EIGHTH EDITION

Workplace Communications

THE BASICS

GEORGE J. SEARLES

Workplace Communications

The Basics

Eighth Edition

George J. Searles
Mohawk Valley Community College

Pearson

Executive Portfolio Manager: Aron Keesbury
Content Producer: Barbara Cappuccio
Content Developer: Brenda Hadenfeldt
Portfolio Manager Assistant: Christa Cottone
Senior Product Marketing Manager: Michael Coons
Product Marketing Manger: Nicholas Bolt
Content Producer Manager: Ken Volcjak
Managing Editor: Joanne Dauksewicz
Program Manager: Tom Stover
Digital Studio Course Producer: Elizabeth Bravo
Full-Service Project Manager: Sindhuja Vadlamani, Pearson CSC
Printer/Binder: LSC Communications, Inc.
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color/Hagerstown
Senior Art Director: Cate Barr
Cover Design: Cadence Design Studio

Acknowledgements of third party content appear on the appropriate page within the text, which constitutes an extension of this copyright page.

Copyright © 2020, 2017, 2013 by Pearson Education, Inc. 221 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permissions, request forms and the appropriate contacts within the Pearson Education Global Rights & Permissions department, please visit www.pearsoned.com/permissions/.

PEARSON, ALWAYS LEARNING, and Revel are exclusive trademarks in the U.S. and/or other countries owned by Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates.

Unless otherwise indicated herein, any third-party trademarks that may appear in this work are the property of their respective owners and any references to third-party trademarks, logos or other trade dress are for demonstrative or descriptive purposes only. Such references are not intended to imply any sponsorship, endorsement, authorization, or promotion of Pearson's products by the owners of such marks, or any relationship between the owner and Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates, authors, licensees or distributors.

MICROSOFT AND/OR ITS RESPECTIVE SUPPLIERS MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE SUITABILITY OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE DOCUMENTS AND RELATED GRAPHICS PUBLISHED AS PART OF THE SERVICES FOR ANY PURPOSE. ALL SUCH DOCUMENTS AND RELATED GRAPHICS ARE PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND. MICROSOFT AND/OR ITS RESPECTIVE SUPPLIERS HEREBY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES AND CONDITIONS WITH REGARD TO THIS INFORMATION, INCLUDING ALL WARRANTIES AND CONDITIONS OF MERCHANTABILITY, WHETHER EXPRESS, IMPLIED OR STATUTORY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, TITLE AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. IN NO EVENT SHALL MICROSOFT AND/OR ITS RESPECTIVE SUPPLIERS BE LIABLE FOR ANY SPECIAL, INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES OR ANY DAMAGES WHATSOEVER RESULTING FROM LOSS OF USE, DATA OR PROFITS, WHETHER IN AN ACTION OF CONTRACT, NEGLIGENCE OR OTHER TORTIOUS ACTION, ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE OR PERFORMANCE OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM THE SERVICES. THE DOCUMENTS AND RELATED GRAPHICS CONTAINED HEREIN COULD INCLUDE TECHNICAL INACCURACIES OR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS. CHANGES ARE PERIODICALLY ADDED TO THE INFORMATION HEREIN. MICROSOFT AND/OR ITS RESPECTIVE SUPPLIERS MAY MAKE IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR CHANGES IN THE PRODUCT(S) AND/OR THE PROGRAM(S) DESCRIBED HEREIN AT ANY TIME. PARTIAL SCREEN SHOTS MAY BE VIEWED IN FULL WITHIN THE SOFTWARE VERSION SPECIFIED.

MICROSOFT® WINDOWS®, and MICROSOFT OFFICE® ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF THE MICROSOFT CORPORATION IN THE U.S.A. AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS BOOK IS NOT SPONSORED OR ENDORSED BY OR AFFILIATED WITH THE MICROSOFT CORPORATION.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Searles, George J. (George John), author.
Title: Workplace communications : the basics / George J. Searles, Mohawk Valley Community College.
Description: Eighth edition. | Boston : Pearson, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018045615| ISBN 9780135203064 | ISBN 0135203066
Subjects: LCSH: English language--Business English. | English language--Techincal English. | Business writing--Problems, exercises, etc. | Technical writing--Problems, exercises, etc. | Business communication--Problems, exercises, etc. | Commercial correspondence--Problems, exercises, etc.
Classification: LCC PE1479.B87 S43 2018b | DDC 808.06/665--dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018045615

1 18

Pearson

Rental Edition
ISBN-10: 0-13-520306-6
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-520306-4

Instructor's Review Copy
ISBN-10: 0-13-520298-1
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-520298-2

Loose-Leaf Edition
ISBN-10: 0-13-520299-X
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-520299-9

Access Code Card
ISBN-10: 0-13-516481-8
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-516481-5

Revel Combo Card
ISBN-10: 0-13-525991-6
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-525991-7

Contents

Preface vii

1 The Keys to Successful Communication: Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Ethics 1

Purpose 2
Audience 2
Tone 6
Ethics 13
Exercises 16

2 Workplace Correspondence: Memos, E-mail, Text Messages, and Business Letters 22

Memos 23
E-mail 25
- Checklist: Evaluating a Memo or E-mail 29

Text Messages 29
- Checklist: Evaluating a Work-Related Text Message 31

Business Letters 31
- Format 36
- "Plain English" Style 38
- Checklist: Evaluating a Business Letter 39

Exercises 39

3 Effective Visuals: Tables, Graphs, Charts, and Illustrations 43

Principles of Effective Visuals 44
Tables 45
Graphs 45
- Line Graphs 46
- Bar Graphs 46

Charts 47
- Flow Charts 48
- Organizational Charts 50

Gantt Charts 50
Circle Charts 50
Illustrations 51
Photographs 51
Drawings 53
Diagrams 56
Checklist: Evaluating a Visual 58
Exercises 58

4 Short Reports: Page Design, Formats, and Types 60

Page Design 61
Report Formats: Memo, Letter, and Booklet 64
Incident Reports 66
Checklist: Evaluating a Memo Report 67
Recommendation Reports 69
Checklist: Evaluating a Letter Report 70
Progress Reports 73
Checklist: Evaluating a Booklet Report 77
Travel Reports 77
Exercises 80

5 Collateral Advertising: Fliers, Brochures, Newsletters, and Websites 82

Fliers 83
Checklist: Evaluating a Flier 83
Brochures 85
Checklist: Evaluating a Brochure 86
Newsletters 87
Checklist: Evaluating a Newsletter 91
Websites 91
Checklist: Evaluating a Website 95
Exercises 95

6 Instructions: Guidelines, Alerts, and Procedure Descriptions 97

Instructions 98
Troubleshooting Guidelines 99

Instructional Visuals 100
Checklist: Evaluating Instructions 103
Hazard Alerts 103
Procedure Descriptions 105
Checklist: Evaluating Procedure Descriptions 106
Exercises 107

7 Job Application Process: Online Search, Cover E-mail, Résumé, Interview, and Follow-Up 109

Job Search 110
Cover E-mail 111
Résumé 114
Interview 122
Follow-Up 124
Checklist: Evaluating a Cover E-mail, Résumé, and Follow-Up E-mail 126
Exercises 127

8 Oral Presentations: Preparation and Delivery 135

Preparation 136
Preliminaries 136
Rehearsal 137
Introductions and Conclusions 139
Introductions 139
Conclusions 140
Vocal and Physical Delivery 140
Vocal Delivery 140
Physical Delivery 141
Audience Rapport: Eye Contact and Enthusiasm 141
Eye Contact 141
Enthusiasm 142
PowerPoint and Other Presentation Aids 142
Evaluating Oral Presentations 146
Checklist: Evaluating a Public Speaker 147
Exercises 147

9 Proposals: Objectives, Types, and Formats 150

Objectives of Proposals 151
Solicited and Unsolicited Proposals 152
Internal and External Proposals 152
Formats of Proposals 153
    Checklist: Evaluating a Proposal 174
Exercises 174

10 Long Reports: Format, Collaboration, and Documentation 176

Identifying Reputable Sources 177
    Books 177
    Magazines 177
    Newspapers 178
    Academic Journals 178
    Websites 179
Incorporating Information 180
    Summary 180
    Paraphrase 181
    Quotation 181
Report Format Conventions 181
    Transmittal Document 181
    Title Page 182
    Abstract 182
    Table of Contents 182
    List of Illustrations 182
    Glossary 182
    Text 183
    Visuals 183
    Pagination 183
Collaboration 183
Documentation 187
    Bibliography 188
    Parenthetical Citations 193
    Checklist: Evaluating a Long Report 206
Exercises 207

Appendix A: Ten Strategies to Improve Your Style 209

Appendix B: Review of Mechanics: Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar 225

Index 241

Preface

What's New in the Eighth Edition?

The eighth edition of *Workplace Communications* retains all the essential features of the earlier versions while incorporating much new material—and it's now available as a Revel edition.

Chapter Updates

Refined and updated coverage in this eighth edition includes the following:

- Learning objectives are updated and emphasized, featured at the beginning of each chapter and paired directly with the in-text headings. Activities in Revel further support objectives with opportunities for application, reflection, and review.
- Model visuals and documents have been updated, including additional samples in the Revel edition.
- Coverage of technology has been updated throughout.
- Chapter 7, Job Application Process, features updated and expanded coverage of searching for jobs online, creating an online profile on websites such as LinkedIn, writing cover e-mails, and crafting a résumé to submit online.
- Chapter 8, Oral Presentations, features revised and updated coverage of delivery skills, practicing, and establishing rapport with the audience.
- Chapter 9, Proposals, has been reorganized to lead off with the discussion of objectives of proposals.
- To streamline the text, the previous chapter on summaries has been dropped, with brief summary material instead incorporated in Chapter 10, Long Reports.
- The text is now in full color.
- In Revel, each chapter offers integrated writing opportunities to help students connect chapter content with practice. Journal prompts elicit free-form, topic-specific responses (one per main heading), and an end-of-chapter Shared Writing prompt encourages students to share and reply to each other's brief responses to exercises or key topics from the chapter.
- Revel also includes graded end-of-chapter quizzes, tied directly to the learning objectives, for students to take as they complete their reading.

Hallmark Approach of *Workplace Communications*

Workplace Communications: The Basics originated as the solution to a problem. Semester after semester, I had searched unsuccessfully for a suitable text to use in my English 110 course, Oral and Written Communication, at Mohawk Valley Community College. Designed as an alternative to traditional first-year composition, the course satisfies curricular English requirements for students anticipating careers in such fields as welding, heating and air conditioning, and electrical maintenance. As might be expected, English 110 is a highly practical, hands-on course that meets the specialized needs of its target audience by focusing exclusively on job-related communications.

Although some excellent texts had been written in the fields of business and technical communication, nearly all were aimed at the university level and were therefore quite beyond the scope of a course like English 110. Finally, I decided to fill the gap and meet my students' needs by creating a textbook of my own. My students at Mohawk Valley responded enthusiastically, citing the book's accessibility, clarity, and pragmatic, down-to-earth emphasis as particularly appealing qualities. To my great satisfaction, it has met with similar success at many other colleges both here and abroad, with new, updated editions appearing every few years. There have also been Canadian, international, and global editions, and in 2016 a Mandarin translation from Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Short on theory, long on practical applications, and written in a simple, conversational style, it's exceptionally user-friendly. The book is appropriate not only for recent high school graduates but also for returning adult students and other nontraditional learners. It's comprehensive and challenging enough for trade school and community college courses such as English 110 and for similar introductory-level classes at most four-year institutions.

Like the earlier editions, this eighth edition includes many helpful features:

- Numerous examples and sample documents based on actual workplace situations
- Coverage addressing global communications
- Useful checklists at the ends of most sections
- Realistic exercises that reflect each chapter's focus, including exercises that address cross-cultural dynamics and collaborative exercises in all chapters

Revel ™

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessments integrated directly within the authors' narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

Learn more about Revel
www.pearson.com/revel

Pearson English Assignments Library

Available with your adoption of any © 2019 or © 2020 Pearson English course in Revel is the English Assignments Library comprising 500 essay and Shared Media prompts:

- A series of 300 fully editable essay assignments invite students to write on compelling, wide-ranging writing topics. You can choose from an array of writing prompts in the following genres or methods of development: Argument/Persuasion; Comparison/Contrast; Critique/Review; Definition; Description; Exposition; Illustration; Narration; Process Analysis; Proposal; and Research Project. Assignments can be graded using a rubric based on the WPA Outcomes for First-Year Composition. You can also upload essay prompts and/or rubrics of your own.
- 200 Shared Media assignments ask students to interpret and/or produce various multimedia texts to foster multimodal literacy. Shared Media activities include analyzing or critiquing short professional videos on topics of contemporary interest; posting brief original videos or presentation slides; and sharing original images—such as posters, storyboards, concept maps, or graphs.

