WRITING SKILLS

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.nscc.ca/profcommunication/?p=140

Effective Writing Skills

CREDITS

CREDITS

Written by Suzie Baker. 2019. CC BY-NC 4.0 using openly licenced content.

Chapter 1

Business Communication for Success by University of Minnesota is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Communication for Business Success. Authored by: Anonymous. Provided by: Anonymous. Located at: http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/communication-for-business-success/. License: CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike

Image of texting. Authored by: Alvimann. Provided by: MorgueFile. Located at: . License: All Rights Reserved. License Terms: Free to remix, commercial use, no attribution required. http://www.morguefile.com/license/morguefile

[1] Sullivan, J., Kameda, N., & Nobu, T. (1991). Bypassing in managerial communication. Business Horizons, 34(1), 71–80.

[2] Sullivan, J., Kameda, N., & Nobu, T. (1991). Bypassing in managerial communication. Business Horizons, 34(1), 71–80.

[3] Sullivan, J., Kameda, N., & Nobu, T. (1991). Bypassing in managerial communication. Business Horizons, 34(1), 71–80.

Chapter 2

2.1 Written by Deedra Wollert Hickman

2.2 Written by Laura Ewing using the following resources:

Dong, Q., Day, K., & Collaco, C. (2008) Overcoming Ethnocentrism through Developing Intercultural Communication Sensitivity and Multiculturalism.Human Communication,11, 27-38.

Hofstede, G. (1991).Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. London: McGraw-Hill.

Wan, C. (2008). Creative Commons License: An Alternative Solution to Copyright in the New Media Arena.Trans. Array Copyright Law, Digital Content and the Internet in the Asia-Pacific(). Sydney, AU: Sydney University Press.

2.3

Anyon, J. (1980, Fall). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education, 162*(1), 67–92.

Begley, S. (2008, December 1). When DNA is not destiny. *Newsweek*, p. 14.

Cooley, C. (1922). *Human nature and the social order* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Scribners.

Insel, P., & Jacobson, L. (1975). *What do you expect? An inquiry into self-fulfilling prophecies*. Menlo Park, CA: Cummings.

McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Birmingham, NY: Vail-Ballou Press.

Rosnow, R., & Rosenthal, R. (1999). *Beginning behavioral research: A conceptual primer* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Sadker, M., & Sadker, D. (1994). *Failing at fairness: How America's schools cheat girls*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Schugurensky, D. (Ed.). (2009). Selected moments of the 20th century. In *History of education: A work in progress*. Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). Retrieved from http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_sc/assignment1/1968rosenjacob.html. *Pygmalion in the Classroom* was followed by many other school-based studies that examined these mechanisms in detail from different perspectives. Prominent among the works on this subject conducted by U.S. scholars are Rist, R. C. (1970, August). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. *Harvard Educational Review, 40*(3), 411–451.

Chapter 3

English for Business Success. **Authored by**: Anonymous. **Provided by**: Anonymous. **Located at**: http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/english-for-business-success/. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*

3.1 Written by Joe Moxley

3.2 Written by Jessica McCaughey

Chapter 4

English for Business Success. **Authored by**: Anonymous. **Provided by**: Anonymous. **Located at**: http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/english-for-business-success/. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*

Chapter 5

Saylor.org BUS210: Memorandums and Business Letters. **Authored by**: The Saylor Academy. **Provided by**: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3ViH4v57QE. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube license

5.3 Written by Lee Ann Hodges

Works Consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

Freeman, Lawrence H. *Franklin Covey Style Guide for Business and Technical Writing*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Franklin Covey, 1997.

Locker, Kitty O. *Business and Administrative Communication*. Boston, Mass.: Irwin/McGraw-Hill, 1997.

For samples of various types of resumes and business letters:

http://careers.unc.edu/

http://www.provenresumes.com

http://www.4hb.com/letters/index.html

Chapter 10

10.1

Adept Science, "Lockheed Martin Chooses Mathcad as a Standard Design Package for F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Project," *Adept Science*, September 23, 2003, http://www.adeptscience.co.uk/pressroom/article/96 (accessed October 11, 2011).

