



Business and Report Writing

Learn how to plan and write reports that are clear, well-structured and polite, and how to edit these reports to be error free and flawlessly professional.

Course duration: 20 hours

DOCUMENT PLANNING

Planning helps you decide what you want to say and how to say it. It helps ensure all relevant information is included and the message flows logically. Learn how to plan and structure all types of documents (including persuasive documents) using an easy to use, step by step model for planning.

Estimated duration: 2 hours

PRE-ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT PLANNING (20 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: PLANNING MODEL (30 MINUTES)

- Learn why it is important to plan your documents and know the steps to the Planning Model.
- Learn how to use the Planning Worksheet to help plan written work.
- Use the planning steps to effectively plan a document.

LESSON 2: PERSUASIVE DOCUMENTS (20 MINUTES)

- Learn what the Persuasive Model is and how it can help you write convincing arguments.
- Use the steps to effectively plan a persuasive document.

ACTIVITY: RECOMMENDATION REPORT (30 MINUTES)

- Practise using the Planning Model to evaluate and edit a persuasive document.

ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT PLANNING (20 MINUTES)

DOCUMENT INTRODUCTION AND CLOSING

All documents need to be clearly divided into three separate sections, namely the introduction, body and closing. Learn what to include in the introduction and closing and how to draft them effectively.

Estimated duration: 45 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT INTRODUCTION AND CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: THREE DOCUMENT SECTIONS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn about the three sections of all documents and how important they are to the document effectiveness.
- Practise identifying when a document has or doesn't have the three sections.

LESSON 2: INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

- Understand what is required to make a communication purpose statement complete and accurate.
- Practise identifying complete and incomplete communication purpose statements.
- Practise identifying effective and ineffective introductions.

LESSON 3: CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

- Learn what to include in the closing of your document.
- Practise identifying effective and ineffective closings.

ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT INTRODUCTION AND CLOSING (10 MINUTES)

DOCUMENT OUTLINE AND BODY

The body of a document provides the details for the reader in a logical framework that makes the document's message easy to read and scan. Learn how to write the document's body from the reader's perspective and batch the content with an apparent and systematic structure and substructure. Practise using techniques to structure information.

Estimated duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT OUTLINE AND BODY (15 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: CONTENT STRUCTURE (15 MINUTES)

- Learn about document structure and substructure and how it can be used to assist with document readability.
- Correctly structure a planned document.

LESSON 2: COMMUNICATION PURPOSE (5 MINUTES)

- Ensure the subject is not treated too narrowly or too broadly, and the substance is accurate and sufficiently detailed.
- Check if the document achieves the communication purpose.

LESSON 3: REFERENCE SYSTEM (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the two main ways to reference sources in business documents.
- Identify and correct errors in written references.

LESSON 4: OUTLINE FORMAT (15 MINUTES)

- Learn how to structure an outline to be logical and to follow a pattern to highlight vertical and horizontal relationships between groups.
- Use a combination of format options consistently to distinguish headings from text.
- Identify and correct faulty heading format.

LESSON 5: HEADINGS (10 MINUTES)

- Learn how to write a descriptive subject heading or title and know why it is important to do so.
- Identify descriptive and non-descriptive subject headings or titles.

LESSON 6: OUTLINE HEADINGS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn how to word headings and subheadings to follow parallel construct, and be able to identify incorrect heading progression.
- Learn the difference between topic and talking headings.
- Ensure the headings accurately reflect the content that follows them.

ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT OUTLINE AND BODY (15 MINUTES)

DOCUMENT TONE

Tone in writing expresses the attitude of the writer about a certain subject at that moment. Learn how to draft documents maintaining a positive, professional and polite tone, even when delivering a negative message.

Estimated duration: 1 hour

PRE-ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT TONE (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: POSITIVE TONE (30 MINUTES)

- Learn how to maintain a positive, professional and polite tone (even when delivering a negative message).

LESSON 2: POSITIVE WORDS (10 MINUTES)

- Use positive language and in conflict situations make careful word choices to avert negative repercussions, alienation and misunderstandings.