Format Options

Below are format options by which *Strategies for Successful Writing* is available.

EBook

Students can choose to purchase or rent the EBook version of the text.

Revel Access Card

Students can purchase a physical Revel access code card at their campus bookstore.

Instant Access

Students can purchase access directly from Pearson to start their subscription immediately.

Print Upgrade

Students can choose to have a printed loose-leaf version sent to them with free shipping.

Revel Combo Card

The Revel Combo provides the Revel access code card plus a coupon for the loose-leaf print reference (delivered by mail). This option is perfect for students who need to purchase all of their materials from the campus bookstore.

Print Rental

Students can rent the text from their campus bookstore or directly from Pearson. Barnes & Noble and Follett bookstores are partners in this program.

Rent to Own

If a student has rented the text from either Pearson or their campus bookstore, they can choose to permanently own the text by paying a flat ownership fee.

Supplements

Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson's partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *Workplace Communications: The Basics*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download from Revel or on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at **www.pearson.com/us** to register for access.

- **Test Bank.** Each chapter of *Workplace Communications* has a corresponding chapter in the Test Bank with thirty-five multiple-choice questions and six short essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word and BlackBoard versions are available on the IRC.
- **Instructor's Resource Manual.** Available within Revel and on the IRC, this updated resource offers teaching guidelines for each chapter, sample course outlines, keys to the exercises, and additional material. All the visuals are available at high-quality resolution to facilitate the creation of PowerPoint slides. Please send me your comments and suggestions by e-mail to gsearles@mvcc.edu or by conventional mail to the Center for Arts & Humanities, Mohawk Valley Community College, 1101 Sherman Drive, Utica, NY 13501.
- **PowerPoint Presentation.** Make lectures more enriching for students. The accessible PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture outline and photos and figures from the textbook and Revel edition. Available on the IRC.

Acknowledgments

Permit me some acknowledgments. First, I thank my reviewers:

Lance Davis, Hennepin Technical College

Patricia Moseley, Central Carolina Technical College
Rima Gulshan, George Mason University
Roxanna Pisiak, Morrisville State College
James Allen, College of DuPage
Michael Hricik, Westmoreland County Community College
Ana Madani, Miami University

I also thank my publishing team at Pearson and Ohlinger Studios: Aron Keesbury, Carolyn Merrill, Cynthia Cox, Brenda Hadenfeldt, Joanne Dauksewicz, Tom Stover, and Kelly Cummins-Schulze.

On a more personal note, I wish also to thank my students and colleagues, who have taught me so much over the years. And I would be remiss indeed if I failed to acknowledge the assistance of former Mohawk Valley Community College librarians Colleen Kehoe-Robinson and Barb Evans. In addition, I salute my lifelong friend Frank Tedeschi and my "basketball buddy" John Lapinski; both continue to provide much-appreciated diversion, encouragement, and companionship.

Most importantly, of course, I thank my wife, Ellis; and my sons, Jonathan and Colin.

George J. Searles, Ph.D.
Mohawk Valley Community College

Chapter 1

The Keys to Successful Communication: Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Ethics

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1.1 Determine your purpose for writing.

1.2 Identify the intended audience for your writing.

1.3 Employ an appropriate tone.

1.4 Demonstrate strict ethical standards.

Every instance of workplace writing occurs for a specific reason and is intended for a particular individual or group. Much the same is true of spoken messages, whether delivered in person or by phone. Therefore, both the purpose and the audience must be carefully considered to ensure that the tone of the exchange is appropriate to the situation. In addition, all workplace communication should be true, accurate, and honest—in a word, ethical. Although this may seem obvious, awareness of purpose, audience, tone, and ethics is crucial to ensuring that your communication succeeds. Equally important is the need to understand that writing is a three-step process involving not only the writing itself but also prewriting and rewriting. This chapter concentrates on these fundamental concerns, presents a brief overview of the basic principles involved, and provides exercises in their application.

Purpose

1.1 Determine your purpose for writing.

Nearly all workplace writing is done for at least one of three purposes: to create a record, to request or provide information, or to persuade. For example, a caseworker in a social services agency might interview an applicant for public assistance to gather information that will then be reviewed in determining the applicant's eligibility. Clearly, such writing is intended both to provide information and to create a record. On the other hand, the purchasing director of a manufacturing company might write a letter or e-mail inquiring whether a particular supplier can provide materials more cheaply than the current vendor. The supplier will likely reply promptly. Obviously, the primary purpose here is to exchange information. In yet another setting, a probation officer composes a presentencing report influencing the court to grant probation to the offender or impose a jail sentence. The officer may recommend either, and the report will become part of the offender's record, but the primary purpose of this example of workplace writing is to persuade.

At the prewriting stage of the writing process—before you attempt to actually compose—you must first do some *thinking* to identify which of the three categories of purpose applies. Ask yourself, "Am I writing primarily to create a record, to request or provide information, or to persuade?" Once you make this determination, the question becomes, "Summarized in one sentence, what am I trying to say?" To answer, you must zoom in on your subject matter, focusing on the most important elements. A helpful strategy is to use the "Five W's" that journalists use to structure the opening sentences of newspaper stories: Who, What, Where, When, Why. Just as they do for reporters, the Five W's will enable you to get off to a productive start.

Audience

1.2 Identify the intended audience for your writing.

Next, ask yourself, "Who will read what I have written?" This is a crucial part of the prewriting stage of the communication process.

An e-mail, letter, report, or oral presentation must be tailored to its intended audience; otherwise, it probably won't achieve the desired results. Therefore, ask yourself the following questions before attempting to prepare any sort of formal communication:

- Am I writing to one person or more than one?
- What are their job titles and/or areas of responsibility?
- What do they already know about the specific situation?
- Why do they need this information?
- What do I want them to do as a result of receiving it?
- What factors might influence their response?

Because these questions are closely related, the answers sometimes overlap. A good starting point for sorting them out is to classify your audience by level: layperson, expert, or executive. The layperson doesn't possess significant prior knowledge of the field, whereas an expert obviously does. An executive reader has decision-making power and, one hopes, considerable expertise. By profiling your readers or listeners this way, you'll come to see the subject of your planned communication from your audience's viewpoint as well as your own. You'll be better able to state the purpose of your communication, provide necessary details, cite meaningful examples, achieve the correct level of formality, and avoid possible misunderstandings, thereby achieving your desired outcome.

In identifying your audience, remember that workplace communications fall into four broad categories:

- ***Upward communication:*** Intended for those above you in the hierarchy. (Example: An e-mail reply to a question from your supervisor.)
- ***Lateral communication:*** Intended for those at your own level in the hierarchy. (Example: A voice mail to a coworker with whom you're collaborating.)
- ***Downward communication:*** Intended for those below you in the hierarchy. (Example: An oral reminder to an intern you've been assigned to train.)
- ***Outward communication:*** Intended for those outside your workplace. (Example: A letter or e-mail to someone at a company with which you do business.)

These differences will influence your communications in many ways, particularly in determining format. For in-house communications (the first three categories), the memo was traditionally the preferred written medium. The memo has now been almost totally replaced by e-mail. And text messaging, of course, has become another major form of in-house communication. For outward communications, such as correspondence with clients, customers, or the general public, the standard business letter has been the norm. Business letters are either mailed or transmitted by fax machine. Even for outward communications, though, e-mail is often the best choice because of its speed and efficiency. If a more formal document is required, a confirmation letter can always be sent later.

Increasingly, outward communication involves transcultural interactions. In the global marketplace, you face particular challenges when composing documents intended for readers in other countries. Although it's always foolish to embrace cultural and ethnic stereotypes, cultural differences do indeed exist. In fact, specialized terminology has been developed to address this issue. For example, experts in the field of communications differentiate between *high-context* and *low-context* cultures. Business and technical communications in high-context cultures such as many in Asia, the Middle East, and South America typically exhibit an emphasis on background information and often contain an interpersonal component. Those in low-context cultures such as Australia, much of Western Europe, and certainly the United States do not. Such differences can result in very dissimilar handlings of essentially identical situations, as Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate.

Figure 1.1 Letter to an Overseas Reader

3-Dynamics

221 River Street
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

February 4, 2019

Mr. Yukio Tanaka
Shinchoku International
7-3-1 Hongo
Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-8654
Japan

Dear Mr. Yukio Tanaka:

Everyone at 3-Dynamics enjoyed your recent visit to our corporate offices, but we must apologize for the frigid New Jersey weather. We are sure that your wife and family are glad that you have returned safely and are delighted with the lovely gifts you bought for them at Bloomingdale's, one of our most highly regarded department stores.

As you know, 3-Dynamics was founded in 2010 and was an early leader in three-dimensional printing. Since then we have expanded and become the most well-known American company in this field. Much of our success is the result of our decision to develop both hardware and software, rather than focusing exclusively on one area of this exciting technology.

Certainly we are enthusiastic about the prospect of cooperating with Shinchoku International in a joint venture. Such an undertaking would be very rewarding for both companies, allowing us to capture a much greater segment of the worldwide market than either can claim at present.

With your permission, we will contact you in the very near future to arrange for the next step in establishing our partnership.

Respectfully,

Edward Ahern

Edward Ahern
Assistant Director of Marketing

Figure 1.2 Letter to an American Reader

3-Dynamics

221 River Street
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

February 11, 2019

Mr. Richard Gray
SxSW Technologies
50 Sixth Street, Suite 56
Austin, TX 78700

Dear Richie,

Thanks for making the trip east last week to discuss our possible merger.

Everybody here agrees it's something we should explore further, with an eye toward capturing a much greater share of the rapidly expanding 3-D market. Could be a major win-win for both SxSWT and 3-Dynamics.

Someone here will contact you very soon to start putting the wheels into motion. Stay tuned!

Best,

Ed

Edward Ahern

Assistant Director of Marketing

The letter to the Japanese company "shoots the breeze" through its more formal tone and conclusion of personal detail before getting down to the "take-away." The letter to the American company "cuts to the chase." Idioms such as these, although well-known by American English speakers, might be quite confusing—in fact meaningless—to readers elsewhere. Indeed, that's the definition of an idiom: an expression that defies direct translation. This is another key feature of global communication. Colloquialisms vary greatly around the world, even among native speakers of English in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, and elsewhere. Therefore, they should definitely be avoided when writing to readers outside the United States. Even contractions—which can be seen as too informal—should not appear. The same is true of slang, abbreviations, acronyms, and other varieties of nonstandard phrasing. Of course, it's *always* better to avoid such expressions in workplace writing, but especially so in transcultural situations. These usages not only increase the likelihood of miscommunication but are difficult or impossible to translate meaningfully if your writing must be recast in your reader's language.

Also important when writing in an international setting, is to use familiar, commonplace vocabulary and strive for direct, straightforward sentence structure that follows the basic subject/verb/object pattern. This is always preferable to a complex, roundabout style, but never more so than in the global context.

In addition, it's necessary to avoid cultural references, which may not be understood by readers in other countries. Many American idioms presuppose a familiarity with our popular culture, particularly sports. If we refer to a "Hail Mary," for example, or a "slam dunk," we'll be understood "in a New York minute," but only if our reader is also from this country. Such expressions are useful only in rather informal exchanges and are never appropriate when addressing readers in other parts of the world.

This is equally true of attempts at humor, which may not only puzzle but perhaps unintentionally insult the reader. Although we must always consider questions of audience when composing workplace documents, attention to this fundamental issue is paramount in the international context.

Tone

1.3 Employ an appropriate tone.

As Table 1.1 reflects, the drafting stage of the three-part writing process is the least complicated. If you've devoted enough time and attention to prewriting, you'll know what you intend to say, you'll have *enough* to say, and you'll know what goes where, so you'll be able to compose fairly quickly. Indeed, at the drafting stage, you should simply push ahead rather than stopping to fine-tune because it's best not to disrupt the flow of your ideas. Of course, if you notice an obvious miscue (a typo, for example), it's okay to correct it, but keep the emphasis on completing the draft before you run out of time and energy. Any additional polishing that may be needed can be done during the final, most challenging stage of the process, rewriting.

