



Business Writing

GLOBAL COURSEWARE

Getting Started

Writing is a key method of communication for most people, and it's one that many people struggle with.

Here is a refresher on basic writing concepts such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation and provide an overview of the most common business documents.

Workshop Objectives



- Gain awareness of common spelling and grammar issues
- Review basic concepts of sentence and paragraph construction
- Understand the basic structure of agendas, email messages, business letters, business proposals, and business reports



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When all other means of communication fail, try words.

Anonymous

MODULE TWO

Working With Words

The building blocks of any writing, whether for business or social purposes, are words. Failure to use words properly can affect the over-all impact of your prose.



Spelling

A misspelled word can reflect negatively on your image. It may also result in confusion in meaning.

Grammar

Grammar violations in a business document can reflect negatively on a professional or a company.





Creating a Cheat Sheet

The number of spelling and grammar rules can feel daunting, but you don't have to memorize everything.

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- Spelling
- Grammar
- Creating a Cheat Sheet

Module Two: Review Questions

1. Which of the following statements is true?

A. Using the spelling resources takes too much time

B. Every word in English can be spelled only one way

C. There are acceptable spelling variations in different kinds of English

D. It is not important if you make a mistake with a commonly misused word

Module Two: Review Questions

2. Which of the following IS NOT a good advice for improving your spelling?

A. Using the spell-check function in your software

B. Taking note of words often mistaken for each other

C. Noting friendly rules in spelling

D. Learning harder words by heart

Module Two: Review Questions

3. Which of the following is one of the two grammar issues most business writers have trouble with?

A. Verb tenses

B. Articles

C. Conditionals

D. Direct and indirect speech

Module Two: Review Questions

4. Which of the following is an example of past perfect?

A. Mr. Myers was sitting in a meeting when the client called

B. Mr. Myers sat in a meeting when the client called

C. Mr. Myers had been sitting in a meeting when the client called

D. Mr. Myers has sat in a meeting when the client called

Module Two: Review Questions

5. Which of the following is not a common part of the cheat sheet?

A. Example

B. Issue

C. Rules

D. Hints

Module Two: Review Questions

6. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Cheat sheet is used for easier learning by heart

