GRAMMAR AND WRITING SKILLS

PART 3

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CREDITS

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PREFACE

Grammar and Writing Skills Parts 1-3 are designed to provide the student with a basic knowledge of writing English. Topics include parts of speech, punctuation, and letter and report writing. Once you have completed this training, you should have a better understanding of grammar and proper writing skills which will enable you to produce concise, correct, and easily understood business communications.

TO THE STUDENT

This is a self-instructional study course which allows you to proceed at your own speed. The course is designed to provide you with information, then to test your recall by immediately providing questions about the material just presented. This process allows you to read the information, actively participate in the course by answering questions, and learn promptly, if you are correct. Therefore, a mistake is prevented before it happens and you spend your time learning - not unlearning. This procedure reinforces what you have just read and should enable you to retain what you have studied for a longer period of time than a lecture or a regular textbook.

HOW THIS PROGRAM WORKS

You will be given blocks of information (frames) in sequence. These frames will be followed by questions which require a written response. You are to follow the instructions for the type of question being asked. After you have responded to the questions, you may turn to the back of the book for the corresponding answers.

If you have missed any answers, you should reread the appropriate frame or frames and make a special effort to recall this information.

PART 3

WRITING SKILLS

CHAPTER 1 – BUSINESS WRITING

1-1　INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will learn to:

- improve your business writing skills
- choose effective words that are clear, concrete, concise, appropriate and fresh
- avoid confusing words that sound the same but have different spellings
- avoid and correct common sentence faults such as fragments, run-ons
- write nondiscriminatory language in terms of age, race and gender
- write effective sentences while considering clarity, sentence length and variety, and voice
- misplaced modifiers and nonparallel structure
- design paragraphs with proper structure, unity, length and coherence

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1-2　FIVE QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE WORDS

When writing business communications, it is important to consider proper word choice for the meaning you want to convey.

Verbal communication begins with words. That is obvious, yet word choice often presents problems to both senders and receivers of messages.

It is important to use words effectively when writing business communications. The five qualities of effective words are as follows:

- Clarity
- Concreteness
- Conciseness
- Appropriateness
- Freshness

Clarity involves picking words that precisely identify your meaning to your reader. It includes avoiding vague, fuzzy terms. And, it usually involves selecting

the simplest or shortest words possible.

Examine these pairs of words. In each case, the words in the second column are either more precise or simple than those in the first column.

Vague	Clear
Activate	Start
Cogent	Persuasive
Verbose	Wordy
Distraught	Upset
Rudimentary	Simple
Utilize	Use

Now, examine these pairs of sentences. Once again, the bottom sentence in each pair is either more precise or simple than the top sentence.

Vague: Please utilize the manuals if you feel the need.
Clear: Please use the manuals if necessary.

Vague: We activated the machine when we were supposed to.
Clear: We started the machine on schedule.

Vague: The rudimentary exercises were performed within a short period of time.
Clear: The simple exercises were done quickly.

Concreteness means choosing words and phrases that are specific, leaving little chance for misinterpretation. Concrete words have a greater impact on readers than abstract words do. This is because abstract words may be vague or open to individual interpretation. Examine these pairs of words and phrases. In each case, the words and phrases in the second column are more concrete and specific.

Vague	Concrete
Office equipment	Computers
As soon as possible	By March 16
Large number	6,000
Inclement weather	Six feet of snow

A lot of time	72 hours
Professional development	An MBA degree

Now, examine these pairs of sentences. Once again, the bottom sentence in each pair is more concrete and specific than the top sentence.

Vague: A lot of people purchase equipment.
Concrete: On Saturday, July 19, 16 people bought fax machines at Wilson's Office Supplies Store.

Vague: I expect your answer at the earliest convenience.
Concrete: I expect your answer by July 1.

Vague: Mr. Harris recommended you as a good manager.
Concrete: Mr. Harris recommended you as a responsible and efficient manager.

Of course, you cannot avoid abstract terms entirely. In this example, while "responsible and efficient" are an improvement on "good," they are basically abstract terms open to interpretation.

Moreover, words like "improvement," "success" and "motivation" are an accepted part of business language. When you use such abstract terms, use them in a context that includes concrete terms. Concrete terms clarify the meaning of abstract terms. For example, what does "improvement" mean? Perhaps it means an increase of 17 percent in gross sales in the next 12 months. If that is the case, say so.

Conciseness means presenting your message in as few words as possible. It also involves avoiding unnecessary words and repetition of ideas. The more words you use — especially if they are repetitious, obscure, or inappropriate — the more you slow the reader. Your message might easily get lost in the verbiage! Compare the wordy and unnecessary expressions on the left and their corrections on the right. In all cases except one, the problem was remedied simply by deleting the phrase and being more direct.

Wordy	**Concise**
As you know...	Omit — If the readers know, why remind them?
I would like to take this opportunity to tell you...	Omit — Provide the message.
Permit me to say...	Omit — You are not really asking the reader's permission.

This is to inform you that...	Omit — Directly inform them.
Your attention is directed to...	Use "Please see ..."
As a matter of fact...	Omit — State the fact itself.
I wish to state...	Omit — Supply the fact immediately.
You are advised that...	Omit — Provide the advice instead.

Now, examine these additional wordy expressions and their corrections. In each case, the words in the second column are more concise.

Wordy	Concise
During the time that	While
Brown in color	Brown
In order to	To
In the event of	If
Absolutely essential	Essential
True facts	Facts
Type of fertilizer	A fertilizer
Through the use of	With

Appropriateness means selecting the right word for the specific communication context. It requires that you consider the reader's familiarity with the subject, the reader's word preference, and the occasion of the communication. The degree of formality is usually determined by what you know about these factors.

Examine the following list of words and phrases. In each case, the words and phrases in the second column are more formal than those in the first column. They would be appropriate in a situation when the reader would be more comfortable with formal language.

Informal	Formal
Free ride	At no expense
Macho	Masculine
Hassle	Argument

Okay	All right
Go for broke	Take a chance
Green light	Approval
Blue sky	Consider possibilities

Also, avoid using technical terms associated with your profession or industry when you communicate with readers who may not be familiar with those terms.

"Friable" may mean something to a geologist, but it probably confuses the general public. When are contractions appropriate? Whenever you question their appropriateness, do not use them. Certainly, you should avoid them in formal reports. Contractions are informal and conversational. You might want to use contractions in a friendly sales letter to the general public or in a memo to a co-worker.

When is the word "I" appropriate in business communications? "I" is much more natural and direct than referring to yourself in the third person as "the writer" or "one." Some companies, however, do not permit this type of reference. Find out your company's policy on this matter.

Freshness means choosing words that have color and life. It also involves avoiding trite and cliché expressions and jargon.

Examine the following pairs of words and phrases. The phrases in the second column eliminate the dull word stuffing found all too often in business messages.

Dull	**Fresh**
First and foremost, the drop in sales...	The drop in sales...
Please find enclosed...	Here is...
Said as follows...	Said...
Thanking you in advance...	We shall be grateful for any...
It is the opinion of this writer...	I think...
This letter is for the purpose of requesting...	Omit — Start by stating the request

Verbs make sentences lively. Always strive for strong action verbs that precisely communicate your meaning. Avoid verbs that describe a state of being, such as "is" or "am." You should also avoid sentence starters, such as "There is" and

"There have been." Verbs of being and sentence starters take the life from your prose. They are dull and frequently wordy.

Compare these pairs of sentences. The second group is livelier.

Dull	Lively
Agents went into the branch office.	Agents burst into the branch office.
There are five employees in our advertising department.	Our advertising department employs five people.
There was an understanding between us.	We understood each other.

Another way to keep your messages fresh is to use active voice.
Avoid passive voice, which can be wordy and awkward.

Passive: The operation was completed by this writer.
Active: I completed the operation.

Passive: Bob was given a raise by Mr. Henry.
Active: Mr. Henry gave Bob a raise.

****

1-3   Questions

1) Which of the following is a true statement? _____

      a. Action verbs give life to sentences.

      b. Passive voice is preferable to active voice.

      c. Sentence starters like "There is..." are dull and meaningless.

2) Choose **three**. What does it mean to "write with clarity"? ___,___,___

      a. Picking precise words.

      b. Avoiding vague terms

      c. Selecting the simplest words possible

      d. Choosing fourth grade level words.

3) Would it generally be acceptable to write a formal report to the president of your corporation using such words as "hassle" and "go for broke"? _____

****

1-4 EXERCISES

Exercise 1
Review some of your own business communications to see if your words are being used effectively.

Step	Action
1	Check for the following qualities: • Clarity • Concreteness • Conciseness • Appropriateness • Freshness
2	Once you have reviewed your own writing, make any necessary changes to reflect its new effective wording!

****

1-5 RULES OF CORRECT WORD USAGE

People often make mistakes about words that sound the same or have similar spellings. Such errors can result in business messages that are confusing, inaccurate, and meaningless.

Some words like "accept" and "except" are often used incorrectly because they look and sound somewhat alike. First, it is important to understand the definition of the word and then you will know its appropriate use.

"Accept" means to receive.
"Except" means to leave out, to exclude.

*The store **accepts** personal checks.*

*All of the programs **except** Greg's were finished on time.*

"Affect" is a verb that means to change, influence, or impress.
"Effect" is usually a noun that means the result of an action.

*Humidity can **affect** electronic systems.*

*The changes in this administration had a negative **effect**.*

"Among" refers to a situation involving three or more people or objects.
"Between" refers to a situation involving only two people or objects.

*The club divided duties **among** its four officers.*

*A merger **between** the two companies is anticipated.*

"Anxious" indicates worry about something.
"Eager" indicates looking forward to something.

*Larry is **anxious** about completing his report on time.*

*Lana is **eager** to help in any way she can.*

"Disinterested" means to have an unbiased opinion.
"Uninterested" means to have no opinion or interest at all.

*Judges are supposed to be **disinterested** in cases tried before them.*

*Ms. Smith is **uninterested** in the remodeling of our offices.*

"Continually" refers to action that happens often.
"Continuous" refers to action that takes place without interruption.

*My supervisor **continually** places training literature on my desk.*

*The rubber plant operates **continuously**.*

"Elicit" means to draw out or to evoke.
"Illicit" indicates not permitted or unlawful.

*We're hoping this marketing piece will **elicit** a response.*

*The CEO admitted to accepting the **illicit** funds.*

"Fewer" refers to items that can be counted.
"Less" refers to collective quantities or amounts that cannot be counted.

*Recycling our copier paper could mean **fewer** trees consumed.*

*It will take me **less** time to complete the task.*

"Infer" means to conclude from evidence.
"Imply" means to suggest or hint.

*Laura **inferred** from Dan's resume that he was an experienced engineer.*

*Laura **implied** to Dan that her company was hiring experienced engineers.*

"Its" is a possessive pronoun.
"It's," with an apostrophe, is the contraction of "it is."

*The company provided **its** mission statement.*

***It's** time to schedule a staff meeting.*

"Loose" is generally used as an adjective and means free or not tight.
"Lose" is a verb and means to misplace or be without.

*The cable came **loose** from the PC.*

*I don't want to **lose** my job.*

"Liable" means subject to or responsible for a situation or consequence, usually a negative one. It can have two slightly different meanings: "legally responsible for" or "likely to cause some negative consequence. "On the other hand, "likely" indicates a neutral condition of probability, regardless of responsibility and regardless of positive or negative consequences.

The homeowners are **liable** for accidents that occur on their property.

Watch out or you're **liable** to fall.

It is **likely** that the incumbent will win.

"Precede" means to come before something.
"Proceed" means to continue.

The Table of Contents **precedes** the main chapters of a document.

When you finish this report, **proceed** to the next one.

"Principal" can refer to the head of a school, an important person in some organization, or the amount of a loan. Otherwise, it is used as an adjective.
"Principle" is a law, a rule or fundamental truth. It is always a noun.

The **principal** amounts to $210,000.

Our company believes in one **principle**: honesty.