Table 1.1 **Writing: A Three-Step Process**

Prewriting	Drafting	Rewriting
• Identify your purpose and your intended audience. • Decide what needs to be said. • Choose the most appropriate format (e-mail, letter, report).	• Create a first draft, concentrating on content rather than fine points of mechanics, style, and tone.	• Consider the organization of the content. • Check for accuracy, completeness, and ethical validity. • Revise for style, striving for concision and simplicity. • Adjust the tone to suit the audience. • Edit for mechanical errors (typos, spelling, grammar, punctuation).

Nobody produces good writing on the first try. You *must* rewrite. But rewriting involves far more than simply correcting mechanical errors. For example, what may have seemed sufficient and logical at the drafting stage might now strike you as much less so. Therefore, you might want to add something here and there or take something out. How about organization?

- Are the individual words in each sentence precisely the right ones, and is each exactly where it belongs?
- Are the sentences in each paragraph presented in the best possible order?
- Are the paragraphs in the best sequence, or should they be rearranged?

In addition, you should look for ways to tighten your style by avoiding wordiness and expressing yourself as simply and directly as possible. Very important, is your tone appropriate to your purpose and your intended reader?

Your hierarchical relationship to your reader plays a major role in determining your tone, especially when you're attempting to convey "bad news" (the denial of a request from an employee you supervise, for example) or to suggest that staff members adopt some new or different procedure. Although such messages can be phrased in a firm, straightforward manner, a harsh voice or belligerent attitude is seldom productive.

Any workforce is essentially a team of individuals cooperating to achieve a common goal: the mission of the business, organization, or agency. A high level of collective commitment is needed for this to happen. Ideally, each person exerts a genuine effort to foster a climate of shared enthusiasm. But if coworkers become defensive or resentful, morale problems inevitably develop, undermining productivity. In such a situation, everyone loses.

Therefore, don't try to sound tough or demanding when writing about potentially sensitive issues. Instead, appeal to the reader's sense of fairness and cooperation. Phrase your sentences in a nonthreatening way, emphasizing the reader's viewpoint by using a reader-centered (rather than a writer-centered) perspective. For obvious reasons, this approach should also govern your correspondence intended for readers outside the workplace, especially those in other countries.

Here are some examples of how to creatively change a writer-centered perspective into a reader-centered perspective:

Writer-Centered Perspective	**Reader-Centered Perspective**
If I can answer any questions, I'll be happy to do so.	If you have any questions, please ask.
We shipped the order this morning. I'm happy to report that . . .	Your order is on its way. You'll be glad to know that . . .

Notice that changing *I* and *we* to *you* and *your* personalizes the communication. Focusing on the reader is also known as the "you" approach. Another important element of the "you" approach is the use of *please, thank you,* and other polite terms.

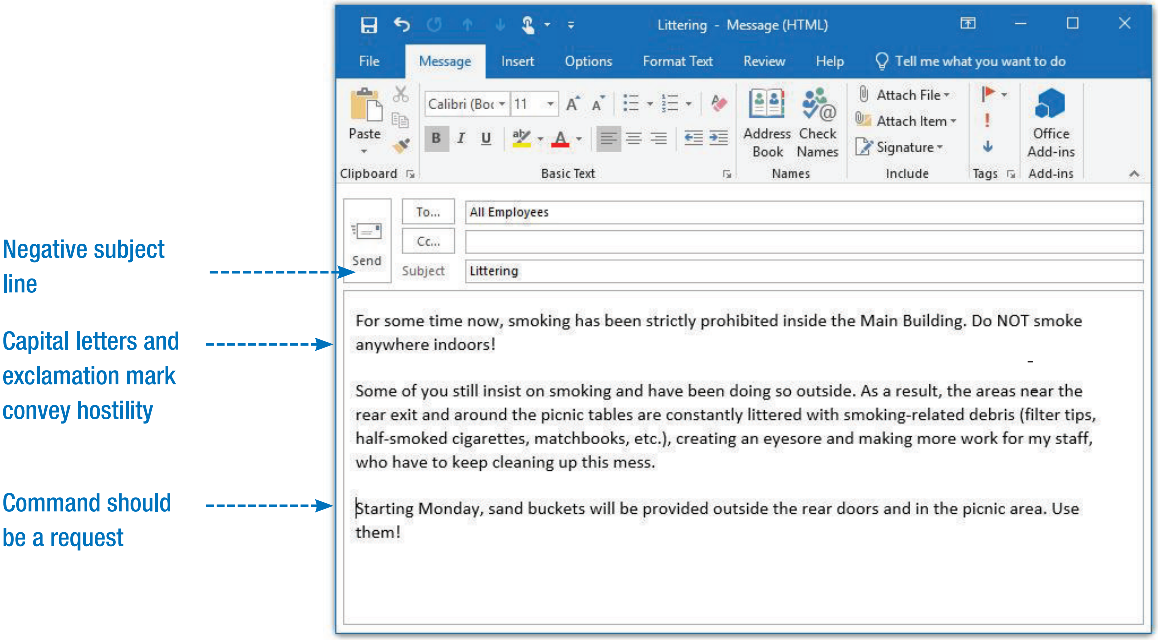
Now consider Figures 1.3 and 1.4. Both e-mails have the same purpose—to change a specific behavior—and both address the same audience. But the first version adopts a writer-centered approach and is harshly combative. The reader-centered revision, on the other hand, is diplomatic and therefore much more persuasive. The first is almost certain to create resentment and hard feelings, whereas the second is far more likely to achieve the desired results.!

In most settings, you can adopt a somewhat more casual manner with your equals and with those below you than with those above you in the chain of command or with persons outside the organization. But in any case, avoid an excessively conversational style. Even when the situation isn't particularly troublesome and even when your reader is well known to you, remember that "business is business." Although you need not sound stuffy, it's important to maintain a certain level of formality. Accordingly, you should never allow personal matters to appear in workplace correspondence. Consider, for example, Figure 1.5, an e-mail in which the writer has obviously violated this rule. Although the tone is appropriately respectful, the content should be far less detailed, as in the revised version shown in Figure 1.6.

A sensitive situation awaits you when you must convey unpleasant information or request assistance or cooperation from superiors. Although you may sometimes yearn for a more democratic arrangement, every workplace has a pecking order that you must consider as you choose your words. Hierarchy exists because some individuals—by virtue of more experience, education, or access to information—are in fact better positioned to lead. Although this system sometimes functions imperfectly, the supervisor, department head, or other person in charge responds better to subordinates whose communications reflect an understanding of this basic reality. Essentially, the rules for writing to a person higher on the ladder are the same as for writing to someone on a lower rung. Be focused and self-assured, but use the "you" approach, encouraging the reader to see the advantage in accepting your recommendation or granting your request.

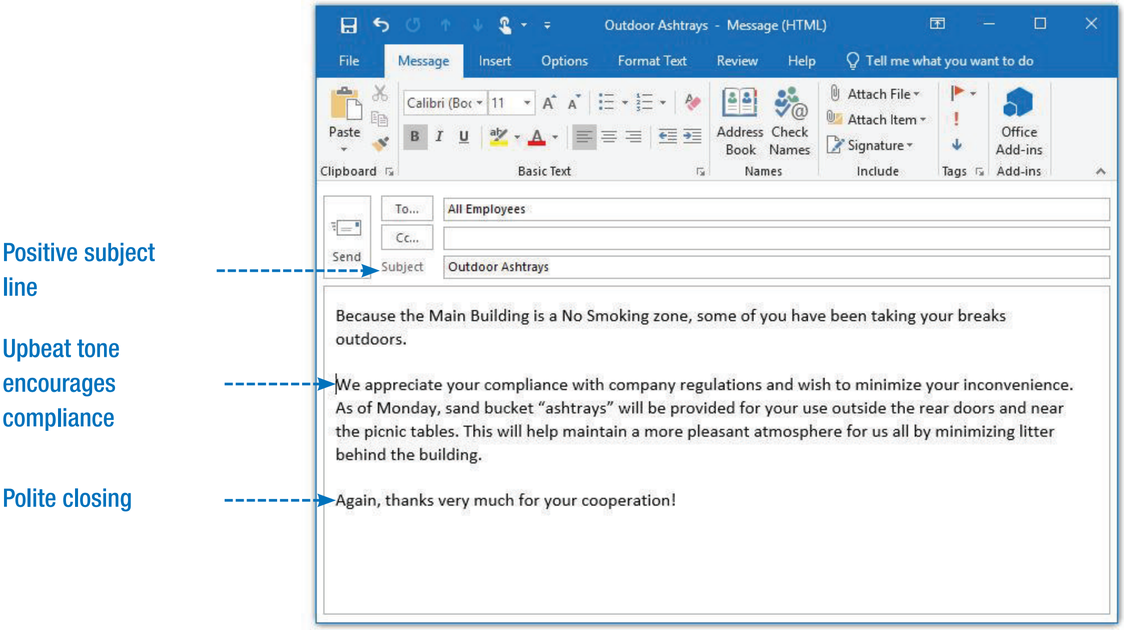
Nowhere is this more crucial than in the global context. Obviously, it would be impossible to familiarize oneself with all the many cultural differences that exist around the world. Nevertheless, it's important to recognize that in the realm of workplace communications, most cultures place a very high value on tact and courtesy. Informality can easily be viewed as disrespect, and indirection is often preferable to outright refusal or disagreement. In many Asian countries, for example, "maybe" is often understood to mean "no," as is the phrase "we'll think about it." This is in

Figure 1.3 Original E-mail



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

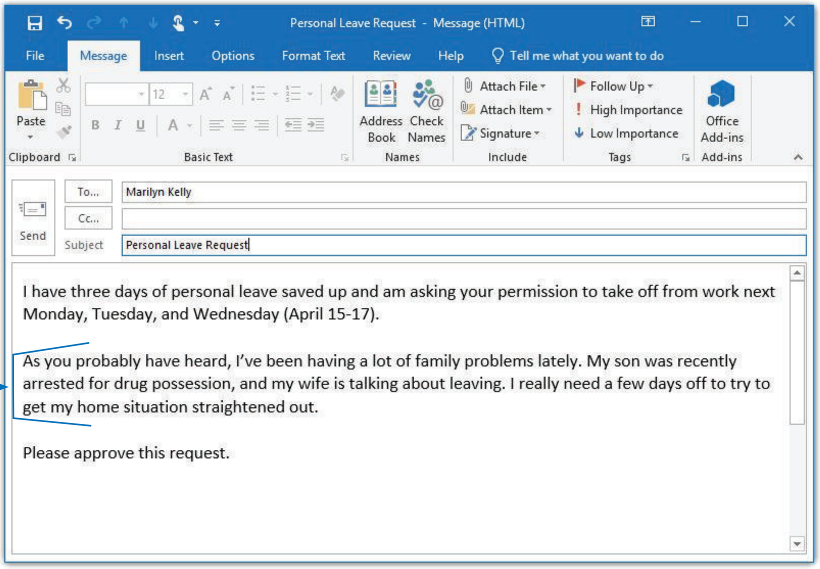
Figure 1.4 Revised E-mail



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

Figure 1.5 Original E-mail

Too much personal information

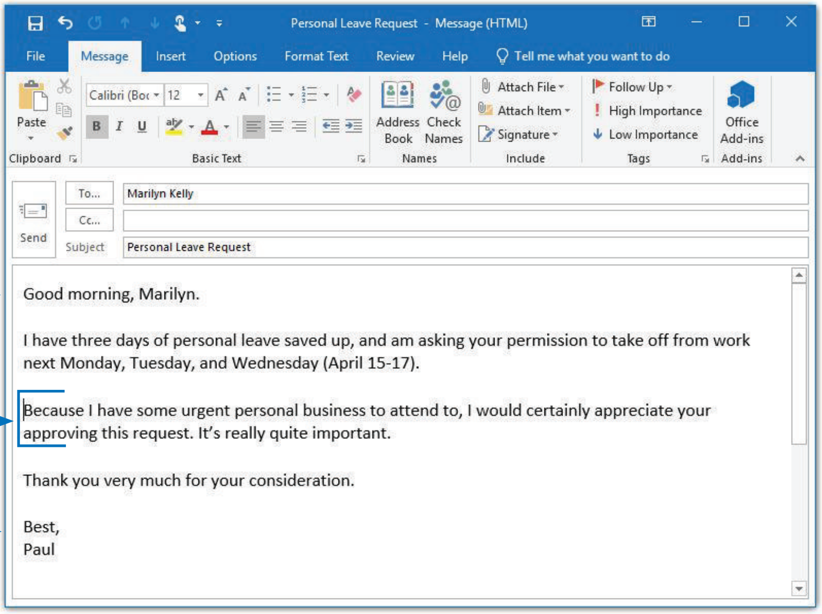


SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

Figure 1.6 Revised E-mail

Salutation and complimentary close personalize the tone.