B. Cheat sheet is written simple

C. Bullet points can make a cheat sheet more effective

D. Some cheat sheets are poems, alliterations, and songs



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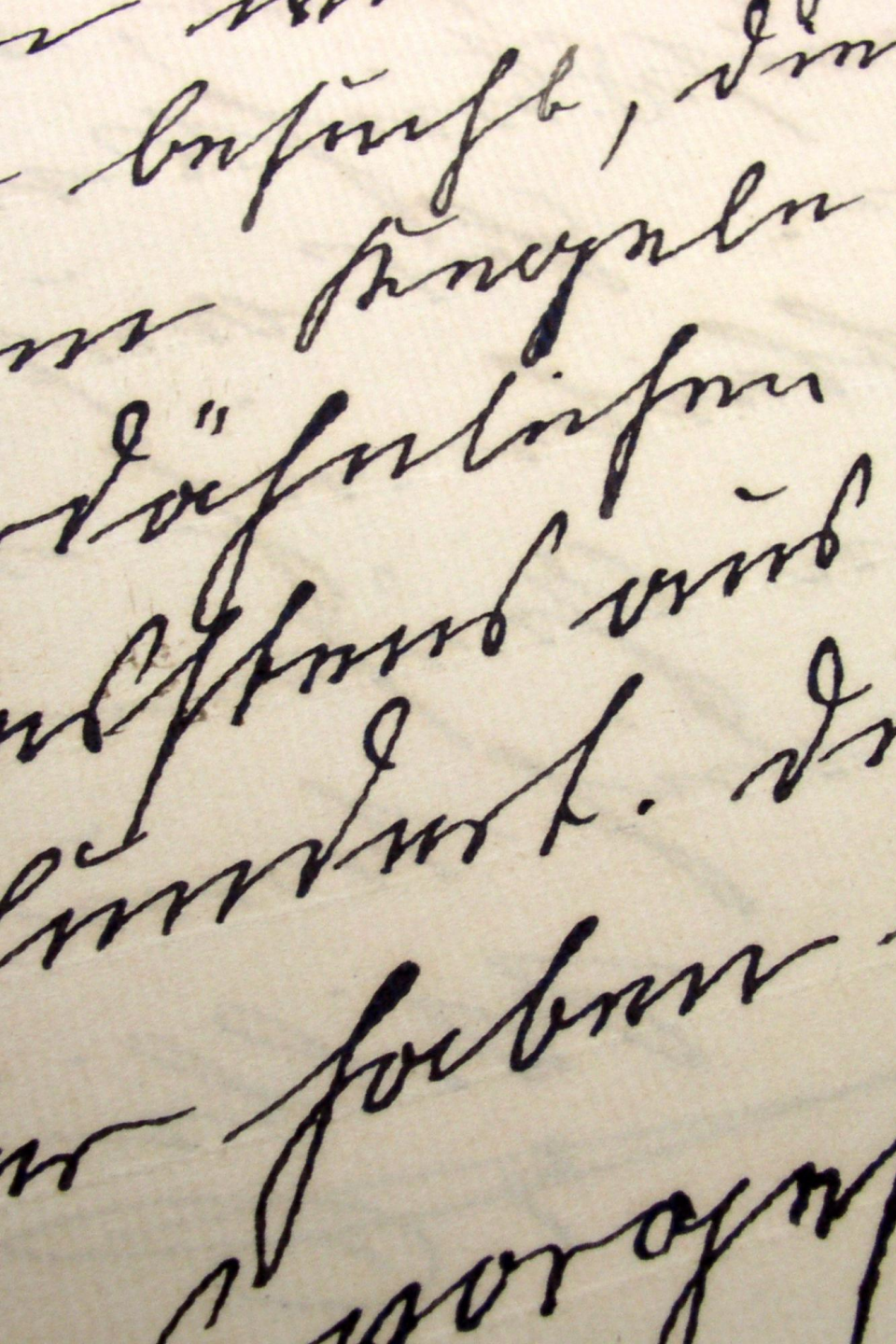
Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style.

Matthew Arnold

MODULE THREE

Constructing Sentences

Now that we have a basic understanding of how to use words more effectively in business writing, it's time to look at sentences. This module will discuss the parts of a sentence, its proper punctuation, and the four kinds of sentences.



Parts of a Sentence

A complete sentence has two parts: a subject and a predicate.

Punctuation

- Period
- Apostrophe
- Exclamation point
- Question mark
- Colon





Types of Sentences

Declarative

Interrogative

Imperative

Exclamatory

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- Parts of a Sentence
- Punctuation
- Types of Sentences

Module Three: Review Questions

1. Which of the following is a necessary part of a complete sentence?

A. Apposition

B. Attribute

C. Predicate

D. Adverbial clause

Module Three: Review Questions

2. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Subjects and predicate can be simple and complex

B. Length determines what a subject and a predicate is

C. Complete sentences are advisable in business writing

D. The subject is usually a noun or pronoun

Module Three: Review Questions

3. Which of the following refers to comma? (,)

A. It is used to mean “note what follows”

B. It is used to link independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction

C. It is used after statements expressed with strong emotion

D. It is used to separate items in a series

Module Three: Review Questions

4. Which of the following is typically succeeded by an elaboration, summation, interpretation of what it precedes?

A. Comma (,)

B. Semicolon (;)

C. Colon (:)

D. Apostrophe (')

Module Three: Review Questions

5. Which of the following statements refers to exclamatory sentences?

A. These sentences don't necessarily follow the format of subject + predicate

B. These are sentences that express strong feeling

C. These are sentences that give a command or make a request

D. These are the most commonly used sentence type in business writing

Module Three: Review Questions

6. Recognize the type of the following sentence: *Please inform Joseph that we would be expecting his payment on Monday.*

A. Declarative

B. Exclamatory

C. Imperative

D. Interrogative



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Clutter is the disease of American writing. We are a society strangling with unnecessary words, circular constructions, pompous frills and meaningless jargons.