"Stationary" implies that an object is fixed and is not capable of moving.
"Stationery" is a type of writing paper.

The desks and chairs are **stationary** to discourage theft.

Always print correspondence on company **stationery**.

"Their" is a possessive form of they.
"There" refers to a place.
"They're" is a contraction of "they are."

Their work on that feasibility study is excellent.

They don't want to work **there**.

They're hard workers.

"Who's" is a contraction of "who is."
"Whose" is a possessive form of who.

Who's going to lead the brainstorming session?

I have not decided **whose** offer I am going to accept.

"Your" is the possessive form of you.
"You're" is a contraction of "you are."

Your department is efficient.

You're invited to the company picnic.

****

1-6   Questions

4) Choose **three**. Which of the following sentences employ correct word usage?
___,___,___

    a. Ann was excepted into the MBA program

    b. Ann was accepted into the MBA program

    c. Failing the final exam will negatively effect your grade.

d. Failing the final exam will negatively affect your grade.

e. Nancy and Stu split the work between them.

f. Nancy and Stu split the work among them.

5) Choose **three**. Which of the following sentences uses words correctly? ___,___,___

a. The firm lost its reputation for excellence.

b. The firm lost it's reputation for excellence.

c. They're about to visit the customer site.

d. Their about to visit the customer site.

e. I know someone who's interested in bidding on the project.

f. I know someone whose interested in bidding on the project.

6) Which of the following sentences is correct? ____

a. The principal of the loan is over twenty thousand dollars

b. The principle of the loan is over twenty thousand dollars

****

1-7   GUIDELINES FOR NONDISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

Nondiscriminatory language is language that treats all people equally. It is important that the business writer communicate in a way that expresses equality and respect for all individuals.

Let's start with sexist language. All business writers should treat men and women equally in language and avoid overuse of masculine references. Most organizations and corporations demand the elimination of sexist language. Sexist language can be eliminated in several ways. One way is to use plural terms when possible. For example:

*Each worker must fill **his** quota*

*All workers must fill **their** quotas.*

There is no loss of clarity with the plural terms.

A second method to eliminate sexist language is to change traditional masculine terms to avoid any exclusive sexual reference. The following table lists some common alternatives.

Masculine	Gender Neutral
Mankind	Humanity
Salesman	Salesperson
Man-hours	Work-hours
Businessman	Business executive

Another way to avoid sexist language is to include both **him** and **her** or **his** and **her** in the sentence. For example:

> *Each worker must complete his or her quota.*

However, you should only use this method when it cannot be avoided. Otherwise, try to employ one of the other methods of using nondiscriminatory language.

As you just saw with sexist language, the easiest way to avoid it is to eliminate the discriminatory language entirely.

This is also true with other forms of discriminatory language. Many people associate certain stereotypical characteristics with racial or ethnic groups. You should avoid including such associations in your writing.

For example:

> Original: *Charlie is tall for an Asian.*

> Rewrite: *Charlie is tall.*

There is simply no need to refer to Charlie's ethnicity when describing his height.

Similarly, you should eliminate reference to a person's age from your writing if it is not relevant.

For example: *"John Smith, 42, submitted the lowest bid."* John's age has no relevance to the amount of his bid. There are instances when a person's age is relevant.

For example: "Mary Parker, 31, is the youngest person ever promoted to vice president." Mary's age is the topic of the sentence and is consequently appropriate.

Yet another form of discriminatory language is referring unnecessarily to a person's disability. As with the other forms you've just seen, unless the disability is relevant, do not include it in your writing. Should you need to include a reference to a disability in your writing, use "disabled" instead of "handicapped" or "crippled." For example:

> Original: *Crippled people have difficulty in offices with stairs.*

> Rewrite: *Disabled people have difficulty in offices with stairs.*

****

1-8   Questions

7) Which guideline is violated in the sentence below? _____

> Emilio Sanchez, the Mexican-born CEO, has led the company to record profits.

> a. Disability bias   b. Racial bias   c. Age bias

8) Which word is most preferable for completing the sentence?

> (handicapped/crippled/retarded)

> You must modify your training program to accommodate the needs of _____ employees.

****

1-9   EXERCISES

Try reviewing your workplace for the use of nondiscriminatory language.

Step	Action

1	Gather a variety of business communications, both internal and external, that represent your company.
2	Review each document for the use of nondiscriminatory language in the following areas: • Ability • Age • Gender • Race
3	Once you have reviewed the communication, suggest changes as appropriate.

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1-10 BUILDING EFFECTIVE SENTENCES

Expressing your ideas in skillfully written sentences contributes greatly to the success of your writing as a whole.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify the five points of effective sentence building

****

1-11 Characteristics of Effective Sentences

Effective sentence building is the basis for any successful business communication. It is important to consider clarity, sentence length and variety, voice, and correctness.

Effective sentences are clear and concise because they incorporate words that are clear and concise.

Here, the original versions are wordy and vague.

Original: *Misoperations mean the power will inadvertently be shut off.*

Revision: *Misoperations result in a power failure.*

Original: *This information should not be made available for anyone's investigation.*

Revision: *This information is confidential.*

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As you've seen, strong action verbs are important. They give the sentence force. Notice Robert Ludlum's powerful verbs: "streaked," "bounced," "burst," and "crashed" in the sentence shown here:

"The cold rays of the moon streaked down from the night sky and bounced off the rolling surf, which burst into suspended sprays of white where isolated waves crashed into the rocks of the shoreline."

With just the first sentence of his novel, Ludlum traps his reader in the action of the scene. While business prose doesn't usually offer the writer such an opportunity for creativity, it can become lively and interesting.

In addition to using action verbs, you should write in active voice, not passive. Passive voice can be wordy and awkward. Our psychological orientation when we read a sentence is to identify the doer of the action first. This is hard to do when the doer is identified at the end of the sentence. Thus, active voice also contributes to clarity.

> **Original:** *The report was read by the marketing team.*

> **Revised:** *The marketing team read the report.*

Another basic rule for strong sentences: Use sentence starters such as "there is" and "it is" sparingly. Doing so causes wordiness and dilutes your message.

> **Original:** *There are ten employees who waived coverage of our health insurance plan.*

> **Revision:** *Ten employees waived coverage of our health insurance plan.*

Now consider the sentence as a whole — its appropriate length and variety. In business writing, short sentences are usually easier to understand than long ones. Business writing consists of more facts than other forms of writing.

Because long sentences often have so much information, they are hard to absorb. To keep your writing interesting for your reader, mix both short and long sentences in your documents. The variety keeps the reader interested. Here's a good guide regarding sentence length: The more complex the topic, the shorter the sentence should be. The simpler the topic, the more complex or longer sentences can be.

It is easier to grasp complex material if it is presented slowly — in short and simple sentences. Remember that your purpose is to communicate clearly with your reader. Use that handy punctuation signal: the period.
The opposite rule holds true for simple topics. You don't want to give your

readers the impression that you think they cannot comprehend anything beyond the level of first grade. Instead, combine short sentences about simple topics for smooth reading.

Using dependent clauses is a great way to combine sentences. In the first sentence pair, one fact is put into an introductory dependent clause beginning with "because." In the second pair, a dependent clause beginning with "although" is similarly used.

> **Original:** *My goal is to get an MBA. I wish to enroll in Xavier University's fine program.*

> **Revision:** *Because my goal is to get an MBA, I wish to enroll in Xavier University's fine program.*

> **Original:** *Sam joined the firm three months ago. Sam has received a raise.*

> **Revision:** *Sam received a raise although he joined the firm only three months ago.*

When writing business letters and reports, you should work on sentence variety as well as sentence length. A reader could easily become bored and perhaps lose your message if all of your sentences followed an identical pattern. Different patterns maintain reader interest. Given the parameters about length we have just discussed, variety in sentence length means some short sentences and some long sentences.

Variety also refers to different constructions. Three-fourths of the sentences in business prose should follow a simple subject-verb-object construction. For example: "I will contact Anna tomorrow to review the project status. "However, one-fourth should employ various other constructions.

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1-12   Sentence Varieties

Any of the following constructions can facilitate sentence variety:

- Introductory prepositional phrases
- Introductory modifiers
- Introductory clauses
- Changing a statement to a question

Here are some examples of introductory modifiers:

Fortunately, no one was hurt by the explosion.

To succeed, we must follow our plan diligently.

The following are examples of questions that were once statements:

How does one succeed?

What are the long-term results of this marketing strategy?

The following are examples of introductory prepositional phrases.

For additional support, call the customer service department.

Like other companies in the city, we plan to offer flextime to our employees.

The following are examples of introductory clauses.

After working in Cleveland for four years, Scott was transferred to Detroit.

Although Laura had a degree in art history, she took a job as a secretary.

****

1-13   Questions

9) Choose **two**. Which of the following sentences is more concise and direct? ___,___

a. We must solve this problem immediately.

b. It is a problem we must solve immediately.

c. There has been a rash of component failures in the static relays.

d. A rash of component failures has occurred in the static relays.

10) You should avoid sentence starters such as "there is" and "it is."

TRUE   FALSE

11) Label each sentence as **A**ctive voice or **P**assive voice:

a. The cause of these failures cannot be explained. ____

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b. We cannot explain the cause of these failures. _____

c. The company has devoted significant effort to my professional development._____

d. Significant effort has been devoted to my professional development by the company. _____

****

1-14 COMMON SENTENCE FAULTS

As most writing begins, it is not uncommon to find sentence errors such as fragments, run-ons, misplaced modifiers, and nonparallel constructions. The most important thing is to identify and correct these errors.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify and correct common sentence faults

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1-15 Sentence fragments are groups of words that do not express a complete thought, and that do not make sense on their own.

A "run-on" sentence occurs when two independent clauses (sentences) are blended into one without using enough punctuation, such as a semi-colon, or a comma with a conjunction.

Misplaced modifiers are words, phrases, or clauses that do not point clearly to the word or words they modify in a sentence. Parallel structure means using grammatically consistent words, phrases, clauses or sentence structures to express ideas that have the same level of importance.

Fragments are incomplete sentences because they lack an essential sentence component — either a subject or a workable verb.

Below, the first sentences are complete, but the following "sentences" are really phrases. The "team" phrase and the "winner" phrase appear as afterthoughts. They need verbs for completeness.

> **Original:** *The sales group exceeded their monthly quota. A motivated team.*

Revision: *The sales group exceeded their monthly quota. They are a motivated team.*

Original: *Mr. John Preston will be the keynote speaker at our banquet. This year's award winner.*

Revision: *Mr. John Preston will be the keynote speaker at our banquet. He is this year's winner of the Honorary Citizen award.*

More often, sentence fragments occur because of an incorrect verb form. Incorrect verb forms do not function correctly as sentence verbs.

Original: *The supervisor anticipating your input. The customer waiting for a salesperson.*

Revision: *The supervisor is anticipating your input. The customer is waiting for a salesperson.*

Fragments also occur when dependent clauses are accepted as whole sentences.

Review these sentences and their revisions:

Original: *We can't go to Duluth. Because we can't get plane reservations.*

Revision: *We can't go to Duluth because we can't get plane reservations.*

Original: *Burton's manager is intimidating. Which is hard for him to cope with.*

Revision: *Burton's manager is intimidating, which is hard for him to cope with.*

Another common sentence problem, **run-on sentences**, results when two or more sentences are combined as though they are one. They can be corrected by separating and punctuating the sentences. Note in these samples how the revisions separate and punctuate the sentences. Notice that the revisions contain two clauses separated with a comma and a conjunction ("and").

Original: *We have received many inquiries from county officials quite a few recorders have visited Warren County.*

Revision: *We have received many inquiries from county officials, and quite a few recorders have visited Warren County.*

Here are some additional examples and revisions that involve integrating dependent clauses. The first revision is two sentences separated with a period. The second is one run-on clause put into a "when" dependent clause.