Better approach



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

Tech Tips

A slangy, vernacular style is out of place in workplace writing, as are expletives and any other coarse or vulgar language. Something that may seem clever or humorous to you may not amuse your reader and will probably appear foolish to anyone reviewing the correspondence later. Keep this in mind when sending e-mail, a medium that seems to encourage looser, more playful phrasing.

Avoid abbreviations and acronyms hatched on social media and other informal contexts such as text messaging. Although inventive, most are inappropriate for the workplace because they may not be readily understood—especially by older workers and those for whom English is not their native language. Here are ten examples.

BTW: by the way
FWIW: for what it's worth
HAND: have a nice day
IMHO: in my humble opinion
IOW: in other words
IRL: in real life
OTOH: on the other hand
TMOT: trust me on this
TTYTT: to tell you the truth
WADR: with all due respect

At the same time, *technical* acronyms specific to particular businesses and occupations facilitate dialogue among employees familiar with those terms. As with so many aspects of workplace communications, the use of acronyms is largely governed by considerations of purpose, audience, and tone.

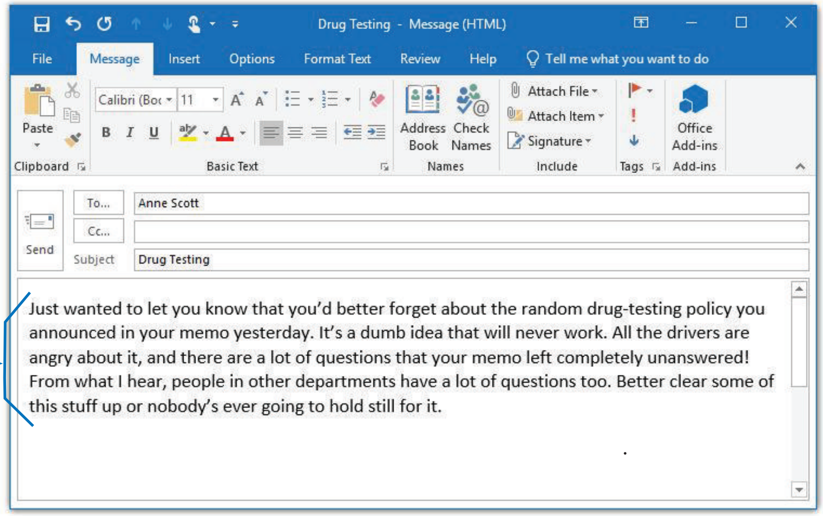
direct contrast to the American tendency toward bluntness, which can be interpreted as overly aggressive or even combative.

An especially polite tone is advisable when addressing those who outrank you. Acknowledge that the final decision is theirs and that you are fully willing to abide by that determination. This can be achieved either through "softening" words and phrases (*perhaps, with your permission, if you wish*) or simply by stating outright that you'll accept whatever outcome may develop. For example, consider the e-mails in Figures 1.7 and 1.8. Although both say essentially the same thing, the first is completely inappropriate in tone, so much so that it would likely result in negative consequences for the writer. The second would be much better received because it properly reflects the nature of the professional relationship.

Communicating with customers or clients also requires a great deal of sensitivity and tact. This is especially important when communicating with readers abroad, many of whom are accustomed to a more formal and polite tone than is common here. When justifying a price increase, denying a claim, or apologizing for a delay, you'll probably create an unpleasant climate unless you present the facts in a gentle manner. Always strive for the most upbeat, reader-centered wording you can devise.

Figure 1.7 Original E-mail

Hostile tone creates negative climate



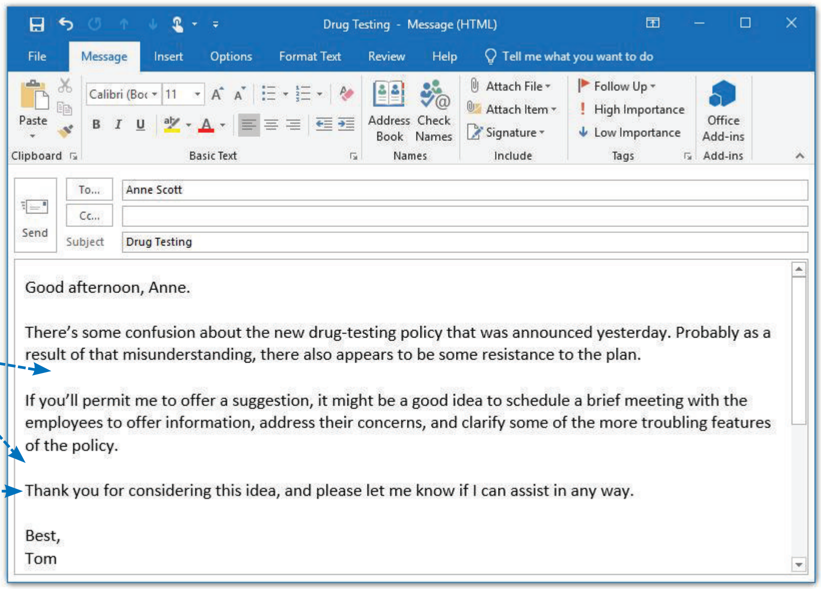
SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

Figure 1.8 Revised E-mail

Salutation and complimentary close personalize the tone.

Paragraph breaks segment the content

Polite closing and offer of assistance reinforce positive tone



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation.

Here are some examples of how to rephrase negative content in more positive, reader-centered terms:

Negative Wording	**Positive Wording**
We cannot process your claim because the necessary forms have not been completed.	Your claim can be processed as soon as you complete the necessary forms.
We do not take phone calls after 3:00 p.m. on Fridays.	You may reach us by telephone on Fridays until 3:00 p.m.
We closed your case because we never received the information requested in our letter of April 2.	Your case will be reactivated as soon as you provide the information requested in our April 2 letter.

When the problem has been caused by an error or oversight on your part, be sure to apologize. However, do not state specifically what the mistake was or your letter may be used as evidence against you should a lawsuit ensue. Simply acknowledge that a mistake has occurred, express regret, explain how the situation will be corrected, and close on a conciliatory note. For example, consider the letter in Figure 1.9.

The body and conclusion are fine, but the introduction practically invites legal action. Here's a suggested revision of the letter's opening paragraph, phrased in less incriminating terms:

> Thank you for purchasing our product and for taking the time to contact us about it. We apologize for the unsatisfactory condition of your Superior microwave dinner.

Moreover, given the serious nature of the complaint, the customer services representative should certainly have made a stronger effort to establish a tone of sincerely apologetic concern. As it stands, this letter seems abrupt and rather impersonal—certainly not what the context requires. (For a much better handling of this kind of situation, see the adjustment letter in Figure 2.6.) This is not to suggest, however, that workplace communications should attempt to falsify reality or dodge responsibility. On the contrary, there's a moral imperative to uphold strict ethical standards.

Ethics

1.4 Demonstrate strict ethical standards.

Recent corporate and government misdeeds have put ethical questions under the spotlight and greatly increased the public's appetite for investigative reporting by the media. The online *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines *ethics* as "the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad, right and wrong." Essentially, ethics involves choosing honesty over dishonesty, requiring us to act with integrity even when there would be short-term gains for behaving otherwise. Ethical communication must therefore be honest and fair to everyone involved.

By their nature, workplace communications can greatly affect people's lives. Accordingly, customers and clients, investors, taxpayers, and workers themselves should be able to treat such materials as accurate, reliable, and trustworthy—in

Figure 1.9 Letter to Customer

SUPERIOR FOODS, INC.

135 Grove St., Atlanta, GA 30300 (324) 555-1234

August 23, 2019

Mr. Philip Updike
246 Alton St.
Atlanta, GA 30300

Dear Mr. Updike:

Wording is too explicit

We are sorry that you found a piece of glass in your Superior microwave dinner. Please accept our assurances that this is a very unusual incident.

Here are three coupons redeemable at your local grocery store for complimentary Superior dinners of your choice.

Positive tone despite negative situation

We hope you will continue to enjoy our fine products.

Sincerely,

John Roth

John Roth
Customer Services Dept.

Enclosures (3)

short, ethical. Documents fail the ethics test if corrupted by any of the following tactics:

- ***Suppression of information:*** The outright burying of data to hide inconvenient truths. (Example: A company fails to reveal product-testing results that indicate potential danger to consumers.)
- ***Falsification or fabrication:*** Changing or simply inventing data to support a desired outcome. (Example: A company boasts of a fictitious enterprise to lure investors into supporting a new venture.)
- ***Overstatement or understatement:*** Exaggerating the positive aspects of a situation or downplaying negative aspects to create the desired impression. (Example: A public-opinion survey describes 55 percent of the respondents as a "substantial majority" or 45 percent as "a small percentage.")
- ***Selective misquoting:*** Deleting words from quoted material to distort the meaning. (Example: A supervisor changes a report's conclusion that "this proposal will seem feasible only to workers unfamiliar with the situation" to "this proposal will seem feasible . . . to workers.")
- ***Subjective wording:*** Using terms deliberately chosen for their ambiguity. (Example: A company advertises "customary service charges," knowing that "customary" is open to broad interpretation.)
- ***Conflict of interest:*** Exploiting behind-the-scenes connections to influence decision making. (Example: A board member of a community agency encourages the agency to hire her company for paid services rather than soliciting bids.)
- ***Withholding information:*** Refusing to share relevant data with coworkers. (Example: A computer-savvy employee provides misleading answers about new software to make a recently hired coworker appear incompetent.)
- ***Plagiarism:*** Taking credit for someone else's ideas, findings, or written material. (Example: An employee assigned to prepare a report submits a similar report written by someone at another company and downloaded from the Internet.)

Workers must weigh the consequences of their actions, considering their moral obligations. If this is done in good faith, practices such as those outlined in the preceding list can surely be avoided. Decisions can become complicated, however, when obligations to self and others come into conflict. Workers often feel pressure to compromise personal ethical beliefs to achieve company goals. All things being equal, a worker's primary obligation is to self—to remain employed. But if the employer permits or requires actions that the employee considers immoral, a problematic situation is created, forcing the worker to choose among two or more unsatisfactory alternatives. As everyone knows, whistle-blowing can incur heavy penalties: ostracism, undesirable work assignments, poor performance reviews—or even termination. And even if the objection does succeed, the worker must then return to an even more hostile climate. Should the person seek employment elsewhere, blacklisting may have already sabotaged the job search.

There are no easy resolutions to ethical dilemmas, but we all must be guided by conscience. Obviously, this can involve some difficult decisions. By determining your purpose, analyzing your audience, and considering the moral dimensions of the situation, you'll achieve the correct tone for any communication. As we have seen, this is crucial for dealing with potentially resistive readers (especially those above you in the workplace hierarchy) and when rectifying errors for which you're accountable. In all instances, however, a courteous, positive, reader-centered, and ethical approach leads to the best results.

EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1.1

Revise each of the following three communications to achieve a tone more appropriate to the purpose and audience.

SOUTHEAST INSURANCE COMPANY

Southeast Industrial Park — Tallahassee, FL 32301
Telephone: (850) 555-0123 — Fax: (850) 555-3210

November 3, 2019

Mr. Francis Tedeschi
214 Summit Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear Mr. Tedeschi:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your 11/2/19 claim.

Insured persons entitled to benefits under the Tallahassee Manufacturing Co. plan effective December 1, 2005, are required to execute statements of claims for medical-surgical expense benefits only in the manner specifically mandated in your certificate holder's handbook.

Your claim has been quite improperly executed, as you have neglected to procure the Physician's Statement of Services Rendered. The information contained therein is prerequisite to any consideration of your claim.

