



# The Business of Writing

## ONLINE INTERACTIVE COURSES

When you need to write a document, do you stare at a blank page for what seems like ages, not knowing where to begin? If so, the 'big' picture issues are important for you.

### 'BIG' picture issues

#### Substance and structure courses

##### Planning and writing your document

Planning your document in less than 10 minutes
Writing your document's introduction and closing
Writing your document's outline and body
Writing your document with tone in mind

When you review the documents you have written, do you feel they need some 'fine tuning'? If so, editing the 'little' things is important for you.

### 'little' things

#### Style and presentation courses

##### Editing your document

Correcting common grammatical errors
Checking your word choices and spelling
Editing your punctuation and case mistakes
Editing your sentence construction
Editing your lists
Checking for sentence sprawl and inappropriate paragraphing
Correcting your use of numbers and symbols
Editing your document's layout and visuals

For details about each course's lessons and approximate duration, please read on.

**GENERAL PREREQUISITE FOR ALL COURSES:** Learners must speak and write English with some fluency and have no severe literacy problems.

## Planning your document in less than 10 minutes

**Estimated duration: two hours**

**Course prerequisite: none**

### **THE STEP BY STEP PLANNING MODEL**

*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. Contrary to popular belief, knowing how to plan will save you time.*

*Learn how to plan and structure all types of documents in less than 10 minutes using an easy to use, step by step model for planning. Learn some special techniques for writing persuasive documents and practice using the planning model and techniques learned. Learn special techniques on how to plan persuasive documents and practice planning a recommendation report.*

### **PLANNING RESOURCES**

- ❑ *Business Writing Skills Planning Worksheet*
- ❑ *Planning worksheets for a generic polite request, recommendation and procedure*

*Use these 'typical' or generic examples to save you time when writing your own documents.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Plan a document using the step by step Planning Model	45 minutes
Lesson 2:	Plan a persuasive document	10 minutes
Lesson 3:	Practice activity	25 minutes
Resource:	Generic polite request	5 minutes
Resource:	Generic procedure	5 minutes
Assessment:	Planning Model	30 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>Two hours</b>

## Writing your introduction and closing

**Estimated duration: 30 minutes**

**Course prerequisite: None, but *Planning your document* course is highly recommended**

*All documents need to be clearly divided into three separate sections: the introduction, body and closing.*

*Learn what to include in the introduction (purpose and situation) and closing (next step and polite sign off) and how to draft them effectively.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1-4:	Write the introduction and closing	20 minutes
Assessment:	Introduction and closing	10 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>30 minutes</b>

## Writing your document's outline and body

**Estimated duration: one hour and 15 minutes**

**Course prerequisite: None, but *Planning your document* course is highly recommended**

*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. Being able to scan a document is crucial in an age where business people have little time to spare. Structuring an effective document outline increases scanability.*

*In persuasive documents, the body is used to outline clear and convincing relationships between details and conclusions, and between conclusions and recommended actions.*

*Learn how to write the body of your document from the reader's perspective and organise the content with an apparent and systematic structure and sub-structure. Practice using different techniques to structure information and how to evaluate if all relevant information/details are included.*

*Also, learn how to word headings and subheadings to help put information into context for the reader. Finally, learn how to develop the outline and format it to highlight vertical and horizontal relationships between groups.*

### RESOURCES

- Structuring long and short reports
- Structuring manuals and instructions
- Structuring periodic reports
- Structuring research and technical reports

*Use these 'typical' or generic examples and extra information to save you time when writing your own documents.*

LESSON	LESSON NAME	APPROXIMATE TIME
Lesson 1:	Organise content with a structure	10 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check the communication purpose	15 minutes
Lesson 3:	Produce a reference system	15 minutes
Lesson 4:	Check the outline format	10 minutes
Lesson 5:	Write a descriptive heading	5 minutes
Lesson 6:	Check the outline headings	5 minutes
Resource:	Document structures	5 minutes
Assessment:	The outline and body	10 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour and 15 minutes</b>

## Writing your document with tone in mind

**Estimated duration: one hour**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Tone in writing expresses the attitude of the writer at that moment and about a certain subject. It also expresses the attitude the writer has toward the reader. The tone of the written message has the same impact that one's voice tone has on a listener.*

*Learn how to draft your document maintaining a positive, professional and polite tone, even when delivering a negative message. Also learn how to recognise 'trigger' words and make careful word choices to avert negative repercussions.*

LESSON	LESSON NAME	APPROXIMATE TIME
Lesson 1 & 2:	Write your document with tone in mind	45 minutes
Assessment:	Tone	15 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour</b>