> **Original:** *My resume highlights my abilities I am sure you will agree that my experience matches your needs.*

> **Revision:** *My resume highlights my abilities. I am sure you will agree that my experience matches your needs.*

> **Original:** *I purchased an Ace hot water tank on March 8 your distributor installed it the same day.*

> **Revision:** *When I purchased an Ace hot water tank on March 8, your distributor installed it the same day.*

Now examine these run-ons and their revisions involving the addition of a conjunction and periods.

> **Original:** *Margaret opened her own personnel agency she worked long hours at it.*

> **Revision:** *Margaret opened her own personnel agency, and she worked long hours at it.*

> **Original:** *I have to fly to Dallas next week we are shooting the new catalog pictures at the Dallas Zoo.*

> **Revision:** *I have to fly to Dallas next week. We are shooting the new catalog pictures at the Dallas Zoo.*

Review this example of a run-on sentence that is remedied by creating dependent clauses.

> **Original:** *Carolyn became the bank's vice president she still maintained close ties with her former colleagues.*

> **Revision:** *Although Carolyn became the bank's vice president, she still maintained close ties with her former colleagues.*

Other sentence errors include misplaced modifiers. The first sentence in the first group reads as though the desk — not Larry — was studying the lab report. In the first sentence of the second group, "working" needs a human subject (Brent). Desks don't read and jogging doesn't work. People do.

Original: *Larry sat at his desk studying the lab report.*

Revision: *Sitting at his desk, Larry studied the lab report.*

Original: *After working all day, jogging is relaxing.*

Revision: *After working all day, Brent finds jogging relaxing.*

Misplaced modifiers confuse the meaning of the sentence — sometimes with unintended humorous results. Keep modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify — and don't forget to include the words modified.

Now let's discuss parallelism. Parallel structures easily help the reader grasp the subjects' similarity or equality of significance. The lists in these sentences do not contain parallel elements. They jar the reader's ear. The revisions, however, contain three nouns which create a parallel construction.

Original: *With all of the background, instructions and to use as a tool, you can work well.*

Revision: *With all of the background, instructions, and tools, you can work well.*

Original: *The software package enables you to create graphics from lines, circles, and using boxes.*

Revision: *The software package enables you to create graphics from lines, circles, and boxes.*

You also need to keep items in bulleted or numbered lists parallel. For items to be parallel, they must be of the same structure. For example, the items should be all commands, all statements, all questions, all verbs, all nouns, all active voice, etc.

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1-16 Questions

12) Which of the following are run-on sentences? _____

   a. After you have read the attached analysis, I would like to discuss this situation with you.

   b. This equipment breakdown was costly to us our contract makes no provisions for it.

c. Similar problems have plagued us in the past I think we should consider a different company.

d. Thank you for returning my call, as I mentioned then, I am exploring every job opportunity.

e. I am eager to meet with you on April 6 when we can discuss my qualifications.

f. My experience is varied it covers all aspects of industrial design.

13) Which of the following sentences contain parallel structures? ___

a. R&C Plumbing provides immediate, complete, and economical service.

b. If you have any questions, criticism, or would like to make suggestions, please contact Mark Hopewell.

****

1-17 PARAGRAPH DESIGN

As you choose effective words and build effective sentences, you present them in coherent paragraphs — the basic unit of business letters, memos, and reports.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

• Identify and apply the four elements of paragraph design

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1-18 Four Elements of Paragraph Design

Paragraphs are the building blocks and the basis of order for writing. They divide the content into logical sections that work together as a unified whole. A good paragraph consists of a solid structure, a single main idea, appropriate sentence length, effective transitions and logical sentence order.

The major issues affecting paragraph design are as follows:

• Structure
• Unity
• Length

22

- Coherence

Let's start with structure.

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1-19   Paragraph Structure

A paragraph is composed of a group of sentences whose function is to introduce and develop one main idea. You introduce the main idea in the topic sentence of the paragraph — usually the first or second sentence. The topic sentence gives readers a summary of the topic that you cover in the remainder of the paragraph. Sentences following the topic sentence provide additional details about the topic.

They round out the topic and provide the reader with a clear understanding of the main thought. You should arrange these supporting details in descending order of importance. This paragraph structure assumes that readers are busy people who want to know as soon as possible what they are reading and why it is important.

Examine each section of the following paragraph. The first sentence is the topic sentence. It introduces the main idea of the paragraph which is to describe what an outline is. The second sentence identifies the general function of an outline. This sentence provides the most important supporting detail of the paragraph. Sentences three and four identify secondary features.

(1) Before writing a document, it may be beneficial to produce a tentative outline. **(2)** The outline lists important information that should be included in the publication and the order in which the information will appear. **(3)** Outlines are tentative because the writer may choose to add, eliminate, or rearrange the information later as drafts are written. **(4)** Because they list the important information that should go into the document, outlines act as checklists to help keep the writer focused.

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1-20   Unity

As you have probably noticed already in working with past paragraph samples, each paragraph develops one main idea. This restriction to one idea gives the paragraph its essential unity.

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1-21 Length

You may have noticed that the past paragraph samples have been relatively short — three or four sentences long. What do you do when developing one main idea results in a logically unified paragraph of nine or ten sentences?

An important point to consider in business prose is eye relief for the reader. Typical readers would find a long block of print in a letter or report somewhat overwhelming. They might even become reluctant to wade through such a visual density of words

To provide adequate eye relief for the reader, you should keep paragraphs within a maximum of ten typewritten lines. If you write a long, unified paragraph, break it into two paragraphs at some logical point. In such cases, the topic sentence of the first paragraph suffices for both paragraphs.

One-sentence paragraphs are also acceptable. You may occasionally want to use them for emphasis as an introduction to your letter or as a summary at the conclusion.

****

1-22 Coherence

Paragraph coherence means a logical consistency throughout the paragraph so that all parts are clearly connected. When you arrange your sentences in a logical order and link them together to flow smoothly, you have a coherent paragraph.

You can use transitional techniques to link the sentences and paragraphs together.
You can use a variety of transitional techniques to enhance paragraph coherence:

- Repeating key words
- Adding connecting words
- Maintaining consistent tone
- Maintaining consistent point of view

Review each of these techniques.

Repeating key words gives a paragraph as well as the entire document (letter, memo, or report) coherence. Let's examine again the paragraph on static relay failure. Notice the use of the word "failures" in the first and second sentences. The word "misoperations" is likewise used in the third and fourth sentences. Such repetition of key words gives the paragraph coherence — and certainly

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makes the paragraph more comprehensible to the reader.

Another way to achieve coherence within a paragraph is to include transitional or connecting words and phrases. Transitional words and phrases bind paragraphs together and provide the reader with clues about how to read them.

For example, the word "however" usually introduces some qualification of what has just been stated. "Moreover" suggests an additional piece of information. "On the other hand" introduces the opposing view of the argument.

Words	Phrases
Also	In addition
Consequently	As a result
Finally	In conclusion
First	To begin with
Furthermore	What's more
Therefore	For that reason
Likewise	As well as
Nevertheless	All the same

Tone is defined by a writer's word choice. For example, contractions indicate an informal tone. Point-of-view indicates the writer/reader reference of a letter. For example, a writer may refer to himself as "I," which is the personal point of view. Alternatively, the writer may refer to herself as "we," which is the corporate, public point of view. The writer may also address the reader as "you" (a personal reference). You can achieve coherence in a paragraph by maintaining a consistent tone and point of view.

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1-23   Questions

14) Which is the correct transitional word or phrase to make the following sentences coherent?

Moreover/on the other hand

I am very pleased with the results of working at home. _____ the arrangement has been convenient and I enjoy keeping up with my accounting work.

15) What is the maximum number of ideas that should be developed in a single paragraph? _____

****

CHAPTER 2 - WRITING PATTERNS

2-1   INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will learn how to organize your business writing into specific patterns, depending on the type of information you want to communicate. There are eight informative patterns. You will learn to define each pattern, provide examples of each pattern, and describe the kinds of business communications to which each pattern applies.

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2-2   TYPICAL WRITING PATTERNS

Narration
An account of a sequence of events.

Causal Analysis
An account of a cause-and-effect relationship.

Persuasion
An account in which you try to convince the reader that your ideas are correct or worth considering.

Description
An account of a subject's characteristics, such as size, shape, and color.

Definition
An account of an extended, formal explanation of a concept or object.

Process Analysis
An account of how something functions or is accomplished.

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2-3   NARRATION

Use the narrative pattern of writing when it's important to relate a sequence of events. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe and use the narrative pattern of writing

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2-4   Narration is suitable for business communications in which the time or sequence of events is important, such as:

- The minutes of a meeting
- An annual report
- A progress report
- An accident report
- A trip report
- The history or development of something

An example of a narration: Notice how it flows as if someone was telling a story:

When we first started the business, we had two sales representatives handling our entire customer base. In those days, we were familiar with all of our customers and our manual file system was sufficient. However, over the last two years, we have increased our sales team to six representatives and our customer base by 280 percent. To provide faster customer service, we now need to consider a computerized database to hold all of our customer files.

****

2-5   Questions

1) How are events in a narration described? _____

  a. As a cause/effect relationship

  b. In a time sequence

  c. As a comparison

  d. None of the above

2) In each area below, type **Y** for yes or **N** for no. Is narration used for the following business communications?

  a. Minutes of a meeting ____

  b. Annual report ____

  c. Comparison of two technical courses ____

  d. Accident report ____

****

2-6   EXERCISES

Compose a paragraph using the narrative pattern of writing. For example, you might write about the route you take to work or what you did on a particular Saturday or Sunday.

****

2-7   CAUSAL ANALYSIS

When you want to emphasize a cause-and-effect relationship in your business communication, use the causal analysis pattern. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe and use the causal analysis pattern of writing

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2-8   Causal analysis is a common pattern used in informative prose. With the causal analysis pattern, you identify a cause-and-effect relationship.

You can organize a causal analysis by developing a sequence of causes that lead to a resulting effect. Or, you can start with the resulting effect first and then identify its causes sequentially or from greatest to least importance.

Causal analysis is useful in such business communications as:

- Investigative reports
- Accident reports
- Persuasive communications

An example of a causal analysis follows. Notice how this example starts by describing the effect first and then going into the reasons:

Research has shown a high occurrence of burnout among entry-level social welfare workers. Why does a person who has dedicated up to seven years of education in the theory and practice of social welfare suddenly abandon the career after one or two years? Recent studies of this trend point to three primary reasons.

****

2-9   Questions

   3) Can you organize causal analysis either from cause to effect or from effect to
      cause? ___

   4) In each area below, type **Y** for yes or **N** for no. Would you use causal analysis
      for the following tasks?

      a. To explain why there was a four-car accident on the interstate ___

      b. To explain why a committee did not meet its scheduled deadline ___

      c. To explain why professionals should seek higher education ___

      d. To explain the history of a product's development ___

****

2-10   PERSUASION

When using persuasion in business writing, you should try to appeal to reason
rather than emotion. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

   • Describe and use the persuasive pattern of writing

****

2-11   Another pattern you can use in business communication is persuasion. The
purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the reader that your ideas are
correct or at least worth considering.

Start with a proposal or position that is supported by facts, statistics, examples
and quotations from authoritative sources. Next, arrange the support by order of
greatest to least importance.

Always acknowledge your reader's possible objections to the position and try to
address them. This helps demonstrate that you have thoroughly examined the
subject and are sensitive to the reader's views. Ignoring or making light of them
may offend the reader. Showing that you understand the opposing view also
gives you an opportunity to show the advantage of your position.

Although an emotional appeal in business writing can sometimes be appropriate,
persuasion is an appeal to reason and logic. Choose support that is precise,
clear, accurate, and relevant. Do not overstate your case or allow personal bias
to influence your writing.

In persuasive writing, you may include other patterns such as description and comparison. However, the use of other elements is secondary to your primary goal of influencing the reader. Persuasion is an obvious strategy for any marketing and sales situation, including selling your ideas to management.
An example of the use of persuasion follows. Notice how the writer uses statistics that provide compelling evidence for the writer's argument:

A study was conducted of how our sales representatives spend their time. Almost 40 percent of the time is spent on paperwork such as completing forms and records. Another 38 percent is spent entering order information into the system's Order Entry program. This only leaves 22 percent for taking orders from customers and learning about their needs.