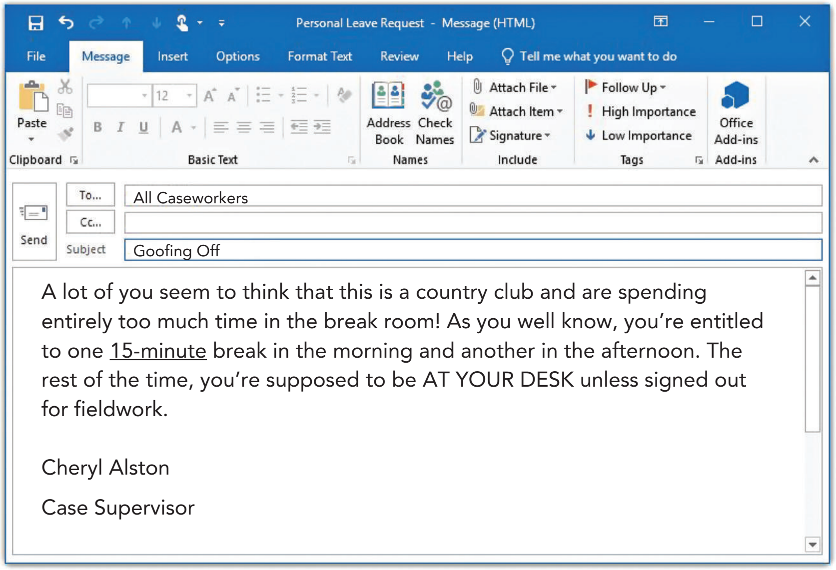
Enclosed is the necessary form. See that it's filled out and returned to us without delay or your claim cannot be processed.

Yours truly,

Ann Jurkiewicz

Ann Jurkiewicz
Claims Adjustor

Enclosure



Personal Leave Request - Message (HTML)

To... All Caseworkers

Cc...

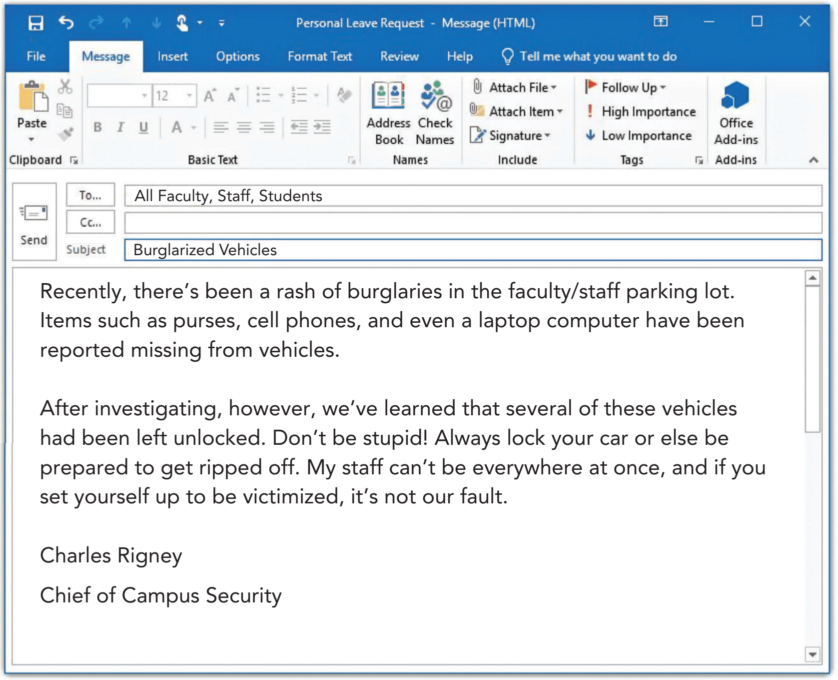
Subject Goofing Off

A lot of you seem to think that this is a country club and are spending entirely too much time in the break room! As you well know, you're entitled to one 15-minute break in the morning and another in the afternoon. The rest of the time, you're supposed to be AT YOUR DESK unless signed out for fieldwork.

Cheryl Alston

Case Supervisor

SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation



Personal Leave Request - Message (HTML)

To... All Faculty, Staff, Students

Cc...

Subject Burglarized Vehicles

Recently, there's been a rash of burglaries in the faculty/staff parking lot. Items such as purses, cell phones, and even a laptop computer have been reported missing from vehicles.

After investigating, however, we've learned that several of these vehicles had been left unlocked. Don't be stupid! Always lock your car or else be prepared to get ripped off. My staff can't be everywhere at once, and if you set yourself up to be victimized, it's not our fault.

Charles Rigney

Chief of Campus Security

SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation

EXERCISE 1.2

Revise each of the following three communications to eliminate inappropriate tone and/or content.

BANCROFT'S
IN THE MALL

The Turnpike Mall • Turnpike East • Augusta, ME 04330

February 18, 2019

Ms. Barbara Wilson
365 Grove St.
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Your Bancroft's charge account is $650.55 overdue. We must receive a payment immediately.

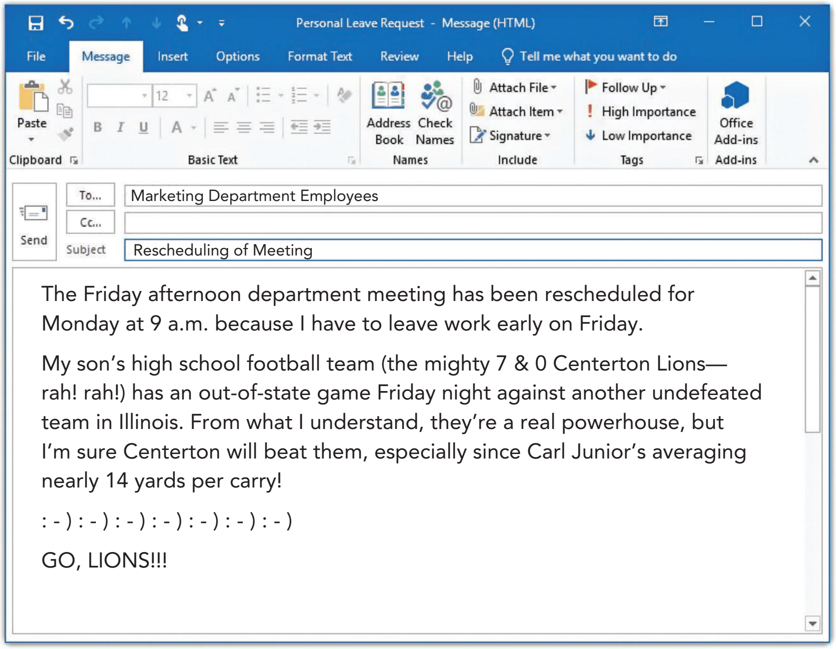
If we don't receive a minimum payment of $50 within three days, we'll refer your account to a collection agency, and your credit rating will be permanently compromised.

Send a payment at once!

Sincerely,

Michael Modoski

Michael Modoski
Credit Department



Personal Leave Request - Message (HTML)

To... Marketing Department Employees

Subject: Rescheduling of Meeting

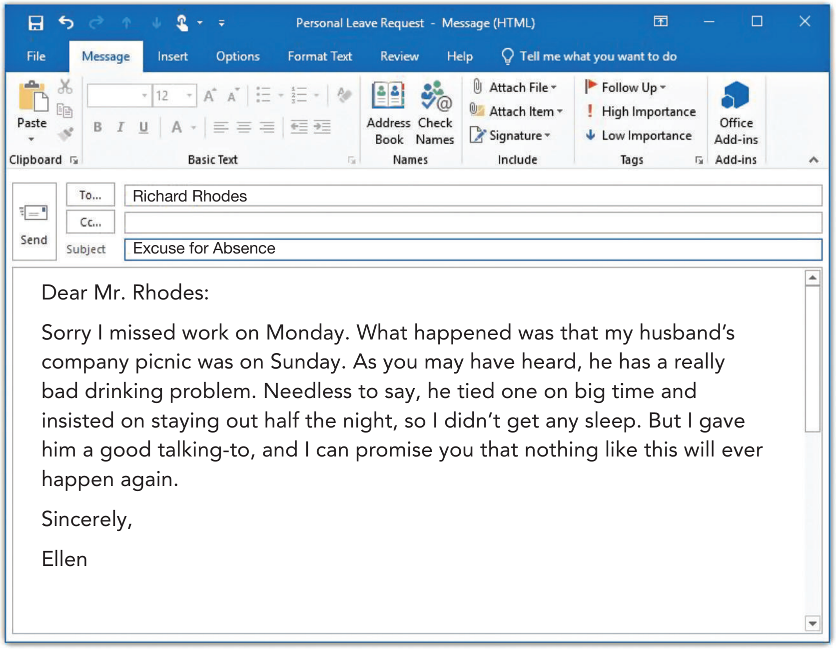
The Friday afternoon department meeting has been rescheduled for Monday at 9 a.m. because I have to leave work early on Friday.

My son's high school football team (the mighty 7 & 0 Centerton Lions—rah! rah!) has an out-of-state game Friday night against another undefeated team in Illinois. From what I understand, they're a real powerhouse, but I'm sure Centerton will beat them, especially since Carl Junior's averaging nearly 14 yards per carry!

: -) : -) : -) : -) : -) : -) : -)

GO, LIONS!!!

SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation



Personal Leave Request - Message (HTML)

To... Richard Rhodes

Subject: Excuse for Absence

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

Sorry I missed work on Monday. What happened was that my husband's company picnic was on Sunday. As you may have heard, he has a really bad drinking problem. Needless to say, he tied one on big time and insisted on staying out half the night, so I didn't get any sleep. But I gave him a good talking-to, and I can promise you that nothing like this will ever happen again.

Sincerely,

Ellen

SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation

EXERCISE 1.3

Revise the following letter to eliminate wording that might create legal liability.

Fin & Feather Pet Supplies

133 Court St. Olympia, WA 98501

January 14, 2019

Mr. Robert Ryan
352 Stegman St.
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Mr. Ryan:

We have received your letter of January 6, and we regret that the heating unit we sold you malfunctioned, killing your tropical fish worth $1,500.

Because the unit was purchased more than three years ago, however, our storewide warranty is no longer in effect, and we are therefore unable to accept any responsibility for your loss. Nevertheless, we are enclosing a Fin & Feather discount coupon good for $20 toward the purchase of a replacement unit or another product of your choice.

We look forward to serving you in the future!

Sincerely,

Sandra Kouvel

Sandra Kouvel
Store Manager

Enclosure

EXERCISE 1.4

The following idioms are well-known in the United States but might not be understood by readers elsewhere. Team up with a classmate and replace these idioms with straightforward, literal expressions of the meanings.

after the dust settles	________________
all in the same boat	________________
back to square one	________________
bend over backward	________________
bite the bullet	________________
count on me	________________
dead on arrival	________________
foot the bill	________________
hands down	________________
hit the ground running	________________
on thin ice	________________
running on fumes	________________
slip through the cracks	________________
tough act to follow	________________
turn up the heat	________________

EXERCISE 1.5

Explain three strategies for making a piece of writing more reader-oriented, and give an example of each.

Chapter 2

Workplace Correspondence: Memos, E-mail, Text Messages, and Business Letters

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

2.1 Compose clear, focused memos.

2.2 Use e-mail efficiently.

2.3 Create clear, concise text messages.

2.4 Write effective business letters in a variety of situations.

Until fairly recently, the memo was perhaps the most common form of workplace correspondence. Along with the business letter, the memo was fundamental to office procedure. Any large company, agency, or other organization would generate hundreds of such documents daily. Now, however, the memo—and, to a lesser extent, the business letter as well—has been largely replaced by e-mail. And e-mail itself is now in competition with text messaging and other electronic chat forms, at least in relatively informal contexts. This chapter explores the connections among a memo, an e-mail, a text message, and a business letter, and explains how to handle each.

Memos

2.1 Compose clear, focused memos.

Traditionally, the memo has been a vehicle for internal or "intramural" communication—a message from someone at Company X to someone else at Company X. The memo may be written to one person or to a group, but it is almost always a form of in-house correspondence.

Although the usual purpose of a memo is to inform, its function can also be to create a written record of a request or other message previously communicated in person, by phone, or through the grapevine.

Accordingly, a memo is usually quite direct in approach. It comes to the point quickly and does not ramble on. A good memo focuses sharply, zooming in on what the reader needs to know. Depending on the subject, a memo make its point in three or four short paragraphs: a concise introduction, a middle paragraph or two conveying the details, and perhaps a brief conclusion. But some memos are as short as one paragraph or even one sentence. Like so many other features of workplace communications, memo length is determined by purpose and audience.