William Zinsser

MODULE FOUR

Creating Paragraphs

Carefully written words and well-constructed sentences make up the building blocks of writing. Now it's time to discuss how you can put these blocks together for best results.



The Basic Parts

Topic sentence

Supporting sentence

Closing sentence

Organization Methods

- Keep your main idea central
- Decide how to best explain your main idea
- Outline first before starting on any writing



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- The Basic Parts
- Organization methods

Module Four: Review Questions

1. Which of the following IS NOT one of the basic parts of a paragraph?

A. Topic sentence

B. Interesting information

C. Supporting sentence

D. Closing sentence

Module Four: Review Questions

2. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Not all paragraphs have to contain these three basic parts

B. Understanding the basic parts of a paragraph ensures that your writing is clear and focused

C. Basic parts serve as a good guideline in creating cohesive paragraphs

D. There are four basic parts of a paragraph

Module Four: Review Questions

3. Which of the following IS NOT a tip stated in the previous module?

A. Keep your main idea central

B. Whenever possible, outline first before starting on any writing

C. Always try to enrich your writing with some interesting information

D. Decide how to best explain your main idea

Module Four: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. It is recommendable to weed out information that does not support your main idea

B. When you begin writing a business document, it is recommendable to have a central idea, but it is not necessary

C. The facts that support your idea should be presented in a logical order

D. An outline will give you an idea of how the topic will play out

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Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it's not all mixed up.

A.A. Milne



Writing Meeting Agendas

Time is a precious commodity in business; you cannot afford to have discussions go all over the place. This is why agendas are an integral part in keeping meetings focused, organized, and flowing well.



The Basic Structure

An agenda keeps the discussion on track and the meeting within schedule.

Choosing a Format

When the attendees are going to view the agenda

The context of the meeting

The purpose of the agenda





Writing the Agenda

- Priority of items
- Logical flow
- Timing

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- The Basic Structure
- Choosing a Format
- Writing the Agenda

Module Five: Review Questions

1. The basic structure of an agenda DOES NOT include:

A. Purpose of the meeting

B. Advanced preparation guidelines

C. The expected outcome of the meeting

D. Date, time, location, and estimated duration of the meeting

Module Five: Review Questions

2. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. It is recommended that you state items for discussion using results-oriented action words

B. You should advise attendees what they need to bring to the meeting

C. "Decide on which vendor to award Sunrise account to." is a better agenda item than "Sunrise Account"

D. It is impossible to determine how much time will you approximately spend on each agenda item

Module Five: Review Questions

3. Which of the following IS NOT something the agenda format depends on?

A. When the attendees are going to view the agenda

B. The estimated time of the meeting

C. The purpose of the agenda

D. The context of the meeting

Module Five: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Agendas for meetings that happen regularly are usually as detailed as other agendas

B. Word processing software offers agenda templates and agenda wizards

C. It is recommended to distribute the agendas days before meeting

D. Some agendas are meant as orientations

Module Five: Review Questions

5. When considering the timing of a meeting you should plan for :

A. 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes

B. 1 hour to 2 hours

C. 30 minutes to 3 hours

D. There is no recommended limit

Module Five: Review Questions

6. Which of the following IS NOT a factor you need to consider when you write an agenda?

A. Logical flow

B. Priority of items

C. Timing

D. The number of attendees



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Almost overnight the internet has gone from a technical wonder to a business must.

Bill Schrader

MODULE SIX

Writing Emails

Email is a convenient and effective medium to conduct business communication. In this module we will discuss etiquette guidelines on how to address an email message, as well as grammar and acronyms rules in the letter body.



Addressing Your Message

- Using the 'To' field
- Using the 'Cc' field
- Using the "Bcc" field

Grammar and Acronyms

Remember that business emails require the same formality as any business letter.