****

2-12   Questions

5) Which of the following is a true statement about the persuasive pattern of writing? ____

   1. Arrange the support material by order of least to greatest importance.

   2. You should always acknowledge your reader's possible objections to your position and try to address them.

        a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

****

2-13   EXERCISES

Compose a paragraph using the persuasive pattern of writing. For example, you might try persuading your supervisor to implement a new procedure or persuading a friend to do you a favor.

****

2-14   DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION

When describing something, you should avoid abstract words and use concrete words. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

• Describe and use the description and definition patterns of writing

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2-15   Another pattern you may use when composing a business document is description. With description, you provide information about a subject's characteristics such as size, shape, and color.

Keep descriptive information specific, objective, and complete. Use concrete words instead of abstract words.

For example, instead of describing an employee's appearance at an important meeting as professional, say instead that he wore a blue suit and a striped silk tie.

To help the reader picture what you are describing, organize prose according to some spatial pattern. Or, if one feature stands out visually, describe it first and then describe the background details in a "circular" order. You can also organize a description by describing the whole and then describing its parts.

Common uses of description in business communications include:

- A description of a product, person or place
- A job description
- A purchase order or contract

An example of the use of description follows. This example gives you a larger perspective with details that follow:

This tractor trailer is 48 feet long with doors that open to 110 inches. It has two axles with four tires on each axle. It also comes equipped with landing gear or dollies — legs that roll up and down to support the front of the trailer when it is not hooked onto the tractor.

****

2-16   The next pattern of writing you'll learn about is definition. A definition is an extended, formal explanation of a concept or object.

There are several ways to define something. You can:

- Provide the origin or background of the subject
- Divide it into its parts or components
- Discuss its functions and/or purposes
- Compare it with something similar
- Provide examples

When writing a definition, remember to include all information essential to clarifying the term. Also use vocabulary with which the reader is familiar. The

definition writing pattern is appropriate for explanations of technical terms and objects. Likewise, it is appropriate for policy and procedure manuals and product orientation guides.

When writing definitions, avoid certain pitfalls such as:

- Defining the term by restating it:
  "Occidental refers to people living in Occidental territories."
- Using "is where":
  "Flextime is where employees can choose their own starting and ending work hours."
- Using "is when":
  "E-mail is when you transmit an electronic message from one computer to another."

This example of the use of the definition writing pattern illustrates defining a technical term, which is a common use of a definition:

A database is a collection of records containing related information about a subject. Databases store records on computers, which provide quick and simple access to information. Before personal computers became popular, databases were created and maintained manually, usually by typing information onto index cards and storing the cards in drawers or cabinets.

****

2-17   Questions

6) Which of the following are true statements about the definition pattern of writing? _____

    a. Definition isn't a suitable writing pattern for policy and procedure manuals.

    b. You can define something by providing the origin or background of the subject.

    c. When writing a definition, you should use the jargon associated with the thing you are defining.

    d. You can define something by dividing it into its parts or components.

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2-18 EXERCISES

Compose a paragraph using the descriptive pattern of writing. For example, you might try to describe the exterior of your house or apartment or describe the interior of the building where you work.

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2-19 PROCESS ANALYSIS

In process analysis, you help someone understand the phases that lead to an end result or how something works. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe and use the process analysis pattern of writing
- Describe the difference between a process and a procedure

****

2-20 A process explains how something functions or is accomplished. You can think of a process as having phases that occur in sequence over a period of time. For example, the phases of manufacturing an automobile, is a process.

In the introductory paragraph of a process analysis, you should describe (as appropriate):

- Necessary skill or experience
- Necessary materials
- Necessary tools
- Time involved
- Money involved

Of course, you should also describe the end result of the process.

Process analysis is appropriate in a business situation that requires helping someone understand phases that lead to an end result or how something operates, such as:

- How the new accounting system operates
- How a machine operates
- What you need to do to advance to the next salary grade

A procedure explains the steps a person takes to complete a task. These steps must be sequential, too, but they relate to accomplishing the task, not to the

overall phases of how something functions or is accomplished.

For example, the specific steps for installing the seats in an automobile is a procedure. This procedure is part of the overall process of manufacturing an automobile. Perhaps in the process, the phase to which this task relates could be called "Install Interior Components."

This example illustrates the use of process. It differs from a procedure because it does not list specific steps related to a task:

When filing a grievance, you first document your issue on Form AA01. Next meet with your manager to discuss the grievance. Your manager discusses the issue with you and then notifies the appropriate HR representative. The HR representative logs your case and schedules a meeting with you and your manager to discuss next steps.

When you explain procedures, it is often helpful to the reader if you put the procedures in bulleted or numbered lists. For example, consider this paragraph:

When we take the customer's order, we first locate the customer's file in the Current Customers file cabinet and take it back to our desks. Next we write the information in the appropriate form. Then we enter the order into the computer using the Order Entry function of our current system. Finally, we file a copy of the order in the file cabinet.

Burying the steps in a paragraph makes it difficult for the reader to quickly review the steps at a later date. Now read the revised paragraph. Isn't this revision easier to read and understand?

When we take the customer's order, we perform the following tasks:

1. Locate the customer's file in the Current Customers file cabinet.
2. Write order information on the appropriate form.
3. Enter order into computer using Order Entry function.
4. File a copy of order in the file cabinet.

When placing items in numbered or bulleted lists, be sure to keep the sentence structures parallel. Also be consistent in your use of capitalization and punctuation.

****

2-21 REVIEW QUESTIONS

7) Which of the following is a true statement about a process and a procedure? _

    1. A process explains the steps a person takes to complete a task.

    2. A procedure explains how something functions or is accomplished.

    a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

8) In which pattern of writing do you try to convince the reader to accept your ideas or at least consider them? _____

9) Which of the following is a true statement about the descriptive pattern of writing? _____

    1. You should keep descriptive information as subjective as possible.

    2. You should use concrete words instead of abstract words.

    a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

10) Which business pattern of writing does this paragraph demonstrate? _____

Bankruptcy proceedings are started by filing a petition with the bankruptcy court. In general, a business can file in one of two general categories under federal bankruptcy law: either Chapter 7 (liquidation) or Chapter 11 (reorganization).

    a. Persuasion   b. Classification   c. Causal Analysis   d. Narration

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CHAPTER 3 - LETTERS

3-1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses standard letter parts and letter formats. All of your business correspondence should incorporate a distinct pattern when you write letters. This course talks about planning a letter, the words, sentences, and paragraphs used when creating an effective letter.

While the words you use for business correspondence are very important, you should also make sure the correspondence follows an acceptable format. This course discusses the block and modified letter formats and how they differ.

You will learn how to write letters that convey neutral or positive news, as well as how to write negative news letters with tact and courtesy. Finally, the parts of a persuasive letter are discussed.

****

3-2 LETTERS

Whatever style of letter you use, make sure that you treat similar elements consistently throughout the document.
After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the seven parts contained in a letter
- Write an effective letter using the seven major parts

****

3-3 Business Letters

Making a good impression is important to you and to your business. Any business correspondence you send is an opportunity to make a positive and professional impression. Although using proper mechanics such as grammar and word choice is important, you should also make sure your business correspondences follow an acceptable format.

Acceptable Styles

Now that people do much of their own word processing, letter styles have become more relaxed and varied. However, before you write a letter, find out if your company or your recipient has a preferred style. If no style is specified, consider one of the styles provided here.

Whatever approach you use, make sure that you treat similar elements consistently throughout the document. For example, if you indent one paragraph, indent all of them.

****

3-4   SEVEN MAJOR PARTS OF A LETTER

Heading

The heading is the first part of a business letter and contains the sender's organization name, address, and usually a telephone number. It is often an organization's letterhead. If the letter is typed on regular stationery, the heading requires only a return address.

Date

Always place the current date on your letters, following the standard date format: April 1, 2004. If you are using letterhead stationery, place the date two lines below the lowest part of the letterhead. If you are using regular stationery, position the date directly below the return address.

Inside Address

The inside address identifies the recipient. Place it at least two lines below the date. Include the address elements in the following order: courtesy title, if known, plus name and organizational title if applicable, department, name of organization, company name, and company address.

Salutation

In the salutation, include the recipient's name if you know it. The name should reflect your level of familiarity with the person. If you do not know the person's name or if the recipient is actually a group of people, consider a generic salutation such as *To Whom It May Concern*. As always, check your company's correspondence standards to see if there is a preferred format.

Body

In the body of the letter, you convey the message. Start the body one or two spaces after the salutation. Single space each paragraph and double-space between paragraphs. Put an extra space between the last paragraph and the closing. You may include additional formatting options within the body of a letter including subheadings and indented lists. Remember to be consistent in your use of these options.

Complimentary Closing

Place the complimentary closing one or two lines below the body of the letter. Choose a closing that reflects the tone of familiarity and formality adopted in your salutation. For example, if you know the person, you can use the word *Sincerely*.

Signature Block

Place the signature two or three lines below the closing. This leaves room for the sender's signature. The first line of the signature block is the sender's name as it is to be signed. The second line is the sender's title. You can also include the sender's title on the same line as the name.

****

3-5   Questions

1) Which of the following parts should appear at the top of a business letter? ____

  a. Date   b. Heading   c. Salutation   d. Inside address

2) A letter that begins with an informal salutation should end with a formal complimentary closing.   T   F

****

3-6   EXERCISES

Create your own business letter. Make sure you include the heading, date, inside address, salutation, body, closing, and signature block.

****

3-7   LETTER FORMATS

You can format your letters in two traditional letter formats: ***block*** and ***modified block***. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Correctly format a letter
- Explain a few tips for effective letter writing

****

3-8   In *block* format, all the parts of the letter begin at the left margin. You do not indent paragraphs or center text with block format. You divide paragraphs by inserting an extra line of space.

Modified block has two formatting options:

- Modified block without paragraph indentation
- Modified block with paragraph indentation

Modified block format without paragraph indentation is similar to the block format — all parts of the letter start at the left margin **except** the date, the complimentary closing, and the signature block. You would position the date, closing and signature block near the center of the page.

Modified block format with paragraph indentation involves indenting the first line of all of the paragraphs. Indentation is customarily five spaces — as it is for all other printed and typed formats. As with the previously discussed modified block format, the date, complimentary closing, and signature block are positioned near the center of the page. Since each paragraph begins with an indent, no spaces are necessary between paragraphs, although spacing gives a cleaner appearance.

Regardless of the letter format you choose, some rules remain constant for all letters:

- Use one inch-margins, including the top and bottom margins.
- Place the top margin of the first page below preprinted elements when using letterhead.
- Use one-inch top and bottom margins for pages that follow.
- Separate each letter part by at least one blank line.

****

3-9   TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

As you write, keep in mind the main points concerning your words, your sentences, and your paragraphs. Here are the five qualities of effective words:

- *Clarity* — words that precisely identify your meaning
- *Concreteness* — words that are specific and concrete
- *Conciseness* — words that present your message as briefly as possible
- *Appropriateness* — words that are right for the specific context
- *Freshness* — words that have color or life

Effective sentences should have clear and concise wording. They should contain strong action verbs, written in an active voice. Sentences should also be short and remain under twenty words. When creating your sentence structure, follow a subject-verb-object construction three-fourths of the time.

Effective paragraphs should present one main idea with supporting detail. They should exceed no more than 10 typewritten lines for eye relief. Your paragraphs should also maintain a single tone, and one point of view for coherence.

A list is an effective technique for alerting the reader to important and specific points in the request or response. When you have this type of information, put it in a bulleted list. Notice that a bulleted list differs from a numbered list. Use a numbered list only when the information is sequential. For example, you place a list of steps for a task in a numbered list.

The logic of your writing may follow one of two approaches. The deductive (direct) approach presents the main idea first and then follows it with the evidence. The inductive (indirect) approach presents the evidence first and then follows it with the main idea. The type of letter you are writing often determines which approach is better to use.