Although minor variations exist, practically all memos share certain standard format features:

- The word *Memo*, *Memorandum*, or some equivalent term at or near the top of the page.
- The DATE line.
- The TO line, enabling the memo to be "addressed," and the FROM line, enabling it to be "signed."
- The SUBJECT line, identifying the topic. Like a newspaper headline but even more concise, the subject line orients and prepares the reader for what is to follow. A good subject line answers this question: "In no more than three words, what is this memo really about?"
- Of course, the message or content of the memo. As explained earlier, three or four paragraphs are usually sufficient.

The memo in Figure 2.1 embodies all these features and provides an opportunity to further explore the principle of *tone* introduced in Chapter 1.

The personnel manager has picked her words carefully to avoid sounding bossy. She says, "You *may want* to send him a . . . card," not "You *should* send him a . . . card," even though that's what she really means. As discussed in Chapter 1, a tactful writer can soften a recommendation, a request, or even a command simply by phrasing it in a diplomatic way. In this situation, an employee's decision whether to send a card would be a matter of personal choice, so the memo's gentle tone is particularly appropriate. But the same strategy can also be used when conveying important directives you definitely expect the reader to follow.

For the sake of convenience in situations where a paper memo may still be preferable to e-mail, most word-processing programs include at least one preformatted memo form, called a *template*. The template automatically generates formatted headings and inserts the date. The writer simply fills in the blanks.

Figure 2.1 Basic Memo Format

CITY MANUFACTURING CO.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 13, 2019

TO: All Employees

FROM: Susan Lemley, Manager, Personnel Department SL

SUBJECT: James Mahan

As many of you already know, James Mahan of the maintenance department was admitted to Memorial Hospital over the weekend and is scheduled to undergo surgery on Tuesday.

Although Jim will not be receiving visitors or phone calls for a while, you may want to send him a "Get Well" card to boost his spirits. He's in Room 325.

We'll keep you posted about Jim's progress.

From line is often initialled

Paragraph breaks segment content

E-mail

2.2 Use e-mail efficiently.

Because an e-mail is essentially just an electronic memo, practically everything that's already been discussed about traditional memos also applies to e-mail.

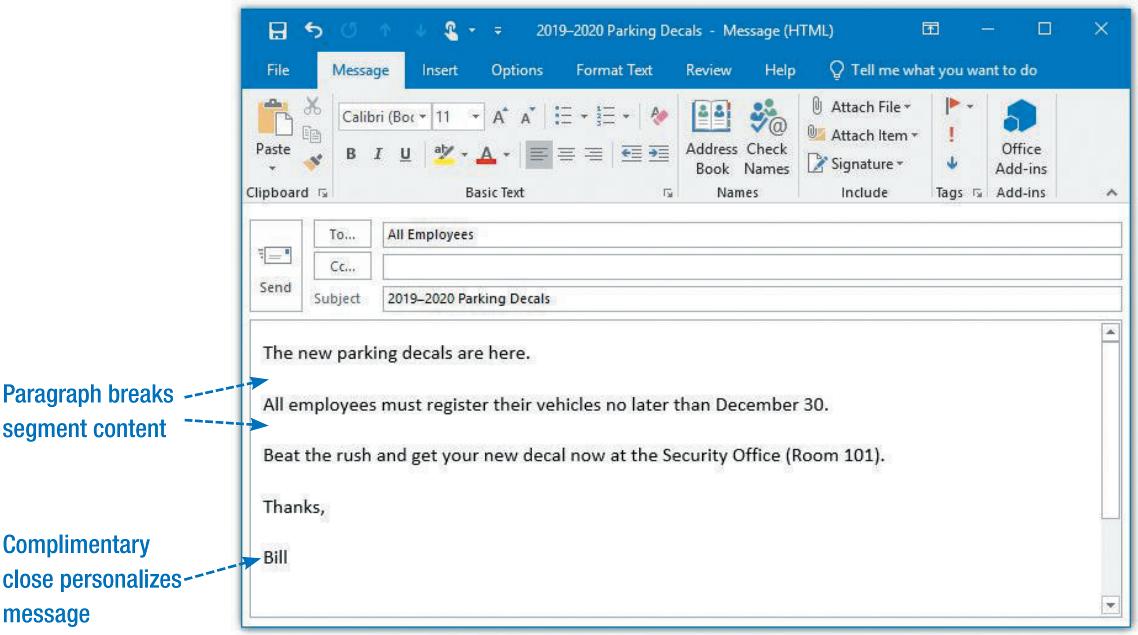
Figure 2.2 is a typical e-mail memo, similar to those you saw in Chapter 1.

There are good reasons e-mail has been so widely adopted since becoming generally available in the 1990s. On the most obvious level, it's incomparably faster than traditional correspondence.

It allows for rapid-fire exchanges, and the most recent transmittal can reproduce a complete record of all that has gone before. When you're engaged in a lengthy back-and-forth e-mail "conversation," however, the focus of the discussion most likely evolves. So it's smart to continuously revise the subject line to reflect that fact.

Despite its many obvious advantages, e-mail can also create some problems. One major drawback is that the very ease with which e-mail can be generated encourages overuse. Sometimes a text or simple phone call is more efficient, even if voice mail is involved. In the past, a writer would not bother to send a memo without good reason; too much time and effort were involved to do otherwise. Now, though, much

Figure 2.2 E-mail



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation needless correspondence is produced. Many of yesterday's writers would wait until complete information on a given topic had been received, organized, and considered before acting on it or passing it along. But today, it's not uncommon for many e-mails to be written on the same subject, doling out the information piecemeal, sometimes within a very short time span. The resulting fragmentation wastes the energies of writer and reader alike and increases the possibility of confusion, often because of premature response. One way to minimize this danger is to scan your entire menu of incoming messages, taking special note of multiple mailings from the same source before responding to any.

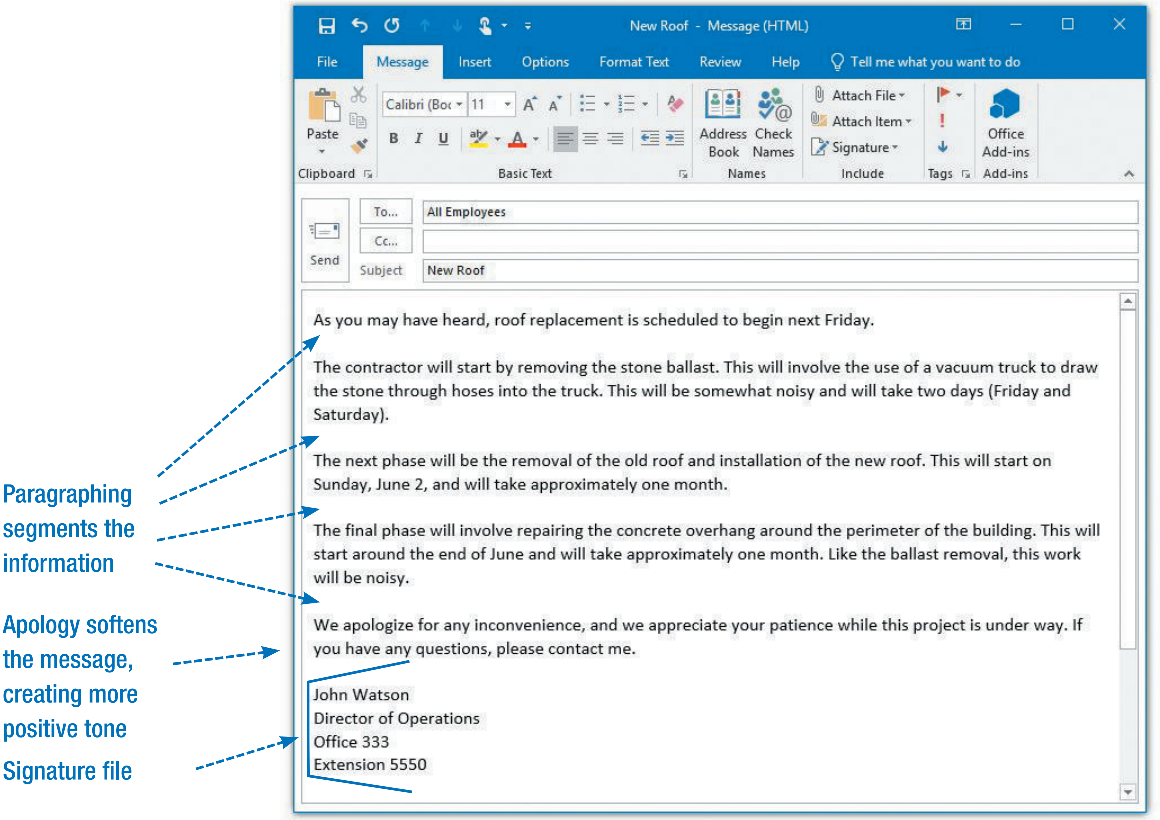
Similarly, e-mails about sensitive issues are often dashed off "in the heat of battle," without sufficient reflection. In the past, most writers had some time to reconsider a situation before reacting. There was usually the option of revising or simply discarding a memo if, upon proofreading, it seemed a bit too harsh or otherwise inappropriate. The inherent rapidity of e-mail, however, all but eliminates any such opportunity for second thoughts. In addition, hasty composition causes a great many keyboarding miscues, omissions, and other fundamental blunders. These must then be corrected in subsequent messages, creating an inefficient proliferation of "e-mail about e-mail." Indeed, hurried writing combined with the absence of a secretarial "filter" has given rise to a great deal of embarrassingly bad prose in the workplace. You risk ridicule and loss of credibility unless you closely proofread every e-mail before sending it. Make sure that the information is necessary and correct and that all pertinent details have been included. Be particularly careful to avoid typos, misspellings, faulty capitalization, sloppy punctuation, and basic grammatical errors. Virtually all e-mail systems include spell-checkers; although not foolproof, they help minimize typos and misspellings. Similarly, grammar checkers can detect basic sentence problems.

Be aware that although the To and From lines of an e-mail eliminate the need for a letter-style salutation ("Dear Ms. Bernstein") or complimentary close ("Yours truly"), most writers employ these features when using e-mail to make their messages seem less abrupt and impersonal. The relative formality or informality of these greetings and sign-offs depends on the relationship between writer and reader. In any case, if your own e-mail name and address don't fully reveal your identity, you *must* include a complimentary close to inform your readers who you are. Most e-mail systems enable you to create a "signature file" for this purpose. (See Figure 2.3.)

Understand that e-mail is not private. Recent court decisions—some involving high-profile government scandals—have confirmed the employer's right to monitor or inspect workers' e-mail (and Internet activity). Indeed, it's not uncommon for workers to be fired for impropriety in this regard. A good rule to follow is, "Don't say it in an e-mail unless you'd have no problem with it appearing on the front page of your company newsletter." In some situations, a given message may be entirely appropriate but may contain highly sensitive information. In such cases, the best choice may be a paper memo personally delivered in a sealed envelope.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the company e-mail network is no place for personal messages or an excessively conversational style. Many employers provide a separate e-mail "bulletin board" on which workers can post and access announcements about garage or vehicle sales, carpooling, unwanted theater and sports tickets, and the like. Such matters are appropriate only as bulletin board content.

Figure 2.3 E-mail with Signature File



SOURCE: Microsoft Office Profession Plus 2016, Microsoft Corporation

Now that nearly all organizations are online, e-mail is no longer just an intramural communications medium; indeed, it's beginning to rival the business letter as the major form of correspondence across company boundaries. When you're sending e-mail to readers at other locations, tone takes on even greater importance than usual. Because the writer and the reader probably do not know each other personally, a higher level of courteous formality is in order, especially in situations involving international communication. Additionally, the subject matter is often more involved than that of in-house correspondence, so e-mail sent outside the workplace is commonly longer and more fully developed than messages intended for coworkers. And outside e-mail nearly always includes a letter-style salutation and complimentary close unless the writer and the reader have established an ongoing professional relationship.

Tech Tips

Despite its seemingly informal, spontaneous nature, e-mail is no less "official" and permanent than a memo printed on paper. Therefore, it's important to use this medium thoughtfully, efficiently, and responsibly. These guidelines will help.