Alderfer, C. P., "Group and Intergroup Relations," in *Improving Life at Work*, ed. J. R. Hackman and J. L. Suttle (Palisades, CA: Goodyear, 1977), 277–96.

Fisher, K., *Leading Self-Directed Work Teams: A Guide to Developing New Team Leadership Skills*, rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Professional, 1999).

Fishman, C., "Whole Foods Is All Teams," *Fast Company.com*, December 18, 2007, http://www.fastcompany.com/node/26671/print (accessed October 11, 2011).

George, J. M., and Gareth R. Jones, *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 381–82.

Greenberg, J., and Robert A. Baron, *Behavior in Organizations*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 315–16.

Human Technology Inc., "Organizational Learning Strategies: Cross-Functional Teams," *Getting Results through Learning*, http://www.humtech.com/opm/grtl/ols/ols3.cfm (accessed October 11, 2011).

Robbins, S. P., and Timothy A. Judge, *Organizational Behavior*, 13th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2009), 340–42.

Thompson, L. L., *Making the Team: A Guide for Managers* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 4.

10.2

Festinger, L., "Informal Social Communication, *Psychological Review* 57 (1950): 271–82.

George, J. M., and Gareth R. Jones, *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 371–77.

Greenberg, J., and Robert A. Baron, *Behavior in Organizations*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 317–18.

Griffin, E., "Groupthink of Irving Janis," 1997, http://www.doh.state.fl.us/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early_steps/training/documents/groupthink_irving_janus.pdf (accessed October 11, 2011).

Thompson, L. L., *Making the Team: A Guide for Managers* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 323–24.

Whetten, D. A., and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 497.

10.3

Feenstra, K., "Study Skills: Team Work Skills for Group Projects," *iamnext.com*, 2002, http://www.iamnext.com/academics/grouproject.html (accessed October 11, 2011).

Fortune Magazine, "What Makes Great Leaders: Rethinking the Route to Effective Leadership," Findings from the Fortune Magazine/Hay Group 1999 Executive Survey of Leadership Effectiveness, http://ei.haygroup.com/downloads/pdf/Leadership%20White%20Paper.pdf (accessed August 9, 2008).

Lawler, E. E., *Treat People Right* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

Nichols, H., "Teamwork in School, Work and Life," *iamnext.com*, 2003, http://www.iamnext.com/academics/groupwork.html (accessed September 1, 2008).

Paulson, T. L., "Building Bridges vs. Burning Them: The Subtle Art of Influence," 1990, at http://books.google.com/books?id=iXkq-IFFJpcC&pg=PA55&lpg=PA55&dq=%22capable+people+fail+to+advance%22&source=web&ots=a2l2cJ2_AF&sig=4Xk7EuOq2htSf2XqBWSFQxJwVqE&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result (accessed September 2, 2008).

Robbins, S. P., and Timothy A. Judge, *Organizational Behavior*, 13th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2009), 346–47.

Wellins, R. S., William C. Byham, and Jeanne M. Wilson, *Empowered Teams* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).

Whetten, D. A., and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 498–99.

10.4

Anthony, S. D., "Motorola's Bet on the RAZR's Edge," *HBS Working Knowledge*, September 12, 2005, http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4992.html (accessed October 11, 2011).

Carr, N., "Lessons in Corporate Blogging," *Business Week*, July 18, 2006, 9.

College Board, "Writing: A Ticket to Work…or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders," *Report of the National Commission* *on Writing*, September 2004, http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf(accessed October 11, 2011).

(ISDA) Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), "About ID," *IDSA*, http://www.idsa.org/absolutenm/templates/?a=89&z=23 (accessed September 4, 2008).