Your letter will be more successful if you have a clear idea of the audience, subject matter, and goal for the letter. These areas are often more clearly defined if you follow a **Planning Worksheet**, which is a series of questions that you answer to analyze the needs and restrictions of a writing task.

The three parts of the Planning Worksheet are: ***Initial Analysis, Audience Analysis, and Presentation Analysis.***

****

3-10 Questions

3) In block format letter, all parts of the letter begin at the left margin.   T   F

4) When using the modified block format for your letter, where do you place the date, closing and signature block?

   _____

****

3-11 NEUTRAL AND POSITIVE NEWS

Use the deductive approach when conveying neutral or positive news in a letter. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Write a letter that gives positive news

****

3-12 Types of Letters

The types of letters can fall into three categories:

- *Neutral and Positive News*
- *Negative News*
- *Persuasive News*

Letters that convey neutral or positive news form a large portion of daily business correspondence. These letters are informative in nature. Recipients accept them without question.

A neutral news example is a letter confirming receipt of an order. A positive news example is a letter of recommendation from a previous employer.

Use the deductive approach when conveying neutral or positive news. State the main point first and follow with supporting details in subsequent sentences. Keep the tone simple and straightforward. End the letter warmly and courteously, closing by requesting or stating an explicit action.

For example, you can close with "Thanks again for your inquiry. If you have any questions, please call me at 551-551-5555."

Common examples of letters that convey neutral and positive news include:

- Transmittal letters to accompany materials you're sending and that explain package contents
- Requests for information, services and products
- Responses to such requests
- Announcements
- Invitations

A letter of acknowledgement is an example of a letter conveying neutral news. It is appropriately brief, specific, and courteous. The letter opens politely with the main point, and it follows with additional details. Then, it closes politely, thanking the customer again and keeping the door open to future business opportunities.

****

3-13 Questions

5) What is the correct sequence for these sentences to appear in a request letter? ___ ___ ____ ___ ___

    a. I would like to order one two-drawer beige filing cabinet (model 16809).

    b. Sincerely,

    c. To Whom It May Concern:

    d. Enclosed is a personal check for $78.64 to pay for the cabinet and shipping costs.

    e. Thank you for your prompt attention to this order.

****

3-14 EXERCISES

Create your own positive newsletter. Invite a family friend to attend your college graduation ceremony. Make sure you end the letter with a warm closing.

****

3-15 NEGATIVE NEWS

When you have to deliver negative news, do it promptly.
After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Write negative news letters

****

3-16 No one enjoys writing a letter with a negative message. A recipient can take the news personally. So be sure to phrase the message carefully, using tact and courtesy. You want to retain as much good will as possible.

When you have to deliver negative news, do it promptly. Putting off any negative communication makes it more difficult to compose, and it can alienate the recipient.

Examples of letters conveying negative news include:

- Letters of rejection
- Letters denying a request
- Letters of price increases
- Letters of complaint

Use language that is logical and factual — not emotional and judgmental. Be clear and concise. Do not lace it with a sentimental or artificial apology.

For instance, if you must reject an applicant's request for credit, you might explain the reasons for rejection in terms of insufficient credit history or brief residency in the community. Again, be sure to use logical and factual language.

You should definitely not make references to the applicant's general untrustworthiness and embarrassingly low pay, i.e. using emotional and judgmental language. And certainly avoid saying that you profoundly regret any inconvenience.

If you must announce a price increase to your customers, explain, as simply as possible, the specific reasons for the price increase. Do not bemoan the general state of the economy and escalating inflationary trends.

For instance, you could remind customers that you have kept the same price for several years to avoid losing their patronage and that you intend to avoid additional increases within the next year.

Buffering allows you to soften bad news. You can open with an introductory buffer that is neutral or positive in nature. For example, thank a job applicant for inquiring about a position and sending a resume.

Once you've stated the bad news clearly and concisely, follow it up with a closing buffer that reassures or compliments the recipient. You can also suggest other courses of action, invite future contact, or offer future assistance.

For example, in a rejection letter, you can reassure the person that you will keep her resume on hand in case a job with her skills opens in the future.

One example of conveying negative news is a complaint letter. Let's look closely at the four paragraphs of the following letter, which makes a complaint and

requests an adjustment. The first paragraph is the opening buffer. It offers a sincere compliment to the paper company.

April 18, 2011

Dear Ms. Kirkland:

Regions Bank has dealt with Scott Paper Products for several years, and we have never been disappointed in your quality and service.

On February 2, I placed an order for printing 5000 loan applications. I received them on February 23, as I requested, but they are not usable. The print quality is poor, and the applications are incorrectly folded (see enclosed sample).

Although I am returning the applications, I would like you to print an additional 5000. Send the new applications directly to me. Please rush this request because we have a mass mailing scheduled for April 30.

Please feel free to contact me at 221-763-9193 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith

The second paragraph communicates the negative news: poor print quality and incorrect folding. The bad news is brief and specific — the enclosed sample also clarifies the complaint.

The third paragraph is also a buffer. It gives the company a second chance to print the applications. This is a reasonable action since it has always performed satisfactorily in the past. This paragraph also identifies the due date, and the person who should receive the applications.

The last paragraph gives the paper company an opportunity to clarify any problem it might have about the botched print job, or the new print job. The company representative then knows who to call, and the person's phone number.

****

3-17 Questions

6) Whenever you write a letter that conveys negative news, it is a good idea to wait a few weeks before you do it so that you can get your thoughts together
   T   F

7) Which of the following might serve as an appropriate introductory buffer to a negative news letter? _____

   a. We humbly regret that we cannot ...

   b. Company policy does not permit me to ...

   c. We are sorry to inform you ...

   d. Although we value your opinion ...

****

3-18 EXERCISES

Create a letter that conveys negative news. Deny a request for employment based on the applicant's brief residency in the community. Make sure you state the news clearly and concisely.

****

3-19 PERSUASIVE NEWS

A persuasive letter should motivate a reader through clear and reasonable language. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Write a persuasive letter

****

3-20 The purpose of persuasive letters is to influence behavior. Because your reader may be inclined to resist your message, plan what you want to say by identifying your goal.

What do you want the reader to do? You also need to figure out what the reader needs and wants, i.e. the reader's goal. How can you relate your goal to the reader's goal?

The most commonly written persuasive letters fall into three categories:

- Requests that require significant persuasion
- Sales letters
- Collection messages

A persuasive letter should motivate a reader through clear and reasonable language and through realistic and ethical descriptions. Keep your proposals realistic.

Try not to play heavily into the emotions of the reader, or emotional vulnerabilities. Otherwise you risk losing his interest or worse, his respect.

Persuasive letters may employ an inductive, deductive, or chronological pattern. If the news is negative, use an inductive or chronological pattern. Whatever pattern you use, the basic persuasive letter should include these four parts:

- Attention
- Interest
- Comprehension/Desire
- Acceptance/Action

Attention

Try to attract the reader's attention in a sentence or two using one of the following techniques:

- Open with a question: "Do you work late every night?"
- Open with an appropriate, dramatic quotation: "He was a bold man that first ate the oyster."
- Use the reader's name: "Mr. Lee, you can save 60 percent."
- Compliment the reader: "Your credit is outstanding, Mr. Jones."
- Make a dramatic or unexpected statement: "You can save from $100 to $1000 this year."
- Set a scene: "Many active business executives say they don't have time to read."

Interest

Once you get the reader's attention, develop the reader's interest in your subject. Here is where to clarify the subject for the reader.

You can accomplish this in a sentence or two. Keep a conversational tone. Clarify the subject by appropriately following up the attention-getting technique of the first part. A letter that incorporates all four parts of a persuasive letter doesn't have to be lengthy. As long as the four parts work together, you can have a succinct and to the point letter. The attention and interest parts of a persuasive letter may be combined in the same paragraph. Make sure the first section grabs the reader's attention, and then develops the reader's interest.

Comprehension/Desire

The comprehension/desire part is the main emphasis of the persuasive letter. While you can usually complete the attention and interest parts in one or two sentences, the comprehension/desire part may require one or more paragraphs.

The comprehension/desire part has two purposes:

- To provide relevant details about the subject
- To convince the reader about the desirability of the proposal

Provide relevant details, but do not overwhelm the reader with such things as complex mechanical descriptions or an elaboration of a product's evolution. To convince the reader about the desirability of your proposal, include, as appropriate, testimonial statements, guarantees, special services or offers — anything that will make the reader's life easier or happier.

Acceptance/Action

The last part of the persuasive letter is the acceptance/action part, which convinces the reader to accept and/or act on your proposal. In one or two sentences, clearly define what you want the reader to do, answering the questions who, what, when, where, and why. Motivate the reader by referring to the reader's needs and wants. You can also offer assistance in this part. For example, present a contact name, phone number, or address. In addition, you can also recommend doing something in return.

****

3-21 Questions

8) In what order should these parts of a persuasive letter appear?
   ___ ___ ___ ___

   a. Comprehension/desire
   b. Interest
   c. Acceptance/action
   d. Attention

9) Choose **two**. When planning a persuasive letter, you must specify your behavioral goals for the reader. What must you also identify? ___ ___

   a. Reader's wants   b. Reader's profession   c. Reader's needs

****

3-22 EXERCISES

Create an entire letter that incorporates all four parts of a basic persuasive letter. Motivate your reader to donate a small amount of money to a charitable fund in your local community.

****

3-23 REVIEW QUESTIONS

10) What should be placed below the closing in a business letter? ___

   a. date   b. signature block   c. inside address   d. salutation

11) In which letter format do all the parts of the letter begin at the left margin?
   _____

12) Which of the following letter categories typically makes up most day-to-day business communication? ____

   a. neutral/positive news   b. negative news   c. persuasive news

****

CHAPTER 4 - MEMOS, E-MAIL, AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

4-1   INTRODUCTION

This section discusses memos, proposals, press releases, e-mails, and faxes. When using any of these forms of communication, you should check to see if your company has certain standards for you to follow.

****

4-2   MEMOS

When writing the body of the memo, provide the most important information first. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Write a correctly formatted memo

****

4-3   Memos are for internal use in an organization. Like letters, they have some elements that are typically included. Because they are internal, you have a lot more flexibility when formatting memos than when formatting letters. Check to see if your company has a set of preferred formatting standards.

A memo usually shows a heading followed by lines of information. The heading is centered or left justified, and in all uppercase letters. Possible headings include MEMORANDUM, MEMO, or IN-HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE. A heading does not reflect the subject of the memo. Subheadings are usually left justified and in all uppercase. Separate each line with a blank line. You can arrange the headings in almost any order or organize them into two columns. For a single column arrangement, align the subheadings with the left margin.

The TO: and FROM: lines do not require a person's title. First names or initials may be appropriate. When in doubt, use the same level of formality you would use in face-to-face communication. If the memo is addressed to several people, use the TO: line to direct the reader's attention to an attached list of recipients. If the memo is to a group of people you can address it to the group, for example, TO: The Sales Department.

Word the SUBJECT: line efficiently. Be as specific and as brief as possible so that readers can tell easily and quickly what the memo is about. For example, New Schedule for Ordering Supplies is more specific than Supply Orders. Memos often have the heading RE: (regarding) in place of SUBJECT. A memo

covers one subject. If it needs to cover more than one subject, separate the subjects with subheadings. If the reader is unfamiliar with the subject, begin the body of the memo with an introduction that briefly explains the subject.

Begin the body of the memo two or three lines below the top portion. If it is a long memo, you usually single space it with a blank line between paragraphs. Paragraphs may be indented. Short memos may be typed double-spaced.

Most memos are less than 10 pages. If the memo is more than one page, put a heading on the subsequent pages. On the heading, include the name of the recipient, the date, and the page number. Separate the heading from the body with two blank lines.

When writing the body of the memo, use the deductive pattern — providing the most important information first. Write in a tone that is appropriate to the formality of the subject and your relationship with the reader. Regardless of your tone, use concise, straightforward words.