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- Addressing Your Message
- Grammar and Acronyms

Module Six: Review Questions

1. When do we use the “Cc” field?

A. When we are sending a direct message to someone

B. When we want to send a copy of the email to people who are not meant to be the direct recipients of the message

C. When we want the recipients to be ‘blind’ to other recipients’ email address

D. The “Cc” field is usually out of usage

Module Six: Review Questions

2. If a manager has ordered his secretary to send a memo to everyone in the department, the secretary should:

A. Place all the department employees' email address on the 'To' section, and the manager's email address on the 'Cc' field

B. Place all the email addresses on the 'To' section

C. Place all the email addresses on the 'Cc' field

D. Place all the email addresses on the 'Bcc' field

Module Six: Review Questions

3. Which of the following statements is true?

A. Online mediums of communication have developed its own vocabulary which is now accepted in business emails as well

B. The abbreviated expressions are acceptable in business emails, but only if they are wide known, for example: LOL, BTW

C. Business emails the same formality as any business letter

D. Emoticons are also an integral part of business emails nowadays

Module Six: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements is true?

A. It is important to follow the rules of good grammar

B. Tiny grammar mistakes do not give a bad impression

C. If you make one of the common grammar mistakes, that's not so important

D. It is okay to make a grammar mistake as long as the email is clear



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What a lot we lost when we stopped writing letters. You can't reread a phone call.

William Zinsser

Writing Business Letters

Corresponding via letters is a large part of doing business. More than sending a message, business letters are a way to establish rapport, clarify work expectations, and even affirm and encourage co-workers.



The Basic Structure

- Sender's full name and address
- Addressee's full name and address
- Date the letter is sent
- Formal Salutation

Choosing a Format

- Stage of relationship
- Seniority of recipient
- Letter's privacy





Writing the Letter

There are many types of business letters and each type has suggested content and formats.

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- The Basic Structure
- Choosing a Format
- Writing the Letter

Module Seven: Review Questions

1. In which case can we use informal style in a business letter?

A. If it is a shorter letter

B. If we already have an established relationship with the recipient

C. If the letter contains already known information

D. If we are writing to a person who is on a lower position than we are

Module Seven: Review Questions

2. Which of the following IS NOT a necessary part of a business letter?

A. Name and Signature of the Sender

B. Formal Salutation

C. Date the letter is sent

D. Warm and friendly closing

Module Seven: Review Questions

3. Which of the following IS NOT something your letter's format depends on?

A. The seniority of the recipient

B. Your letter's privacy

C. The stage of your working relationship with the letter recipient

D. The content of the letter

Module Seven: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements is true?

A. If a person replies in an informal manner, then you may take it as permission to do the same

B. If a person replies in an informal manner, that's considered to be unprofessional

C. If a person replies in an informal manner, you answer the same at your own risk

D. If a person replies in an informal manner, you still must refer to your company culture

Module Seven: Review Questions

5. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Even if the letter is informal, you have to follow the grammar rules

B. It is good to personalize your business letter

C. Writing in positive tone usually seems to intimate

D. Each type of formal letters has own specific format

Module Seven: Review Questions

6. Which of the following IS NOT a common type of business letters?

A. Letter of requirement

B. Letter of inquiry

C. Letter of congratulations

D. Letter of application



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To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful.

Edward R. Murrow

MODULE EIGHT

Writing Proposals

It is not just in face-to-face interactions that we have to put our best foot forward. The same can be said in written correspondence, more particularly when you are submitting a business proposal.



The Basic Structure

A business proposal is an unsolicited or solicited bid for business. A proposal is usually written to another company or institution.

Choosing a Format

- Intended recipient of the proposal
- The scale/ scope of the project





Writing the Proposal

Targeted

Well substantiated

Persuasive

Organized

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- The Basic Structure
- Choosing a Format
- Writing the Proposal

Module Eight: Review Questions

1. Which of the following IS NOT one of the deliverables in the basic structure of a business proposal?

A. Why

B. What

C. When

D. How much

Module Eight: Review Questions

2. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. A proposal is usually written to another company or institution

B. Companies can require their local departments to write proposals

C. At its very basic level, a business proposal answers three things

D. A business proposal is an unsolicited or solicited bid for business

Module Eight: Review Questions

3. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. There is no one universal format for business proposals