Lashinsky, A., "RAZR's Edge," *Fortune*, *CNNMoney.com*, June 1, 2006, http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2006/06/12/8379239/index.htm(accessed August 22, 2008)

National Association of Colleges and Employers, "2006 Job Outlook," *NACEWeb*, 2007, http://www.naceweb.org (accessed October 11, 2011).

Robbins, S. P., and Timothy A. Judge, *Organizational Behavior*, 13th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2009), 368.

Thill, J. V., and Courtland L. Bovée, *Excellence in Business Communication*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 4.

Urban, G. L., and John R. Hauser, *Design and Marketing of New Products*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 173.

Whetten, D. A., and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 243.

10.5

Brownell, J., *Listening*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002), 9–10.

George, J. M., and Gareth R. Jones, *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 544.

Greenberg, J., and Robert A. Baron, *Behavior in Organizations*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 351–53.

Kimmel, A. J., *Rumors and Rumor Control* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2004), http://books.google.com/books?id=a0FZz3Jq8lIC&pg=PA64&lpg=PA64&dq=rumors+about+Coke&source=web&ots=wtBktafiKZ&sig=HbsDm2Byd0ZPkZH2YUWITwWTDac&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=6&ct=result (accessed October 11, 2011).

Kramer, M. G., *Business Communication in Context: Principles and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 87.

McConnell, C. R., "Controlling the Grapevine," *Small Business Toolbox*, June 18, 2008, http://www.nfib.com/object/IO_37650?_templateId=315 (accessed September 6, 2008).

Netzley, M., and Craig Snow, *Guide to Report Writing* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 3–21.

Russell, R. S., and Bernard W. Taylor, *Operations Management*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005), 85.

Tannen, D., *Talking 9 to 5: Women and Men at Work* (New York: Avon, 1995).

Thill, J. V., and Courtland L. Bovée, *Excellence in Business Communication*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 4–6.

Tsui, A. S., and Barbara A. Gutek, *Demographic Differences in Organizations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 91–95, http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=Rr8jYPKF0hoC&dq=Tsui%2BGutek&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=svMB027a6s&sig=pQForzFKUkbWr1HbNBBLE42EoL0&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result (accessed September 9, 2008).

Watson, S. A., "Sharing Info and Defusing Rumors Helps Keep Staff Motivated During Layoffs," ZDNet, July 29, 2003, http://www.zdnetasia.com/sharing-info-and-defusing-rumors-helps-keep-staff-motivated-during-layoffs-39140816.htm (accessed October 11, 2011).

Whetten, D. A., and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 243.

Exploring Business by University of Minnesota is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

10.6

Barada, P. W., "Confront Your Fears and Communicate," http://career-advice.monster.com/in-the-office/workplace-issues/confront-your-fears-and-communicate/article.aspx (accessed October 11, 2011).

Carnegie, D., "Presentation Tips from Dale Carnegie Training," Dale Carnegie, http://www.erinhoops.ca/LobbyingHandbook/Presentation_Tips.htm (accessed October 11, 2011).

College Board, "Writing: A Ticket to Work…or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders," *Report of the National Commission on Writing*, September 2004, http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf(accessed October 11, 2011).

Iasted, "Making PowerPoint Slides—Avoiding the Pitfalls of Bad Slides," http://www.iasted.org/conferences/formatting/Presentations-Tips.ppt (accessed October 11, 2011).

Jerz, D. G., and Jessica Bauer, "Writing Effective E-Mail: Top 10 Email Tips," *Jerz's Literacy Weblog*, March 8. 2011, http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/e-text/email/ (accessed October 19, 2011).

Exploring Business by University of Minnesota is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Chapter 11

Beebe, S. [Steven], Beebe, S. [Susan], & Redmond, M. (2002). *Interpersonal communication relating to others* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Mehrabian, A. (1972). *Nonverbal communication*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Atherton.

Seiler, W., & Beall, M. (2000). *Communication: Making connections* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Zuckerman, M., DePaulo, B., & Rosenthal, R. (1981). Verbal and nonverbal communication of deception. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 14*, 1–59.

Business Communication for Success by University of Minnesota is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.