You do not need to add a complimentary closing or signature to the end of a memo. However, if confidential material is included in the body of the memo, you may sign your name or initials at the bottom or initial your typed name at the top.

In a memo, the top portion gives the reader insight into what the memo is about, who is sending it, other people receiving a copy, and the date it was written.

****

4-4   Questions

1) Which of the following is NOT included in the top portion of the memo? ___

   a. TO: b. FROM: c. DATE: d. SUBJECT: e. LOCATION:

****

4-5   EXERCISES

Create your own sample memo. Address it to several co-workers asking which type of desk calendar they would prefer for the coming year. Make sure you include the subject, date, and who the memo is from.

****

4-6   PROPOSALS

The purpose of a proposal is to persuade someone to do or buy something. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Write a proposal including all of its components

****

4-7   Like a sales letter, the purpose of a proposal is to persuade someone to do or buy something. A proposal states your understanding of the problem, how you plan to solve the problem, and how much time and money it will take to implement your solution.

Proposals vary in size depending on what is being proposed. A proposal for painting a small office building may require only a few pages while one for installing a system of labor-saving equipment may require several.

Lengthy proposals should include a letter of transmittal, which conveys the message you would give if you delivered the proposal in person. It is less formal than the proposal.

Highlight the advantages of your proposal in the letter. If the proposal is unsolicited, write it in a persuasive letter style. If the proposal is solicited, use a positive newsletter style.

Short proposals may give the information in a few paragraphs. Longer proposals require the use of appropriate headings to separate the components. The parts of the proposal are:

- Solution(s) to the problem
- Presentation(s) of the plan
- Terms and Conditions
- Call for Action
- Acceptance Statement

In the *Solution to the Problem* section of a proposal, state the customer's problem and briefly explain how to solve it. Include reasons why your organization or company is qualified to solve the problem. Say, for example, a company needs to improve its insurance coverage. A potential vendor could show how its plan reduces health-care costs by a certain percent in other companies. The writer usually mentions how the company plans to solve the customer's problem (employees select the coverage they need) and gives the company's qualifications (past experience with similar companies).

In the *Presentation of Plan* section of a proposal, you specify the details of how to implement the plan and the final deliverables. You also specify the steps you will take, the materials you will supply, and the materials you expect the customer to supply. Use subheadings to divide this section into smaller, easily identifiable parts. In an abbreviated plan for documenting the health care coverage, the steps are listed numerically and give specific details about how each step will be handled.

The *Terms and Conditions* section of a proposal includes a breakdown of costs, the total cost, and when payment is expected. Start this section at the top of a new page. Be sure to give specific details so the customer knows exactly what the costs cover. Include the cost of materials, equipment, and work-hours. In the *Terms and Conditions* section, the costs are listed conveniently at the right and both the costs and the terms are specific.

The *Call for Action* section of a proposal is a brief paragraph that invites the customer to act on your proposal by:

- Approving it
- Issuing a purchase order
- Calling with questions (include a telephone number and contact person)

Be sure the *Call for Action* provides clear, accurate information on what to do next and when you think the plan could be implemented.

The *Call for Action* section, usually states when the vendor will be ready to begin the project and gives a telephone number to call if the customer has questions.

The *Acceptance Statement* section gives the customer the opportunity to approve the terms and conditions listed in the proposal. When the customer signs the proposal, the project, its limitations, and its costs are approved. When you include an acceptance statement, the proposal can automatically become a contract since both you and the customer sign the agreement.

****

4-8 Questions

2) Which of the following is true? _____

1. A proposal that is several pages long should include a letter of transmittal.

2. Every proposal has to include a letter of transmittal.

a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

3) Can you use numbered steps in a proposal to present your plan for solving the problem? ___

4) What is the section of a proposal called in which you give a breakdown of the costs, the total cost and when you expect payment? _____

5) Is the following sentence appropriate for the *Call for Action* section of a Proposal?___

       Call if you are ready to discuss our plan.

****

4-9   EXERCISES

Create a mock proposal for lawn services. Make sure you outline your plan to solve the lawn problem, and how much time and money it will take to implement your solution. Highlight the big advantages of your proposal in the transmittal letter.

****

4-10   ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL) AND FAX

Sending an e-mail and transmitting a fax are two ways to send written correspondences.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain how e-mail works
- Describe how to transmit a clear fax

****

4-11   E-mail is another way to send written correspondence. The message you send goes to a host computer that stores the message in your recipient's mailbox for later retrieval. You do not create or send a printed copy. Many e-mail software programs and services are available. Be sure to check your program's manual for information about how to create, edit, and transmit messages.

With electronic mail, your choices for emphasizing text may be limited. Many e-mail programs do not have the capability to bold or italicize text. Some ways to emphasize text include:

55

- Typing single words, phrases, and sentences in all uppercase letters
- Placing angle brackets or hyphens on each side of the text
- Indenting paragraphs
- Using uppercase headings to emphasize points, especially in lengthy messages
- Using numbered lists and bulleted lists

The text of your message may wrap awkwardly and be difficult to read, especially if your recipient has different computer settings or equipment. Usually you can avoid this problem by breaking your lines so they do not exceed the characters per line most e-mail software can handle, usually under 66.

You can fax just about anything you can put on paper. However, you need to consider how the pages you transmit will appear to the recipient.

When you send a fax, be sure to include a **cover page** or sticker. If your company has a standard fax transmittal form, use that. Be sure to include the date and the recipient's name, company, and fax number. Also include your name, company name, and fax number. List the number of pages being faxed so the recipient knows if all pages were properly transmitted.

To ensure that the recipient's copy of what you transmitted is legible and neat, keep several things in mind. Look at the size of type used on the pages you are faxing. Any type size smaller than 10 points may appear smeared and blurred on the recipient's copy because the letters tend to swell when they print on the receiver's end.

Select a font that prints clear and legible characters. Avoid fonts with needlessly complicated characters because the letters tend to blur and swell on the receiver's end.

Check that any print or handwriting on the pages is in a dark ink. Light-colored ink or pencil markings may not show up as clearly on the recipient's page as on the original copy. Likewise, when you print pages to be faxed, check that the print is dark enough. If not, change the printer cartridge or use a printer that prints darker type.

Some fax machines have an option to adapt to lighter text. If your pages contain light-colored ink or pencil markings, use this option if available.

Here are more tips on preparing pages to fax:

- Be sure that handwritten marks are neat and clean enough for the recipient to read and understand.

- Check that the pages have at least a one-half inch margin on all sides to accommodate fax machines that cannot read marks closer than one-half inch from the edge of the paper.

Depending on your fax machine, you may want to make sure that the paper feed width is set according to the width of the pages you are sending. Using the wrong setting may adversely affect the size of the paper and type that the receiving fax will print.

For example, having the paper feed width wider than your paper may cause your machine to transmit in a smaller type than necessary to fit all of the type on one page. If you are transmitting a graphic, be sure that any necessary difference in shades or pattern is prominent. Similar shades may appear to be the same when transmitted.

****

4-12 REVIEW QUESTIONS

6) Which of the following is true? _____

1. When writing a lengthy, complex e-mail message, it helps to divide the message into sections using headings.

2. When writing short e-mail messages, you should always divide the message into sections using headings and subheadings.

 a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

7) Which of the following is true? _____

1 .Type that is too small may appear smudged or blurry on the recipient's faxed copy.

2. Type that is too big will be truncated on the recipient's faxed copy.

 a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

8) Which of the following techniques can always be used to emphasize text in e-mail messages? _____

 a. bold   b. angle brackets   c. uppercase letters

 d. indenting left to right

9) Which of the following is true about memos? _____

      1. Memos are for internal use in an organization.

      2. Memos typically only cover one subject.

         a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

10) Which of the following is true? _____

      1. You should use numbered steps in a proposal to present your plan for solving the problem.

      2. You should use separate paragraphs and all uppercase when you present your plan for solving the problem.

         a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

11) What is the section of a proposal called in which you specify the details of how to implement the plan and the final deliverables? _____

12) Which section of a proposal states the customer's problem and how to solve it? _____

****

CHAPTER 5 - REPORTS

5-1   INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will learn about the types of reports you can write in your business communications. You will learn about the general characteristics of reports and about the organizational structure and acceptable formats of formal, informational, analytical, and persuasive reports.

****

5-2   CHARACTERISTICS OF REPORTS

Reports enable businesses to formally convey both in-house and out-of-house communication. Reports allow businesses to formalize and verify communication among people. They serve many purposes. A report can:

*   Serve as in-house and out-of-house communication
*   Create a permanent record
*   Solve an immediate need
*   Help management supervise the units of a business
*   Explain management decisions to employees

Reports come in a variety of forms. They can be fill-in-the-blank forms, informal letters and memos, and multiple-volume documents. They can also be delivered orally.

Generally, reports communicate business information and have the following characteristics. Reports are:

*   Formal
*   Written
*   Factual
*   Objective

****

5-3   Questions

1) Reports only serve to convey information within a business.   T   F

2) Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of a report? ____

          a. formal   b. written   c. factual   d. objective   e. fiction

****

5-4   FORMAL REPORTS

A formal report is composed of three parts: the preliminary portion, the report text, and the supplemental portion.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the parts and contents of a formal report

****

5-5   A formal report is appropriate for formal situations such as communicating information to management, boards of directors, stockholders, and government agencies.

This table illustrates the parts of a formal report and their contents. Let's examine the parts of the preliminary portion in more detail.

Parts of Formal Report	Contents
Preliminary Portion	**Title page** **Abstract** **Preface** **Table of contents** **List of illustrations**
Report Text	Body Conclusions Recommendations
Supplemental Portion	Appendix Endnotes Bibliography

The preliminary portion of a formal report begins with the title page. It lists the title, the author, the date the report was prepared, and any other important identification, such as the report sponsor.

Keep titles brief and make sure they clarify the subject of the report. Avoid including terms such as "A Report on ..." or "A Discussion of ..." in the title. Also avoid giving the period of time covered in the report; put that information in a subtitle such as "3rd Quarter — 2005."

A formal report can contain an **abstract** or executive summary — a paragraph or two (100-150 words) that highlights the main points of the report, including the conclusion and recommendation.

The abstract appears on a page by itself and directly follows the title page. It serves as a convenient summary for readers who can tell by reading it if the report is of interest. You should write it after you finish the report so that it includes all important points.

The preface is a brief statement — two or three paragraphs — that explains:

- The purpose of the report
- The scope of the contents
- Any acknowledgement of help with content

The preface goes on a separate page with the heading *Preface*.

The table of contents lists the main components of the report along with page numbers. Make sure the headings in the table of contents match the headings in the report.

The table of contents also lists the preliminary portions (that follow the table of contents) and supplemental portions of the report. Include a table of contents if the main body of the report is longer than five pages.

If you include more than four or five illustrations of any nature — such as tables, graphs, or pictures — provide a list of illustrations. The list should provide the title and page number of each illustration.

If there is enough space, place the list of illustrations directly under the table of contents. Otherwise, place it on a separate page after the table of contents. Separate the types of illustrations using labels such as Figures and Tables.

The title page, abstract, preface, table of contents, and list of illustrations make up the preliminary portion of the report. Begin numbering the first printed page after the title page using lower-case Roman numerals, and start with **ii**. Number the rest of the pages of the preliminary portion accordingly (**iii**, **iv**, **v**, etc.).

Now that you know about the preliminary portion of a report, let's move on to the report text.

Parts of Formal Report	Contents
Preliminary Portion	Title page Abstract

	Preface Table of contents List of illustrations
Report Text	**Body** **Conclusions** **Recommendations**
Supplemental Portion	Appendix Endnotes Bibliography

The introduction is the first part of the report text body. Consider the introduction an elaboration of the preface. Use the introduction to explain the following:

- Purpose of the report — what it intends to accomplish
- Scope of information — how much information it contains
- Sources of information — where and how the information was obtained
- Authorization of the report — who requested it

The first page of the body is numbered "1" using Arabic numerals.

