

Writing in Organizations

Writing in an organization is similar to other types of writing in that it is a creative process and a communicative act. Writing in organizations involves a problem-solving process requiring that one analyze situations, make decisions, and inform others of those decisions.

When writing for organizations, you should be able to

- write correspondence for a business reader by keeping in mind your reader's needs.
- apply a systematic process to plan, organize, and revise business messages.
- write routine messages that conform to established rules of writing. Such messages include e-mail messages, memos, and faxes.
- write more demanding messages such as routine letters and goodwill messages, persuasive and sales messages, and negative (bad news) messages.
- plan and prepare complex messages such as business reports, proposals, and formal reports.

What is Good Writing?

Good writing for organizations is clear, concise, simple, and to the point.

Clear communication in organizations demands good writing that

- uses direct sentences. Begin with a subject, followed by an active verb and an object (subject + verb + object) (See these links for more about subjects and predicates: http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/egh/recognition_of_sentence_parts.php#subject_recognition
http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/egh/recognition_of_sentence_parts.php#predicate_recognition.)
- communicates ideas, facts, and feelings to a reader clearly and without overstatement
- communicates information using a minimum number of words to make a point
- uses words for their precise meaning
- leaves no doubt or confusion in the reader's mind about the intent of a message
- describes the course of action the writer wants the reader (or group of readers) to follow
- lets ideas and facts speak for themselves, rather than drawing attention to the writer's style

- guides readers through complex information using graphic charts and images
- organizes information with headings as reference points
- uses typography and text formatting to guide the reader
- uses parallelism to create coherent patterns and provide balance to a text.

- adopts a client view, also known as a “you view.”

What is Poor Writing?

Poor writing for organizations

- emphasizes nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, rather than active verbs (See this link for more: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/02/> .)
- uses indirect sentence constructions, passive voice, and filler expressions such as “there is” or “it is said that”
- includes vague abstract noun concepts

Follow steps that guide you to write efficiently for a business reader

Step1: Prewriting (Preparing to Write)

1. Analyze the situation that you confront. Ask yourself:
 - What do you want to communicate to a reader or to a group of readers?
 - What does a reader need to know, do, or think about?
 - How can you communicate this information effectively, clearly, and directly?
 - Can your reader or readers act on the information you communicate in a way that provides the results you hoped for?

Sort out facts, ideas, and feelings that you need to clarify before you start writing.

Gather the information you need.

Step 2: Writing (Work with Key Information Your Reader Requires)

1. Organize key information into a loose outline. (See this link for more: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/> .)
2. Check your outline to ensure it presents key information most effectively.
3. Write as clearly and concisely as possible. (See this link for more: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/01/> .)

4. Learn to recognize several styles for writing business correspondence, including
 - author-centred writing (“I” view) and reader-centred writing (“you” view)
 - direct text construction (to-the-point) and indirect text construction (delayed impact)
 - informative style (factual) and persuasive style (opinionated)
 - descriptive writing (“as is”) and reflective writing (“as could or should be”)
 - formal (professional) and informal (cordial) tone.

Learn to format different types of texts into memos, letters, and short reports, including

- internal and external memos
- informative and persuasive memos
- good news and bad news letters
- request and reply letters
- testimonial and sales letters
- analytical and informative reports.

Step 3: Revising (Make Your Text Clear, Concise, Organized, and Readable)

1. Proofread your text for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
2. Evaluate your text to consider whether it meets the goal you want it to reach.