ASSESSMENT: DOCUMENT TONE (10 MINUTES)

COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

Learn about the four most common grammatical errors and how to check for and correct them.

Estimated duration: 45 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: PRONOUN REFERENCE AGREEMENT (10 MINUTES)

- Define pronoun reference agreement problem.
- Identify when pronoun reference agreement problems exist in text.
- Practise correcting faulty pronoun reference agreement problems.

LESSON 2: SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT (10 MINUTES)

- Define subject verb agreement problem.
- Identify when subject verb agreement problems exist in text.
- Practise correcting faulty subject verb agreement problems.

LESSON 3: VAGUE WORD AND PRONOUN REFERENCE (10 MINUTES)

- Define vague word and pronoun reference problem.
- Identify vague word and pronoun problems in text.
- Practise correcting vague word and pronoun reference problems.

LESSON 4: DANGLING AND MISPLACED MODIFIERS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn the difference between dangling and misplaced modifiers.
- Identify dangling and misplaced modifiers in text.
- Practise correcting dangling and misplaced modifiers.

ASSESSMENT: COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS (10 MINUTES)

WORD CHOICES AND SPELLING

Learn to use correct word choices in commonly abused, misused, confused and misspelled words.

Estimated duration: 1 hour and 15 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: WORD CHOICES AND SPELLING (15 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: WORD CHOICES (20 MINUTES)

- Identify the commonly abused, misused and confused words when writing business documents.
- Practise identifying and correcting faulty word choices and spelling mistakes.

LESSON 2: SEXIST AND POLITICALLY INCORRECT WORDS (10 MINUTES)

- Define sexist language and understand why you need to avoid it when writing business documents.
- Identify the main sexist language faults and correct them.
- Learn the preferred wording for salutations and complimentary closes.

LESSON 3: SPELLING (15 MINUTES)

- Identify the most common spelling, typing and word use mistakes when writing business documents.
- Identify and correct faulty spelling.

ASSESSMENT: WORD CHOICES AND SPELLING (15 MINUTES)

PUNCTUATION AND CASE

Learn how to edit documents according to the rules for punctuating words, sentences, paragraphs and shortened forms. Also learn how to use case correctly and consistently.

Estimated duration: 2 hours

PRE-ASSESSMENT: PUNCTUATION AND CASE (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: APOSTROPHES (15 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct use of apostrophes.
- Identify and correct faulty apostrophe use.

LESSON 2: COMMAS (20 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct use of commas.
- Identify and correct faulty comma use.

LESSON 3: COMMON PUNCTUATION MARKS (15 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct use of periods/full stops, semicolons, colons, hyphens, dashes and slashes.
- Identify and correct faulty use of these punctuation marks in text.

LESSON 4: QUESTION AND EXCLAMATION MARKS (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct use of question marks and exclamation marks.
- Identify and correct faulty use of these punctuation marks in text.

LESSON 5: SALUTATIONS AND COMPLIMENTARY CLOSES (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct punctuation and case in names, salutations and complimentary closes.
- Identify and correct faulty punctuation and case usage.

LESSON 6: SHORTENED FORMS (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct punctuation and case in different types of shortened forms.
- Identify and correct faulty punctuation and case usage in shortened forms.

LESSON 7: ADDRESSES (5 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct punctuation and case in addresses.
- Identify and correct faulty punctuation and case usage in addresses.

LESSON 8: BRACKETS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct punctuation and case when using brackets.
- Identify and correct faulty punctuation and case usage.

LESSON 9: QUOTATION MARKS (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct punctuation and case when using quotation marks.
- Identify and correct faulty punctuation and case usage.

LESSON 10: CASE (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct use of case in common nouns, proper nouns and titles.
- Identify and correct faulty case usage

ASSESSMENT: PUNCTUATION AND CASE (10 MINUTES)

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Learn how to edit to ensure good sentence construction and parallel construct in text. Also learn how to check for correct use of the active voice. Practise editing documents to ensure an overall consistent approach.