If the introductory material is brief, include it all under the heading Introduction. If the introductory material is lengthy, use these subheadings in the introduction: *Purpose, Scope, Sources of Information,* and *Authorization.*

The organization of the body depends on the subject length and complexity. Depending on what you want to emphasize, you can arrange the information in one of two ways:

- Chronological Order: Develop the subject in a time sequence. You might want to do this with a subject whose history is important.
- Order by Parts: Break the subject into discrete parts and discuss them separately. Use this arrangement for complicated subjects.

In both patterns, use specific and appropriate headings as visual cues to guide your reader through the pages of your report. Appropriate headings identify the subject of the text in only a few words.

When using headings, be consistent in type style (uppercase, bold, italic) and in structure (short sentences, phrases) for all headings of the same level.

Use different heading levels to show relationships among subjects. Each heading level should have different attributes, such as placement or type styles, from the

main heading. Indent the second-level headings to show that they are a part of the main heading.

The report conclusion contains your findings based on the facts you present in the body of the report. Put each finding in a separate paragraph. Separate the conclusions of the report under a separate heading — Conclusions — so the reader can identify them quickly.

Recommendations are suggestions for actions based on the report facts and the conclusions drawn from them. Put each recommendation in a separate paragraph. Identify them with the heading Recommendations. A separate section of recommendations, like conclusions, gives them emphasis and makes them easy to identify.

Now that we've learned about the report text portion of a report, let's move on to the supplemental portion.

Parts of Formal Report	Contents
Preliminary Portion	Title page Abstract Preface Table of contents List of illustrations
Report Text	Body Conclusions Recommendations
Supplemental Portion	**Appendix** **Endnotes** **Bibliography**

Formal reports often contain one or more appendices that cover supplementary or supporting information such as detailed drawings, tables, test reports, and a glossary of terms. Appendices are usually lettered, for example, "Appendix A," or "Appendix B."

Do not put any information in an appendix that is essential to the reader's understanding of the report. Put such material in the body of the report. Summarize the key information of the appendix in the body, and put the bulk of the material in the appendices. If your report contains information from any published material, provide a separate page of endnote references in the order in which you quote them. Provide the heading *Endnotes*. You may also include an alphabetized bibliography of reference works you consulted in preparing your

report. Provide the heading *Bibliography.*

With formal reports, you usually send a letter of transmittal to the person who requested the report. This correspondence should be concise, but it should include these points:

- The title of the report with a statement that the report is enclosed
- The date the report was requested
- A short statement of the report's purpose
- A short statement about the key findings of the report
- A note of appreciation for the opportunity to work on the report with an offer to answer any questions the reader might have about the report

****

5-6　Questions

3) Which of the following is a true statement about the preliminary portion of a report? ____

　　1. The preliminary portion includes the title page, preface, and bibliography.

　　2. The first printed page after the title page is numbered "1" using Arabic numerals.

　　　　a. 1 only　　b. 2 only　　c. both 1 and 2　　d. neither 1 or 2

4) The title page of a report should include recommendations.　　　T　　　F

****

5-7　EXERCISES

Try evaluating the parts and contents of a formal report.
Obtain a report that you or someone else wrote and compiled. Read over the report. As you do, ask yourself these questions:

- Are the parts of the report distinct?
- Do the contents have appropriate headings?
- Do the headings in the table of contents match the headings in the report?
- Does the table of contents list the preliminary and supplemental portions of the report?
- Are the preliminary portions appropriately numbered with Roman numerals (i.e., ii, iii, iv, etc.)?

- Does the report contain more than four or five tables, graphs, or pictures? If so, does it provide a list of illustrations?
- Is the introduction brief or long? If long, does it have appropriate subheadings?
- Is the first page of the body appropriately numbered (i.e., with Arabic numerals)?
- Is the body organized chronologically or by parts?
- Does the report contain not only conclusions but also recommendations?
- Does the report contain information from any published material? If so, is there a separate page of endnote references? Are they in the order in which they were quoted? Were reference works consulted in preparing the report? If so, is there an alphabetized bibliography?

****

5-8   INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Informational reports, which include travel and progress reports, present the most important information in the first one or two paragraphs. Relevant details then follow in subsequent paragraphs.

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe and provide examples of informational reports

****

5-9   Informational reports communicate facts without any analysis or recommendation. They may be one-time reports dealing with a specific issue or problem, or periodic communications, such as budget, meeting, and project reports.

While informational reports may vary widely in content, they are usually brief, informal, and easily adapted to the memo format. Informational reports follow a deductive approach, which presents the most important information in the first one or two paragraphs. In subsequent paragraphs, follow with relevant details. If the information is lengthy or complex, add a brief summary paragraph that restates your opening point.

Common examples of informational reports include:

- Travel reports
- Progress reports
- Conference/meeting reports

You can also write informational reports for special purposes.

You can use a special purpose report to outline a new computer programming procedure.

When using a special purpose report to outline a new computer programming procedure, the first paragraph should indicate the purpose of the report: the new procedure. It should also briefly tell why the new procedure was designed. This point subtly convinces the reader about the value of the new procedure.

The body of the report should explain the procedure in clearly defined steps.

The last paragraph should help to remove the threat or inconvenience that the new procedure might create. It should show the writer's sensitivity to the audience.

Travel reports are another common type of informational communication. Their purpose is to:

- Inform the reader about your activities outside the office
- Document your activities outside the office

The introduction should stick to the important facts. It should indicate that the report is a travel report and should provide the date, city, and firms visited.

Each paragraph should concentrate on the critical activities at each firm that was visited. There should be no superficial or extraneous information to dilute the report.

The last paragraph should summarize the trip's activities and should include the writer's opinion about the success of the visits. It should also confirm any follow-up activities.

Progress reports (or project reports) are usually written periodically to inform management about the status of a certain project or about the activities of a certain department.

As required, progress reports incorporate information about the schedule, procedures, staffing, and budget of a project or department. They may also provide recommendations for changes in any of these components.

In the first progress report in an expected series, you should elaborate in detail on the various aspects involved. In subsequent communications, you can provide an introductory paragraph that summarizes work accomplished to date and then elaborates on current information.

A payroll department can use a monthly progress report to outline the department's accomplishments. The introductory paragraph should indicate that the purpose of the report is to list the accomplishments of the payroll department for a specified month.

Subsequent paragraphs should provide information about various payroll projects and should be introduced with headings. These project headings make it easy for the reader to obtain the needed information.

Conference/meeting reports document concisely the attendees, topics of discussion, and decisions made at meetings. As such, they provide a useful record for reference.

Reports of informal meetings summarize the main points of discussion. Reports (or minutes) of formal meetings follow the agenda pattern. Organize data under these agenda headings:

- Those present
- Those absent
- Reading and approval of minutes of the previous meeting
- Old business
- New business

A meeting report submitted by the development director of a community organization should begin by stating who attended the meeting, when the meeting was held, and the purpose of the meeting.

The report may then present the areas of concern identified at the meeting. It's best to present this information in a numbered list that is indented from the body of the report to call it to the reader's attention.

The final paragraph should clarify the consequences of the meeting. If there are **action items** that resulted from the meeting, the report writer should indicate who is responsible for making sure those items are handled in a timely manner.

****

5-10 Questions

5) Which of the following is a true statement about progress reports? ____

1. Progress reports are usually written periodically to inform management about the status of a certain project, or about the activities of a department.

2. In the first progress report in an expected series, you should only
   provide a summary of the various aspects involved.

   a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

****

5-11 EXERCISES

Try evaluating an informational report. Obtain an informational report — a special
purpose report, a travel report, a progress report, or a conference/meeting report
— that you or someone else wrote and compiled. Read over the report. As you
do, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it a one-time report dealing with a specific issue, or is it a periodic
  communication?
- Does it follow the deductive approach?
- If it's a special purpose report, does the first paragraph indicate the
  purpose of the report?
- If it's a travel report, does it provide the date, city, and companies visited?
  Does it summarize the activities and confirm any follow-up activities?
- If it's a progress report, is it the first report in an expected series or a
  follow-up report? Are there headings for the reader to obtain the needed
  information?
- If it's a conference/meeting report, is it an informal report summarizing the
  main points of discussion or a formal report following the agenda pattern?
  If it follows the agenda pattern, does it document with headings the
  attendees, topics of discussion, and decisions made?

****

5-12 ANALYTICAL REPORTS

Analytical reports are usually one-time reports written to address a specific
problem. They not only communicate facts but also offer opinions about those
facts. After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe and provide examples of analytical reports

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5-13 Like informational reports, analytical reports communicate, investigate, compare, and interpret facts. However, they also offer opinions and recommendations about facts. Analytical reports include:

- Justification reports
- Feasibility reports
- Research reports
- Recommendations

Analytical reports are usually one-time reports written to address a particular issue or problem. Depending upon the scope of the subject, analytical reports may be either brief and informal or long and formal.

- Informal reports follow the memo format.
- Formal analysis requires the formal report format.

The first part of an analytical report contains a concise statement of the problem and doesn't contain irrelevant facts or opinions.

The conclusion and solution of the analytical report follow logically from facts presented in the text.

Another way to set up an analytical report for easy reading is to use the four parts as headings. Under the first heading, Statement of the Problem, write a precise description of the problem.

The next heading is Investigation. The investigation portion of the report presents its analysis in a simple and readable way. Depending on the contents of the report, you can present the information in various ways, such as in a table or bulleted or numbered list.

The final two headings are Conclusion and Solution. In the solution portion, you offer your opinion about the facts presented in the investigation.

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5-14 Questions

6) Which of the following is a true statement about analytical reports? _____

     1. Like informational reports, analytical reports communicate facts without any opinions or recommendations.

     2. Analytical reports always follow the formal report format.

a. 1 only   b. 2 only   c. both 1 and 2   d. neither 1 or 2

7) Analytical reports are usually written periodically to inform management about a particular issue or problem.   T   F

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5-15 PERSUASIVE REPORTS

In the persuasive report, the writer uses positive, polite, and objective language to offer the best possible solution to a problem or situation.
After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the characteristics of a persuasive report
- Describe one common development pattern of a persuasive report

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5-16   The persuasive report, like the informational and analytical reports, communicates facts. Like the analytical report, it interprets facts. But the main thrust of the persuasive report is its recommendation — a specific call to action. The recommendation is offered not just as a solution to the problem. It is presented with the writer's strong conviction as the best possible solution to a problem or situation.

The persuasive report emphasizes action. This means that the writer of such a report must have both the responsibility and the authority to write it. It also means that the writer must be sure of his/her purpose and position in writing the report.

The writer must make certain of all the facts presented in the report and must use language that is both positive and polite. Clearly, the writer of a persuasive report wants to establish a good relationship with the reader.

Common examples of persuasive communications include: recommendations and proposals for research, development, planning, and sales. Persuasive reports, like analytical reports, may be either brief and informal or long and formal. The style depends on the scope of the subject.

- Informal reports adopt the memo format.
- Formal persuasion requires the formal report format.

The development pattern of a persuasive report may vary according to particular circumstances. This table illustrates one common pattern. Remember to use headings consistently and appropriately to identify various sections and

subsections.

Part of Report	Description
Introduction	Statement of the subject/problem Statement of the recommendation (and request)
Body	Elaboration of what, why, how, who, where, when
Conclusion	Advantages and disadvantages of the recommendation
Restatement of Recommendation (and Request)	Restatement of the recommendation (and request) given in the introduction

The introduction briefly identifies the subject or the problem of the report — for example:

- Congested parking patterns in a downtown area
- Proposed research in biogenetics
- Reorganization of a corporate information center

The introduction also briefly specifies the proposed recommendation concerning the subject or problem. If part of the recommendation involves a request for funds or other significant resources (for example, facilities, equipment, personnel), this should also be identified.

The body of the persuasive report should provide clear and complete answers to as many of the six journalistic questions as appropriate:

- What? — background, scope, methodology
- Why? — basic necessity
- How? — various costs
- Who? — personnel: their expertise and experience
- Where? — facilities, equipment
- When? — duration, completion date

To facilitate reading the various parts developed in the body of a long report, use appropriate headings, such as Scope, Personnel, and Equipment.