B. There are no rules when choosing the format – it is all individual

C. As a guide, you can take your cue from the way the Request for Proposal is written

D. Proposals submitted through online marketplaces do not require much structure

Module Eight: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Additional information like your business plan and financial statement can be requested with the proposal

B. Deliverables that don't require much technical explanation can be presented in bullet form

C. Large projects require a concise proposal

D. Proposals for smaller tasks can be written using a more informal format

Module Eight: Review Questions

5. A good business proposal DOES NOT have to be:

A. Targeted

B. Persuasive

C. Organized

D. Detailed

Module Eight: Review Questions

6. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Unsolicited proposal requires a harder 'sell' than solicited ones

B. It is recommended to give generic content

C. It is recommended to keep your tone proactive and optimistic

D. A winning proposal is easy to evaluate

Module Eight: Review Questions

7. The _____ needs to be completely scripted.

A. Beginning

B. Beginning and end

C. End

D. Entire presentation

Module Eight: Review Questions

8. What will help keep you on topic for parts that aren't completely scripted?

A. Nothing

B. Rehearsing

C. Slides

D. Bullet points

Module Eight: Review Questions

9. What is the main difference between webinars and other types of presentations?

A. The audience is present

B. The audience is not physically present

C. Stock photos are more important

D. The script is very detailed



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I notice that you use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English --- it is the modern way and the best way.

Mark Twain

Writing Reports

Sometimes documentation is the only way supervisors can monitor the company's quality of work. At other times, documentation is the key to spotting best and worst practices.

A wooden chess king piece stands on top of a 3x3x3 wooden cube. The cube is constructed from light and dark wood blocks, creating a checkerboard pattern on its top surface. The king piece is dark wood with a cross-shaped top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The Basic Structure

- Overview
- Background/ Project Scope
- Main Body
- Conclusions

Choosing a Format

The purpose of the report

The seniority of your readers

The scale of the project





Writing the Report

Keep the purpose in mind

Stick to objective data

Write to your audience

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- The Basic Structure
- Choosing a Format
- Writing the Report

Module Nine: Review Questions

1. Which of the following IS NOT one of the basic parts of a business report?

A. Overview

B. Conclusions

C. Interesting details

D. Main body

Module Nine: Review Questions

2. Business reports are used for:

A. Providing a written record of a topic, project or process

B. Analyzing a certain topic, project, or process

C. Solving the problems in certain topic, project, or process

D. None of the above

Module Nine: Review Questions

3. The format of the business report DOES NOT depend on:

A. The purpose of the report

B. The seniority of your readers

C. The scale of the project

D. The time available for writing
the report

Module Nine: Review Questions

4. What should you include when you answer a question live?

A. Number of times it is asked

B. Name of participant who submitted it

C. Opinion of the question

D. All of the above

Module Nine: Review Questions

5. Which of the following statements is true?

A. Asking the person who has requested the report about the expectations can be useful

B. Asking the person who has requested the report about the expectations is forbidden

C. Asking the person who has requested the report about the expectations is unprofessional

D. Asking the person who has requested the report about the expectations is not recommended

Module Nine: Review Questions

6. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Reports are meant to be fact-based and impartial

B. Reports are written so that you can present the company's performance in the best possible light

C. Reports should be at least double-checked

D. Reports can be truly useful only when they are accurate



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Good writing is the result of good planning and clear thinking.

Warren Bennis

Other Types of Documents

There are many types of documents used in business aside from agenda, business reports, and proposals: the Request for Proposals, Projections, Executive Summaries, and Business Cases.



Request For Proposals

- What the project is
- What *exactly* do you require as output (your deliverables)
- How proposals would be reviewed
- Your contact information

Projections

Projections are documents that show estimates of future performance.





Executive Summaries

Company Mission Statement

Management and Staff

Market and Customer

Your Competitive Edge

Business Cases

A business case is documentation about a specific process, project, or situation.