Estimated duration: 1 hour and 45 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION (15 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: SENTENCES (25 MINUTES)

- Learn what the read aloud test (RAT) is and how to use it effectively.
- Understand the importance of good sentence construction in business writing.
- Define the three elements of a complete sentence (or independent clause).
- Learn the three basic sentence construction faults.
- Identify and repair the three sentence construction faults.

LESSON 2: PARALLEL CONSTRUCT (20 MINUTES)

- Learn what parallel construct means.
- Understand why using correct parallel construct is important.
- Identify and main grammar forms used in parallel construct.
- Learn the five main parallel construct situations.
- Identify faulty parallel construct using a set of guidelines.
- Learn how to repair faulty parallel construct.

LESSON 3: ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE (10 MINUTES)

- Learn what active and passive voice means.
- Understand why the preference in business correspondence is the active voice.
- Learn the situations where it is more appropriate to use the passive voice.
- Learn to identify the active and passive voice.
- Practise identifying active and passive voice and their appropriate use.

LESSON 4: TENSE (5 MINUTES)

- Learn about the three basic tenses.
- Understand the tense consistency guidelines.
- Identify and correct tense consistency problems.

LESSON 5: FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PERSON WRITING (15 MINUTES)

- Learn what is meant by person or point of view in business writing, and understand the guidelines for using person or point of view.
- Identify first person writing and its appropriate use.
- Identify second person writing (or the you orientation) and its appropriate use.
- Identify third person writing and its appropriate use.

ASSESSMENT: SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION (15 MINUTES)

LISTS AND BULLET POINTS

Learn the rules for wording, punctuating and using case in bulleted, numbered or general lists.

Estimated duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes

PRE-ASSESSMENT: LISTS AND BULLET POINTS (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: LEADER SENTENCES AND LEADER PHRASES (5 MINUTES)

- Learn the difference between leader sentences and phrases.
- Learn when to use leader sentences and leader phrases.
- Identify leader sentences and phrases.
- Identify the appropriate use of leader sentences and phrases.
- Learn how to fix inappropriate use of leader sentences and phrases.

- LESSON 2: PARALLEL CONSTRUCT IN LIST ITEMS (30 MINUTES)**
- Learn what parallel construct means.
 - Understand why using correct parallel construct in lists is important.
 - Identify the main grammar forms used in parallel construct.
 - Use the tips to ensuring correct parallel construct.
 - Learn how to use parallel patterns to structure text.
 - Identify incorrect use of parallel construct and fix the errors.

- LESSON 3: PUNCTUATION AND CASE IN LIST ITEMS (30 MINUTES)**
- Learn the punctuation rules for a long sentence, leader sentence and leader phrase.
 - Learn the case rules for leader sentences and phrases.
 - Correct punctuation and case in all types of lists.

- LESSON 4: BULLET POINT PROGRESSION (5 MINUTES)**
- Learn what the correct bullet point progression is in list items and sub-lists.
 - Practise using correct bullet point progression in lists.
 - Learn when to use a numbered list rather than a bulleted list.
 - Learn when to use a list and when to rather use paragraphs.
 - Identify appropriate and inappropriate use of lists.

ASSESSMENT: LISTS AND BULLET POINTS (10 MINUTES)

SENTENCE SPRAWL AND PARAGRAPHS

Learn how to edit long sentences and to check for precise language (plain English). Practise correcting documents to ensure an absence of complicated vocabulary, long-winded phrases, redundancy, colloquial language, clichés and repetition of words. Also learn how to check paragraphs for their core idea and length.

Estimated duration: 1 hour

PRE-ASSESSMENT: SENTENCE SPRAWL AND PARAGRAPHS (10 MINUTES)

- LESSON 1: SENTENCE LENGTH (5 MINUTES)**
- Learn why it is important to use short, well constructed sentences when writing business documents.
 - Learn how to reduce sentence length without changing the main of the sentence.