The conclusion elaborates on the advantages of the recommendation or proposal. If appropriate, it also addresses the disadvantages that could result if the recommendation is not acted upon. Remember to keep the conclusion as

objective as possible. Use whatever evidence you have to support your case. Avoid exaggerated claims and language.

To end the persuasive report on a positive note, restate the recommendation (and the request, if you ask for any significant resources).

Suppose a service supervisor at an insurance company writes to his superintendent and recommends that one of his employees be promoted. The introduction to the persuasive report includes the statement of the subject, which is the employee, and the statement of the recommendation, which is that the employee be promoted.

The body elaborates on why the employee deserves a promotion, what the employee has done to deserve it, and when the employee carried out those activities.

The conclusion notes the advantage of the employee's promotion.

The restatement of the recommendation sums up the report. It is brief and specific: that the employee be promoted.

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5-17 Questions

8) What two items does the introduction of a persuasive report identify? __,___

        a. subject   b. background   c. advantages   d. recommendation

****

5-18 EXERCISES

Write an informal persuasive report in which you try to persuade your supervisor to adopt a new procedure. Follow this development pattern: introduction, body, conclusion, restatement of recommendation (and request). As you write, keep these questions in mind:

- In the introduction, did you briefly identify the subject of the report and briefly specify the proposed recommendation concerning the subject?
- In the body, did you provide clear and complete answers to as many of the six journalistic questions as appropriate — what? why? how? who? where? when?
- If appropriate, did you provide headings such as Scope, Personnel, and Equipment?

- In the conclusion, did you elaborate on the advantages of your proposal and, if appropriate, address the disadvantages of not acting on your recommendation?
- At the end of your report, did you restate the recommendation and the request?

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5-19   REVIEW QUESTIONS

9) What is the following statement an example of? ___

Information for this report was obtained from reference material, manuals, and maps provided by the State Highway Department.

a. purpose   b. information sources   c. scope   d. authorization

10) Choose **two**. Which of the following are true statements about appendices, endnotes, and bibliographies? __, ___

a. Appendices are usually numbered, for example, "Appendix 1," or "Appendix 2."

b. Endnote references should be placed in the order in which you quote them.

c. A bibliography should always be alphabetized.

d. Put all information even if it is essential to helping the reader understand the report, in an appendix.

11) In which of the following reports is the main objective a call to action? ____

a. special purpose   b. analytical   c. informational   d. persuasive

****

Congratulations! You have finished all three parts of the Grammar and Writing Skills course. Once you have successfully completed the test for this part, you will be finished with your English requirements.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

action items
Assigned tasks that result from discussion during a meeting.

added detail fragments
Are created when writers add specific support to their arguments.

adverb
A word that modifies verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, prepositions, phrases, clauses, or sentences.

analytical reports
One-time reports written to address a particular issue or problem. They communicate, investigate, compare and interpret the facts, then they provide opinions and offer recommendations about these facts.

appendix
The section of the document that includes any items which might detract from the flow of the document. This section might include such items as printouts, reports, samples, reference materials, and error messages.

appositive
Extra words added to describe a simple subject.

appropriateness
Selecting the right word for the specific communication context. It requires that you consider the reader's familiarity with the subject, the reader's word preference, and the occasion of the communication.

basic skills
The section of the document which describes any skills necessary to work through the system or process.

bibliography
The supplemental section of a formal report that displays a listing of reference works you consulted in preparing your report.

call for action
The section of a sales proposal that invites the customer to act on your proposal. The call for action should give precise information telling the reader how to act next.

causal analysis pattern
A pattern of organizing business communications where you identify a cause-and-effect relationship.

chronological order
A method of organizing the body of text in a formal report in which you develop the subject in a time sequence.

clarity
Choosing words that precisely identify your meaning to your reader.

classification pattern
A pattern of organizing business communications which groups similar objects together and then defines the characteristics of each group. The subjects can be people, jobs, ideas or objects.

comma splice
Joins two independent clauses together loosely, with just a comma.

comparison/contrast
A pattern of organizing business communications which helps you explain the similarities or differences between products, people or services.

conciseness
Presenting your message in as few words as possible. It also involves avoiding unnecessary words and repetition of ideas.

conclusions
Findings in a report based on the facts present in the body of the report.

concreteness
Choosing words and phrases that are specific, leaving little chance for misinterpretation.

contraction
A word made by combining two words while leaving out some letters.

cover page
The first page of a fax transmittal.

deductive approach
A writing logic which presents the main idea first and then follows it with the evidence. It is also referred to as the direct approach.

definition approach
A pattern of organizing business communications which is an extended explanation of a particular concept or object.

dependent clause
Created by adding a subordinating word at the beginning of an independent clause.

description pattern
A pattern of organizing business communications where you provide information about the subject's characteristics — size, shape, color, construction and other features.

direct quotation
A word-for-word report of someone's exact words, either spoken or written. It is always placed within quotation marks.

division into parts order
A method of organizing the body of text in a formal report in which you break the subject into discrete parts and discuss them separately.

electronic mail
A way to send written correspondence from one person to another. The message is usually sent to a host computer, which stores the message in the recipient's mailbox for later retrieval.

endnotes
The supplemental section of a formal report that displays the references of the information from any published material in your report. They are usually listed on a separate page in the order in which you quote them.

footer
Provides document information at the bottom of the page.

formal report
A report that is appropriate for formal situations such as business reports to management, boards of directors, stockholders, and government agencies.

format
The way information is presented. This can include the use of headings, sub-headings, notes, cautions, warnings, and other elements of a document.

fragment
An incomplete sentence. A fragment lacks an essential sentence component; either a subject or a workable verb.

freshness
Choosing words that have color and life. It also involves avoiding trite and cliché expressions and jargon.

functions and procedures
The section(s) of the document where the reader learns how to perform the functions or procedures being written about.

fused sentence
Two independent clauses that are tightly fused together.

glossary
A list of terms used in the documentation and their definitions.

header
Provides document information at the top of the page.

independent clause
A subject and verb unit that composes the core of a sentence.

index
A list of key words or phrases along with their respective page numbers. An index is arranged alphabetically.

indirect quotation
An approximate report of what someone said or wrote, often preceded by the word "that." No quotation marks are used around indirect quotations.

inductive approach
A writing logic that presents the evidence first and then follows it with the main idea. It is also referred to as the indirect approach.

infinitive phrase
A phrase that begins with the preposition "to" and ends with a verb.

informational reports
One-time or periodic reports that communicate facts without any analysis or recommendation.

input
Requests for work.

intentional fragments
These sentence fragments are sometimes used to create an informal, conversational effect such as "Right on target".

intransitive verb
A verb that does not require an object to complete its meaning.

introduction
The section of the document which gives a brief description of the subject and states the purpose and scope of the document.

inverted sentences
Sentences which place the verb before the subject.

isolated relative clause
These are sentence fragments. They do not make sense on their own.

linking verbs
Words that show state of being.

memo
Brief correspondence intended for use within an organization only.

missing subject fragment
This type of sentence fragment lacks a stated subject.

narration
A story, a telling of events in sequence. In its most common form, narration is organized chronologically or in time.

organizational sequence
The order in which the information is presented within the document.

output
Completed work.

persuasion pattern
A pattern of organizing business communications where you convince your reader that your ideas on a particular subject are correct or at least worth considering.

persuasive report
A report that communicates and interprets facts. Its main thrust, though, is its recommendation which is a specific call to action.

planning worksheet
A series of questions that are answered to analyze the needs and restrictions of a writing task. The three parts of the planning worksheet are initial analysis, audience analysis, and presentation analysis.

point-by-point pattern
A pattern by which you present the details about each point in matched pairs.

preface
A brief statement that explains the purpose of a report, the scope of the contents, and any acknowledgement of help with content.

preposition
A word that expresses time, location, position, and other more abstract relationships.

prepositional phrase
A phrase consisting of a preposition and noun phrase which expresses a modification or predication.

presentation of plan
The section of a sales proposal where you give the specific details of how you will implement your plan and what the final deliverables will be.

press release
A type of sales literature that gives the writer an opportunity to publish news about a company or product. Press releases are news-like in style — informational, not persuasive.

process
The work that occurs after work is requested and before it is completed.

process analysis pattern
A pattern of organizing business communications which explains a procedure or process.

progress report
A report written periodically to inform management about the status of a certain project or about the activities of a certain department.

pronoun
A word that substitutes for a noun (person, place, or thing).

proper nouns
Names of specific people, places, groups, activities, or things.

proposal
A type of sales literature used to persuade someone to do or buy something.

recommendations
Suggestions for actions based on the report facts and the conclusions drawn from them.

reference manual
Documentation designed to let users look up specific information.

relative pronouns
These words typically do not begin sentences. Instead, they begin dependent clauses in the middle or at the end of sentences.

routine request letter
A neutral new letter used to provide complete and accurate information about what you want.

run-on sentence
Two or more sentences that are combined as though they are one. They can be corrected by separating and punctuating the sentences.

scope definition report
A report listing the specifications for the completed documentation.

solution to the problem
The section of a sales proposal letter where you state the customer's problem and briefly explain how you can solve it.

subject
The part of the sentence which tells who or what the sentence is about.

subject-by-subject pattern
A pattern by which you develop all the points relevant to the first subject, then you develop all the relevant points of the second subject.

subordinate conjunctions
Sometimes called subordinators. They begin dependent or subordinate clauses.

table of contents
The section of the document which lists all other major sections and subsections along with their respective page numbers.

task analysis
Procedures of a job listed in the order in which they are done.

tense
A distinction of form of the verb to express a clear sense of time.

title page
The part of the preliminary portion of a formal report which provides the title of the report, the author of the report, the date it was prepared and any other important identification, such as the report sponsor.

transitive verb
A verb that requires and object to complete its meaning.

transmittal letters
Neutral newsletters used to accompany materials and explain the package contents. They can also be used to highlight the advantages of a sales proposal.

travel reports
An informational communication whose purpose is to inform the reader about your activities outside the office and/or document your activities outside the office.

terms and conditions
The section of a sales proposal letter where you include information such as a breakdown of costs, the total cost and when payment is expected.

tutorial
Documentation which uses a step–by–step approach. Tutorials are designed for novice users.

user guide
Documentation which gives examples and uses step–by–step directions. User guides are designed for users of all skill levels.

verb
The part of the sentence which tells what the subject did, has or was.

verbal
a word that combines characteristics of a verb with those of a noun or adjective.

verbal phrase fragment
These sentence fragments contain a verbal phrase but lack a subject and a helping verb that indicates tense (time).

ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER 1

1-3

1) a

2) a,b,c

3) no

1-6

4) b,d,e

5) a,c,e

6) a

1-8

7) b

8) handicapped

1-13

9) a,d

10) TRUE

11a) P

11b) A

11c) P

11d) A

<u>**1-16**</u>

12) b,c,f

13) a

<u>**1-23**</u>

14) Moreover

15) One

CHAPTER 2

2-5

1) b

2a) yes

2b) yes

2c) no

2d) yes

2-9

3) yes

4a) yes

4b) yes

4c) no

4d) no

2-12

5) b

2-17

6) b,c,d

2-21

7) c

8) persuasion

9) b

10) d

CHAPTER 3

3-5

1) b

2) False

3-10

3) True

4) near the center of the page

3-13

5) c,a,d,e,b

3-17

6) False

7) d

3-21

8) d,b,a,c

9) a,c

3-23

10) b

11) block

12) a

CHAPTER 4

4-4

1) e

4-8

2) a

3) yes

4) Terms and Conditions

5) yes

4-12

6) a

7) a

8) b,c

9) c

10) a

11) Presentation of Plan

12) Solution to the Problem

CHAPTER 5

5-3

1) False

2) e

5-6

3) d

4) False

5-10

5) a

5-14

6) d

7) False

5-17

8) a,d

5-19

9) b

10) b,c

11) d