- Resist the temptation to forward chain letters, silly jokes, political rants, pornographic images, and the like. This not only wastes people's time but, in certain circumstances, can also be hazardous to your professional health.
- Never forward legitimate e-mail to other readers without the original writer's knowledge and permission. The message may have been intended for you alone.
- When composing an e-mail of your own, however, remember that your reader may indeed forward it to others.
- When responding to a mass mailing, do not click Reply All unless there's a valid reason to do so; reply only to the sender.
- Some readers routinely ignore attachments, so don't create one if you can build the information into the body of the e-mail, where it's more likely to be read. If that's not practical, provide a one- or two-sentence summary in the body of the e-mail to prompt the reader to open the attachment. Because very large attachments can clog readers' accounts, it's better to send a hard copy of such material.
- Remember that e-mail is only partially able to convey "tone of voice." For this reason, voice mail or actual conversation is often preferable, allowing your reasoning and feelings to be understood more accurately. This is especially true in complicated or delicate situations, particularly those involving negative messages—the denial of a request, for example.
- Never attempt to communicate when angry. Observe the standard rules of e-mail etiquette. Avoid "flaming" (openly hostile or abusive comments, whether directed at the reader or at a third party). The fact that you're communicating electronically doesn't exempt you from accepted norms of workplace courtesy.

To sum up, e-mail is no different from any other form of workplace communication in requiring close attention to purpose, audience, and tone—not to mention ethical considerations. Just as you would after composing a conventional memo on paper, assess your e-mail by consulting the checklist that follows.

Checklist **Evaluating a Memo or E-mail**

A good memo or e-mail

___ follows a standard format;

___ includes certain features:

- ☐ Date line (appears automatically in e-mail)
- ☐ To line, which includes the name and often the title and/or department of the receiver
- ☐ From line, which includes the name (appears automatically in e-mail) and often the title and/or department of the sender; on a paper memo, the From line must be initialed by the writer before the memo is sent
- ☐ Subject line, which is a clear, accurate, but brief statement of what the message is about

___ is organized into paragraphs (one is often enough) covering the subject fully in an orderly way;

___ includes no inappropriate content;

___ uses clear, simple language;

___ maintains an appropriate tone—neither too formal nor too conversational; and

___ contains no typos or mechanical errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or grammar.

Text Messages

2.3 Create clear, concise text messages.

According to the old saying, "time is money." In the world of work, therefore, information must be conveyed rapidly, in a punctual manner. Of course, e-mails and phone calls can accomplish this reasonably well. But not everyone constantly monitors e-mail, and phone calls can waste a lot of time because of the necessary "small talk" involved. Moreover, the caller is often detoured to the other person's voice mail, resulting in further delay. But *texts*—very short messages typed on the writer's cell phone keypad and sent to the reader's cell phone—are more efficient. When a text message is sent, the receiver of the text knows immediately and can reply (then or later), either by return text or phone call. Depending on the circumstances, a rapid-fire series of text message exchanges may be the fastest and most practical way to address a given situation.

One major advantage of text messaging is that it's well-suited to today's multitasking environment. Virtually everyone carries a cell phone at all times, and most of us have become fairly adept at one-handed "thumb typing." This enables messages to be sent, received, and answered on the fly, even while the persons involved are engaged in other activities. Needless to say, however, no one should ever attempt to text while driving a motor vehicle or operating potentially dangerous equipment of any kind. Although surveys reveal that texting while driving is quite common, this is an extremely irresponsible and hazardous practice, directly responsible for thousands of highway fatalities every year.

Texting can be tricky in less dangerous ways as well. Because every message is limited to only 160 characters (including spaces and punctuation marks), there's a widespread tendency to rely on abbreviation, phonetic spelling, substitution of numerals or single letters for words, emoji, and so forth. This is very typical of texts between friends and in other social contexts. The following example illustrates this:

> ru goin 2 party 2nite? starts @9. cul8r
>
> (Translation: Are you going to the party tonight? It starts at 9:00. See you later.)

In the workplace, however, these shortcuts can create misunderstanding and confusion, partly because of generational and cultural differences among coworkers, and should therefore be minimized. Because most workplace texts are only a brief sentence or two, there's no real need for extreme concision because there's seldom much danger of exceeding the 160-character limit. As in all writing, the use of conventional spelling, punctuation, and grammar is certainly the best way to ensure clarity in text messages. (These guidelines can apply to other short forms of electronic communication as well, such as instant messaging or online chat functions.)

As speedy as texting is, there are situations in which it may not be the best choice. If the subject matter is important or sensitive, for example, an e-mail or phone call is preferable. One reason is that cell phones are sometimes lost or temporarily misplaced, thereby creating the possibility of a security breach. Another is that text message accounts reach capacity even faster than e-mail accounts. As the oldest messages must be deleted to create room for new ones, the "paper trail" becomes shortened. This makes it somewhat difficult (though not impossible) to completely reconstruct a scenario if there's any future need to do so.

Of course, employer-provided cell phones should be used only for business purposes, not for social conversation or nonwork-related texting. When texting coworkers, it's necessary to observe all the same norms of courtesy that govern e-mail and other workplace interactions. Specifically, there should be absolutely no flirting, rumor-spreading, or exchanging of tasteless jokes and/or politically enflamed rants. Even though texts are by nature very brief, they should still be phrased politely and respectfully. On a related note, it's very rude to text while in face-to-face conversation or while attending a meeting—unless, of course, the texting directly pertains to the business at hand. People you're conversing with, including your fellow participants in meetings, expect (and are entitled to) your undivided attention.

Checklist Evaluating a Work-Related Text Message

A good work-related text message
___ is short and to the point, using no more than 160 characters;
___ avoids excessive use of texting shortcuts;
___ contains no sensitive information;
___ uses clear, simple language;
___ maintains an appropriately courteous tone—neither too formal nor too conversational; and
___ contains no typos or mechanical errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or grammar.

Business Letters

2.4 Write effective business letters in a variety of situations.

Business letters are typically used for *external* communication: a message from someone at Company X to someone elsewhere—a customer or client, perhaps, or a counterpart at Company Y. As mentioned earlier, however, e-mail is now often used in situations that in the past would have required letters, and this trend is increasing. Nevertheless, countless letters are still written every day for a variety of reasons. Some of the more typical purposes of a letter are to do the following:

- Ask for information (inquiry)
- Sell a product or service (sales)
- Purchase a product or service (order)
- Request payment (collection)
- Voice a complaint (claim)
- Respond to a complaint (adjustment)
- Thank someone (acknowledgment)

Figures 2.4 through 2.6 provide some examples.

Regardless of its purpose, however, every letter includes certain essential components that appear on the page in the following sequence:

1. Writer's address (often preprinted on letterhead) at the top of the page (Table 2.1 lists standard abbreviations used in letter writing.)
2. Date
3. Inside address (the full name, title, and address of the receiver)
4. Salutation, followed by a colon (avoid gender-biased salutations such as "Dear Sir" or "Gentlemen")
5. Body of the letter, using the three-part approach outlined below

Figure 2.4 Inquiry Letter in Full Block Style

THE
WEEKLY NEWS
P.O. Box 123
Littleton, NY 13300
Telephone (315) 555-1234 • Fax (315) 555-4321

February 25, 2019

Single-spacing within each block of print

Chief Joseph Kealy
Littleton Police Department
911 Main St.
Littleton, NY 13300

Dear Chief Kealy:

Double-spacing between blocks

It is our understanding that a Littleton resident, Mr. Alex Booth, is the subject of an investigation by your department, with the assistance of the county district attorney. In keeping with the provisions of the New York Freedom of Information Law, I'm requesting information about Mr. Booth's arrest.

This information is needed to provide our readership with accurate news coverage of the events leading to Mr. Booth's current situation. The *Weekly News* prides itself on fair, accurate, and objective reporting, and we're counting on your assistance as we seek to uphold that tradition.

Because the police blotter is by law a matter of public record, we appreciate your full cooperation.

Sincerely,

Additional spacing to accommodate signature

Nancy Muller

Nancy Muller, Reporter

Figure 2.5 Consumer Claim Letter in Full Block Style

41 Allan Court
Tucson, AZ 86700
June 30, 2019

Consumer Relations Department
Superior Foods, Inc.
135 Grove St.
Atlanta, GA 30300

Dear Superior Foods:

Opening paragraph provides back-ground, identifies problem

Superior microwave dinners are excellent products that I've purchased regularly for many years. Recently, however, I had an unsettling experience with one of these meals.

Middle paragraph provides details

While enjoying a serving of Pasta Alfredo, I discovered in the food what appeared to be a thick splinter of wood. I'm sure this is an isolated incident, but I thought your quality control department would want to know about it.

Last paragraph concludes politely

I've enclosed the splinter, taped to the product wrapper, along with the sales receipt for the dinner. May I please be reimbursed $7.98 for the cost?

Sincerely,

George Eaglefeather

George Eaglefeather

Enclosures

Figure 2.6 Adjustment Letter in Full Block Style

SUPERIOR FOODS, INC.

135 Grove St. Atlanta, GA 30300 • (324) 555-1234

July 8, 2019

Mr. George Eaglefeather
41 Allan Court
Tucson, AZ 86700

Dear Mr. Eaglefeather:

Opening paragraph thanks reader, apologizes for problem

Thank you for purchasing our product and for taking the time to contact us about it. We apologize for the unsatisfactory condition of your Pasta Alfredo dinner.

Middle paragraph provides solution to problem

Quality is of paramount importance to all of us at Superior Foods, and great care is taken in the preparation and packaging of all our products. Our quality assurance staff has been notified of the problem you reported. Although Superior Foods doesn't issue cash refunds, we have enclosed three coupons redeemable at your grocery for complimentary Superior dinners of your choice.

Last paragraph concludes politely

We appreciate this opportunity to be of service, and we hope you'll continue to enjoy our products.

Sincerely,

John Roth

John Roth
Customer Services Department

Enclosure line

Enclosures (3)

Table 2.1 Standard Abbreviations

States					
Alabama	AL	Kentucky	KY	Ohio	OH
Alaska	AK	Louisiana	LA	Oklahoma	OK
Arizona	AZ	Maine	ME	Oregon	OR
Arkansas	AR	Maryland	MD	Pennsylvania	PA
California	CA	Massachusetts	MA	Puerto Rico	PR
Colorado	CO	Michigan	MI	Rhode Island	RI
Connecticut	CT	Minnesota	MN	South Carolina	SC
Delaware	DE	Mississippi	MS	South Dakota	SD
District of Columbia	DC	Missouri	MO	Tennessee	TN
Florida	FL	Montana	MT	Texas	TX
Georgia	GA	Nebraska	NE	Utah	UT
Hawaii	HI	Nevada	NV	Vermont	VT
Idaho	ID	New Hampshire	NH	Virginia	VA
Illinois	IL	New Jersey	NJ	Washington	WA
Indiana	IN	New Mexico	NM	West Virginia	WV
Iowa	IA	New York	NY	Wisconsin	WI
Kansas	KS	North Carolina	NC	Wyoming	WY
		North Dakota	ND		
Street Identifiers					
Avenue	AVE	Freeway	FWY	Square	SQ
Boulevard	BLVD	Highway	HWY	Street	ST
Circle	CIR	Lane	LN	Turnpike	TPKE
Court	CT	Parkway	PKWY		
Expressway	EXPY	Road	RD		
Directions					
North	N	West	W	Southwest	SW
East	E	Northeast	NE	Northwest	NW
South	S	Southeast	SE		
Other Identifiers					
Room	RM	Suite	STE	Apartment	APT

SOURCE: U.S. Postal Service

6. Complimentary close ("Sincerely" is best), followed by a comma
7. Writer's signature
8. Writer's name and title beneath the signature
9. Enclosure line, if necessary, to indicate item(s) accompanying the letter

Along with these standard components, all business letters also embrace the same three-part organization:

1. A brief introductory paragraph establishing context (by referring to previous correspondence, perhaps, or by orienting the reader in some other way) and stating the letter's purpose concisely. In international correspondence, the introduction is often more lengthy, comprising as many as two or even three paragraphs of polite "ice-breaking" and background before the specific purpose is identified.
2. A middle section (as many paragraphs as needed) conveying the content of the message by providing all necessary details presented in the most logical sequence.
3. A brief concluding paragraph politely requesting action, thanking the reader, or providing any additional information pertinent to the situation.

Table 2.2 provides guidance in applying this three-part approach in each of the basic letter-writing situations.

Format

Over the years, letters have been formatted in various ways. Today, however, "full block" style is the norm. As shown in Figures 2.4 through 2.6, full block style requires that every line (including the date, the receiver's name and address, the salutation, the complimentary close, and the sender's name) begin at the left margin. If, as in Figure 2.5, the sender's address isn't preprinted on letterhead, it should also begin at the left margin.