- LESSON 2: PRECISE LANGUAGE (30 MINUTES)**
- Learn how readers expend energy when reading business documents and how this knowledge will help you write effective sentences.
 - Learn how to write brief sentences that don't include unnecessary words and phrases.
 - Learn how to write clearly and precisely to avoid misinterpretation.
 - Change long unwieldy sentences into brief and clear, short sentences.

- LESSON 3: PARAGRAPHS (5 MINUTES)**
- Learn the rules for correct paragraph construction.
 - Learn how to ensure you use short paragraphs when writing business documents.

ASSESSMENT: SENTENCE SPRAWL AND PARAGRAPHS (10 MINUTES)

NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS

Learn the rules for abbreviating, punctuating, spacing and using case in numbers, digits, telephone numbers, time, currency, common symbols, measurement and dates, and how to check for their correct and consistent use.

Estimated duration: 1 hour

PRE-ASSESSMENT: NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: RULE OF NINE (10 MINUTES)

- Learn what the rule of nine is and how to use it in business documents.
- Learn how to number chapters, and when to use hyphens and when not to use them.
- Identify correct and incorrect use of the rule of nine.

LESSON 2: TELEPHONE NUMBERS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn the acceptable options to use when writing telephone numbers.
- Identify when telephone numbers are written incorrectly and change them to ensure a consistent approach.

LESSON 3: TIME (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the acceptable options to use when writing time.
- Identify correct use of time in business documents and make changes to ensure a consistent approach.

LESSON 4: CURRENCY (5 MINUTES)

- Learn how to write currency correctly and consistently.
- Identify and correct incorrect use of currency in business documents.

LESSON 5: COMMON SYMBOLS (5 MINUTES)

- Learn how to write common symbols and measurements correctly and consistently.
- Identify and correct incorrect use of common symbols and measurement in business documents.

LESSON 6: DATE (5 MINUTES)

- Learn how to write the date correctly and consistency.
- Identify incorrect use of dates in business documents and correct them.

ASSESSMENT: NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS (10 MINUTES)

LAYOUT AND VISUALS

Learn how to edit documents for correct and consistent spacing and page setup including white space ratio, margins, indentations and fonts. Also learn how to check for appropriate use of visuals.

Estimated duration: 1 hour

PRE-ASSESSMENT: LAYOUT AND VISUALS (10 MINUTES)

LESSON 1: SPACING (15 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for correct and consistent spacing in business documents.
- Identify correct and incorrect use of spacing.

LESSON 2: WHITE SPACE RATIO (15 MINUTES)

- Learn the rules for white space on a page.
- Learn the rules for correct use of text alignment, margins, indentations, fonts and page numbering.
- Identify correct and incorrect use of the above layout issues.

LESSON 3: VISUALS (10 MINUTES)

- Learn the correct way to use visuals in business documents.

ASSESSMENT: LAYOUT AND VISUALS (10 MINUTES)

WRITING RESOURCES

Estimated duration: 30 minutes

RESOURCES: CHECKLISTS, NOTES AND PLANNING WORKSHEETS (15 MINUTES)

RESOURCES: DOCUMENT TEMPLATES, EXAMPLES AND STRUCTURES (15 MINUTES)

INTERACTIVE TUTORIALS

Estimated duration per tutorial: 45 minutes

TUTORIAL: GRAMMAR (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that tests grammar knowledge.

TUTORIAL: PLAIN ENGLISH (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that tests ability to write using the plain English guidelines.

TUTORIAL: PAYROLL PROCEDURE (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that shows how an average procedure can be transformed into a clear, effective, well structured and professional document.

TUTORIAL: RESPONSE TO OVERDUE ACCOUNT (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that shows how a poorly written bad news document can be transformed into a clear, polite, well structured and professional document.

TUTORIAL: BUSINESS CASE (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that shows how an ineffective business case can be transformed into a clear, persuasive, well structured and professional document.

TUTORIAL: RETIREMENT FUND DISPUTE (45 MINUTES)

Complete an interactive tutorial that shows how a poorly written sensitive document can be transformed into a clear, polite, well structured and professional document.