## Correcting common grammatical errors

**Estimated duration: one hour**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn what the four most common grammatical errors are and how to check for them and correct them.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Pronoun reference agreement problems	10 minutes
Lesson 2:	Subject verb agreement problems	10 minutes
Lesson 3:	Vague pronoun and word problems	10 minutes
Lesson 4:	Dangling and misplaced modifiers	10 minutes
Assessment:	Common grammatical errors	20 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour</b>

## Checking your word choices and spelling

**Estimated duration: one hour**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn to use correct word choices in commonly abused, misused, confused and misspelled words and to check for common spelling mistakes.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1a:	Check for correct word choices	15 minutes
Lesson 1b:	Check for correct word choices	10 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check for sexist and politically correct words	5 minutes
Lesson 3:	Check for spelling and typing errors	15 minutes
Assessment:	Word choices and spelling	15 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour</b>

## Editing your punctuation and case mistakes

**Estimated duration: two hours**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn the new rules for punctuation, and how to edit your document according to the rules for punctuating words, sentences, paragraphs and shortened forms. Also learn how to use case and capitalisation correctly and consistently.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Check for the correct use of apostrophes	20 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check for the correct use of commas	20 minutes
Lesson 3:	Check for the correct use of commonly used punctuation marks	5 minutes
Lesson 4:	Check for correct use of question marks and exclamation marks	5 minutes
Lesson 5:	Check for correct punctuation and case in salutations and closes	5 minutes
Lesson 6:	Check for correct punctuation and case in shortened forms	5 minutes
Lesson 7:	Check correct punctuation and case when writing addresses	5 minutes
Lesson 8:	Check for correct punctuation and case when using brackets	5 minutes
Lesson 9:	Check for correct punctuation and case when using quotation marks	10 minutes
Lesson 10:	Check for correct use of capitalisation in common and proper nouns	15 minutes
Assessment:	Punctuation and case	25 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>Two hours</b>

## Editing your sentence construction

**Estimated duration: one hour and 15 minutes**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn how to edit to ensure good sentence construction and parallel construct in your text. Also learn how to check for correct use the active voice and you orientation. Practice editing your document to ensure an overall consistent approach and effective use of person or point of view.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Check for good sentence construction	20 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check for correct parallel construct	20 minutes
Lesson 3:	Check for the use of the active voice	10 minutes
Lesson 4:	Check for appropriate and consistent tense	5 minutes
Lesson 5:	Check for use of 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person writing	5 minutes
Assessment:	Sentence construction	15 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour and 15 minutes</b>

## Editing your lists

**Estimated duration: one hour and 30 minutes**

**Course prerequisite: none, but *Editing your sentence construction* course is recommended**

*Learn the rules for wording, punctuating and using case in bulleted, numbered or general lists, and how to check lists for correct and consistent use.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Leader sentences and leader phrases	20 minutes
Lesson 2:	Parallel construct in list items	25 minutes
Lesson 3:	Punctuation and case in list items	15 minutes
Lesson 4:	Bullet point progression	5 minutes
Assessment:	Lists	25 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour and 30 minutes</b>

## Checking for sentence sprawl and paragraphs

**Estimated duration: one hour**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn how to edit long sentences and to check for precise language (plain English). Practice correcting your document to ensure an absence of complicated vocabulary, long winded phrases, unnecessary wordiness, redundancy, colloquial language, clichés and repetition of words.*

*Also learn how to check for and correct inappropriate use of jargon and shortened forms (acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations).*

*Finally, learn how to check paragraphs for their core idea, logical construction and length, and how to correct any related problems.*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Check for short sentences	15 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check for precise language	10 minutes
Lesson 3:	Check for correct use of jargon and shortened forms	10 minutes
Lesson 4:	Check for short paragraphs	10 minutes
Assessment:	Sentences and paragraphs	15 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour</b>

## Correcting your use of numbers and symbols

**Estimated duration: 30 minutes**

**Course prerequisite: none**

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

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1-6:	Check for correct use of numbers and symbols	20 minutes
Assessment:	Numbers and symbols	10 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>30 minutes</b>

## Editing your document's layout and visuals

**Estimated duration: one hour**

**Course prerequisite: none**

*Learn how to edit your document 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 and how to correct your visuals' titles, numbering, layout, position and integration into the text.*

### **RESOURCES**

- Example letter*
- Example memo*
- Example fax*
- Example email message*

<b>LESSON</b>	<b>LESSON NAME</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE TIME</b>
Lesson 1:	Check for correct spacing	20 minutes
Lesson 2:	Check white space ratio	20 minutes
Lesson 3:	Check for correct use of visuals	5 minutes
Resources:	Examples	5 minutes
Assessment:	Layout and visuals	10 minutes
<b>TOTAL TIME FOR COURSE</b>		<b>One hour</b>