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- Requests for Proposals
- Projections
- Executive Summaries
- Business Cases

Module Ten: Review Questions

1. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. RFPs inform the public that you are in the look-out for potential partners in an endeavor

B. A well-written RFP can help you source out vendors and service providers who fit well with your needs and objectives

C. RFP is never longer than 1 – 2 pages

D. There is no one right format for the RFP

Module Ten: Review Questions

2. Which of the following IS NOT among the minimum required explanations of the RFP?

A. Your deliverables

B. How proposals would be reviewed

C. Your contact information

D. Specific legal stipulations

Module Ten: Review Questions

3. The most common type of projection document is:

A. Financial projection

B. Project projection

C. Business cooperation projection

D. Meeting outcome projection

Module Ten: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. Projections are documents that show estimates of future performance, alongside data that can substantiate your predictions

B. You can place your numerical data with the text

C. You cannot place your numerical data in the activity folder

D. Some projection documents present case scenarios, showing predictions based on changes in particular variables

Module Ten: Review Questions

5. Which of the following statements is true?

A. An executive summary is a 1-2 page abstract of a business plan

B. An executive summary is a 10-12 page abstract of a business plan

C. An executive summary is a 10-20 page abstract of a business plan

D. An executive summary is a 12-20 page abstract of a business plan

Module Ten: Review Questions

6. Which of the following statements is true?

A. It is recommended that you write an executive summary before you've written the entire business plan

B. It is recommended that you write an executive summary after you've written the entire business plan

C. Sometimes it is better to write an executive summary before, and sometimes after writing the entire business plan

D. It is all the same

Module Ten: Review Questions

7. A business case is very similar to:

A. Business report

B. Executive summary

C. Business plan

D. Request for proposal

Module Ten: Review Questions

8. A business case usually DOES NOT contain:

A. Expected costs of the project

B. Request for proposal

C. Problems encountered

D. Executive summary

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Make sure you always proofread. You'll never know if you've missed a out.

Anonymous

MODULE ELEVEN

Proofreading and Finishing

The writing process does not end with getting the words on paper or on screen. You also need to review your work carefully, make sure that it's free from errors.



A Proofreading Primer

Proofreading is the systematic check for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and typographical errors.

How Peer Review Can Help

Peer review is the process of submitting your work to the scrutiny of another writer.





Printing and Publishing

It is important that you take time to anticipate printing and publishing issues when writing.

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- A Proofreading Primer
- How Peer Review Can Help
- Printing and Publishing

Module Eleven: Review Questions

1. Proofreading DOES NOT check:

A. Punctuation

B. Accuracy

C. Spelling

D. Grammar

Module Eleven: Review Questions

2. Which of the following statements is true?

A. You shouldn't do the proofreading right after the writing

B. Checking functions in word processing programs are absolutely reliable

C. Proofreading is the same as editing

D. You can check several errors simultaneously to save time

Module Eleven: Review Questions

3. What is the goal of a peer review?

A. Saving time

B. Simplifying the work

C. Avoiding the unnecessary responsibilities

D. Getting a constructive feedback

Module Eleven: Review Questions

4. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. The peer reviewer gets to develop their proofreading and editing skills

B. Any team member can be a good peer reviewer

C. Peer review can be done 'blindly', with the identity of the writers kept from the reviewer

D. The peer review helps writers to get an insight in how their work comes across to one reader

Module Eleven: Review Questions

5. Which of the following statements IS NOT true?

A. If a manuscript looks perfect on the screen, it will look perfect as printed version

B. Opening a document using different software, or an outdated software version, from the original can result in formatting errors

C. Images of a low pixel count may not translate well on print

D. Typesetting can introduce errors in a text that weren't there before

Module Eleven: Review Questions

6. Which of the following IS NOT a necessary step before printing and publishing?

A. Checking the 'print preview' option

B. Checking your publisher for guidelines on what quality of graphics, pictures and clip arts you should use

C. Printing several versions until you get the right one

D. Having a print draft for review before making many copies

Wrapping Up

Although this workshop is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to understanding Business Writing is just beginning.



Words From the Wise

In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.

- Yogi Berra

Plans are nothing; planning is everything.

- Dwight Eisenhower

The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.

- Jonas Salk