Note also that in full block style, even the first line of each paragraph begins at the left margin rather than being indented.

As shown, a full block letter is single-spaced throughout, with double spacing between the blocks of print. A common practice is to triple- or even quadruple-space between the complimentary close and the sender's name to provide ample room for the sender's signature.

A growing trend in letter writing is the fully abbreviated, "no punctuation, all capitals" approach to the inside address. This derives from the U.S. Postal Service recommendation that envelopes be so addressed to facilitate automated scanning and sorting. Because the inside address has traditionally matched the address on the envelope, such a feature may well become standard, at least for letters sent by conventional mail rather than by electronic means. Indeed, many companies using "window" envelopes have already adopted this style. Again, see Table 2.1 for the Postal Service's guidelines for abbreviations in addresses.

As mentioned earlier, more and more companies are communicating with each other by e-mail and other forms of electronic messaging rather than by business letter. The letter is still preferred, however, for more formal exchanges, especially those

Table 2.2 Letter Content Guidelines

Letter Type	Introduction	Middle Paragraphs	Conclusion
Inquiry	Briefly explain the reason for your inquiry, and clearly identify what you're inquiring about.	Provide all relevant details about your inquiry. Concretely specify what you want to know, why the reader should provide this information, and what you'll use it for. If you have more than one question, create a bulleted or numbered list.	Thank the reader in advance for complying with your request. If you must have a reply by a certain date, specify it. Make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to reply (address, phone number, e-mail address). It's a good idea to provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
Sales	Get the reader's attention, perhaps by asking a question, describing a situation, presenting an interesting fact, or using a quotation (the same strategies are explained in Chapter 8 for opening a speech), and state what you're selling.	Provide all relevant details about the product or service you're selling and create an incentive by explaining to the reader the advantages of purchasing.	Thank the reader in advance for becoming a customer and make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to place an order (price list or catalog, order form, address, website, phone number, e-mail address).
Order	Establish that this is indeed an order letter, and state what you want to purchase.	Provide all relevant details about your order (product numbers, prices, quantities, method of payment, etc.). A table is often the best format for presenting this information.	Thank the reader in advance for filling the order. If you must have the product or service by a certain date, specify it. Make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to ship the order (address, billing address, method of delivery).
Collection	Open with a polite but firm reminder that the reader's payment is overdue. (In a second or third collection letter, the tone of the introduction can be more urgent.)	If you have not already done so in the introduction, provide all the relevant details about how much is owed, when it was due, and when it must be paid to avoid penalty, but acknowledge the possibility of error at your end.	Repeat the payment request and encourage the reader to contact you with any concerns or to discuss payment options. Make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to respond (address, phone number, e-mail address). It's a good idea to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
Claim	Provide some background information, but come quickly to the point, identifying the problem.	Politely provide all relevant details about what has gone wrong and what you want the reader to do about it. If appropriate, provide copies of bills, receipts, contracts, etc.	Thank the reader in advance for correcting the problem and make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to contact you (address, phone number, e-mail address).
Adjustment	Thank the reader for bringing the problem to your attention, and if the complaint is justified, apologize.	If the complaint is justified, explain what you'll do to fix the problem. If not, tactfully explain why you must deny the claim.	Thank the reader again for writing to you and provide reassurances that everything will be satisfactory in the future.
Acknowledgment	Briefly explain why you are writing the acknowledgment and identify the person, group, or situation you're commending.	Provide all relevant details about why the person, group, or situation deserves commendation.	Conclusions vary greatly depending on the nature of the situation. Commonly, you'll thank the reader for considering the remarks and invite a reply. In such cases, make sure you've provided all the information the reader will need to contact you (address, phone number, e-mail address).

in which speed of delivery isn't a major factor. In situations involving individual customers and clients (some of whom may still rely on conventional mail), the business letter is also the best choice. At least for the immediate future, therefore, the letter will continue to be a major form of workplace correspondence, although its role will almost certainly undergo further redefinition as various forms of electronic communication become increasingly widespread.

"Plain English" Style

Like all successful communication, a good letter must use an appropriate tone. Obviously, a letter is a more formal kind of communication than in-house correspondence because it's more public. Accordingly, a letter should uphold the image of the sender's company or organization by reflecting a high degree of professionalism. However, although a letter's style should be polished, the language should be natural and easy to understand. The key to achieving a readable style—in a letter or in anything else you write—is to understand that writing shouldn't sound pompous or "official." Rather, it should sound much like ordinary speech—shined up just a bit. Whatever you do, avoid stilted, old-fashioned business clichés. Strive instead for direct, conversational phrasing. Here's a list of overly bureaucratic constructions, paired with "plain English" alternatives:

Cliché	**Alternative**
As per your request	As you requested
Attached please find	Here is
In lieu of	Instead of
Please be advised that X	X
Pursuant to our agreement	As we agreed
Until such time as	Until
We are in receipt of	We have received
We regret to advise you that X	Regrettably, X

If you have a clear understanding of your letter's purpose and have analyzed your audience, you should experience little difficulty achieving the appropriate tone for the situation. In addition, if you have written your letter following full-block format and if you have used clear, accessible, and mechanically correct language, your correspondence will likely accomplish its objectives. As noted earlier, you must scrupulously avoid typos and mechanical errors in memos and e-mails. This is equally important when you compose letters intended for outside readers, who will take their business elsewhere if they perceive you as careless or incompetent. Always proofread carefully, making every effort to ensure that your work is error-free, and consult the following checklist.

Checklist **Evaluating a Business Letter**

A good letter
___ follows full block format;
___ includes certain features:
- ☐ Sender's complete address
- ☐ Date
- ☐ Receiver's full name and complete address
- ☐ Salutation, followed by a colon
- ☐ Complimentary close ("Sincerely" is best), followed by a comma
- ☐ Sender's signature and full name
- ☐ Enclosure notation, if necessary

___ is organized into paragraphs, covering the subject fully in an orderly way:
- ☐ First paragraph establishes context and states the purpose
- ☐ Middle paragraphs provide all necessary details
- ☐ Last paragraph politely achieves closure

___ includes no inappropriate content;
___ uses clear, simple language;
___ maintains an appropriate tone, neither too formal nor too conversational; and
___ contains no typos or mechanical errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or grammar.

EXERCISES

EXERCISE 2.1

You're the assistant to the personnel manager of a metals fabrication plant. Monday is Labor Day, and most of the 300 employees will be given a paid holiday. The company is under pressure, however, to meet a deadline. Therefore, a skeleton force of forty—all in the production department—will be needed to work on the holiday. Those who volunteer will have the option of being paid overtime at the standard time-and-a-half rate or receiving two vacation days. If fewer than forty employees volunteer, others will be assigned to work on the basis of seniority, with the most recently hired employees chosen first. The personnel manager has asked you to alert affected employees. Write an e-mail to the staff in the production department.

EXERCISE 2.2

You're a secretary at a regional office of a state agency. Normal working hours for civil service employees in your state are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a lunch break from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. During the summer, however, the hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with lunch unchanged. Summer hours are in effect from July 1 to September 2.

It's now mid-June, and the busy office supervisor has asked you to remind employees of the summer schedule. Write a memo to be posted on the main bulletin board and sent via e-mail.

EXERCISE 2.3

You work in the lumberyard of a building supplies company. Every year during the July 4 weekend, the town sponsors the Liberty Run, a 10K (6.2-mile) road race. This year, for the first time, local businesses have been invited to enter five-member teams to compete for the Corporate Cup. The team with the best combined time takes the trophy. There will be no prize money involved but much good publicity for the winners. Because you recently ran the Boston Marathon, the company president wants you to recruit and organize a team. It's now April 22. Better get started. Write an e-mail to your coworkers.

EXERCISE 2.4

You're an office worker at a large paper products company that has just installed an upgraded computer system. Many employees are having difficulty with the new software. The manufacturer's representatives will be onsite all next week to provide training. Because you're studying computer technology, you've been asked to serve as liaison. You must inform your coworkers about the training, which will be delivered in Conference Room 3 from Monday through Thursday in eight half-day sessions (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.), organized alphabetically by workers' last names as follows: A–B, C–E, F–I, J–M, N–P, Q–SL, SM–T, and U–Z. Workers unable to attend must sign up for one of two makeup sessions that will be held on Friday. You must ensure that everyone understands all these requirements. Write a memo to be posted on all bulletin boards and sent via e-mail.

EXERCISE 2.5

You're the manager of the employee cafeteria at a printing company. For many years, the cafeteria has provided excellent service, offering breakfast from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. and lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It also serves as a breakroom, selling coffee, soft drinks, and snacks all day. But the cafeteria is badly in need of modernization. Work is scheduled to begin next Wednesday. Naturally, the cafeteria will have to be closed while renovations are in progress. Employees will still be able to have lunch and breaks, however, because temporary facilities are being set up in Room 101 of Building B, a now-vacant area formerly used for storage. The temporary cafeteria will provide all the usual services except for breakfast. Obviously, employees need to know about the situation. Write an e-mail to the employees.

EXERCISE 2.6

Proofread and rewrite the following memo, correcting all errors.

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 9, 2019

TO: All Employes

FROM: Roger Sammon, Clerk Medical Recrods Department

SUBJECT: Patricia Klosek

As many of you allready know. Patricia Klosik from the Medical records Depratment is retiring next month. After more then thirty years of faithfull service to Memorial hospital.

A party is being planed in her honor. It will be at seven oclock on friday October 25 at big Joes Resturant tickets are $50 per person whitch includes a buffay diner and a donation toward a gift.

If you plan to atend please let me no by the end of next week try to get you're check to me by Oct 7

EXERCISE 2.7

A consumer product that you especially like is suddenly no longer available in retail stores in your area. Write the manufacturer a letter ordering the product.

EXERCISE 2.8

Imagine you've received the product ordered in Exercise 2.7, but it's somehow unsatisfactory. Write the manufacturer a claim letter expressing dissatisfaction and requesting an exchange or a refund.

EXERCISE 2.9

Team up with a classmate, exchange the claim letters you each wrote in response to Exercise 2.8, and then write adjustment letters to each other.

EXERCISE 2.10

Many businesses, nonprofit agencies, and other organizations routinely send "snail mail" letters in an effort to advertise products and services, solicit monetary contributions, or achieve some other objective. Select one such letter you've recently received and write a brief evaluation of its effectiveness. Comment on the letter's purpose, format, clarity, and tone. If the letter could be better, provide specific suggestions for improvement.

EXERCISE 2.11

Prepare a simple chart highlighting the most significant differences among the four kinds of workplace writing covered in this chapter (memo, e-mail, text message, business letter).

Chapter 3

Effective Visuals: Tables, Graphs, Charts, and Illustrations

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

3.1 Employ the principles governing effective visual representation.

3.2 Produce user-friendly tables.

3.3 Design informative line graphs and bar graphs.

3.4 Create clear flow charts, organizational charts, Gantt charts, and circle charts.

3.5 Use illustrations (photos, drawings, and diagrams) effectively.

People often communicate without written or spoken language—through gestures and facial expressions, for example, and of course by means of diagrams, pictures, and signs. Consider the familiar icons shown here:

SOURCE: Chrisdorney/Fotolia

SOURCE: Elenarts/Fotolia

SOURCE: Arcady/Fotolia

Workplace communications make extensive use of visual aids along with text. Proposals, manuals, instructions, web pages, and reports of all kinds contain numerous illustrations to capture and hold people's attention and help convey information. To function successfully in today's increasingly sophisticated workplace, an employee must be well acquainted with these visual elements. This chapter begins with a brief overview of basic principles governing the use of visuals. It then explores the four main categories of visuals—tables, graphs, charts, and illustrations—and explains the principal features and applications of each.

Principles of Effective Visuals

3.1 Employ the principles governing effective visual representation.

With today's software options, you can assemble data on a spreadsheet and then display it in whatever format is most suitable. For drawings and photographs, you can choose from a vast array of readily available electronic clip art and stock images. Computer technology produces highly polished results while encouraging a great deal of experimentation with various design features. As with computerized text, graphics stored electronically have the added advantage of easy revision if your data change.

Ironically, the one potential drawback of computer-generated graphics derives from the same versatility that makes these programs so exciting to work with. Inexperienced users can become carried away with the many options at their disposal, creating cluttered, overly elaborate visuals that confuse rather than illustrate. As with writing and page design, simpler is better. Always bear in mind that visuals should never be introduced simply for their own sake to "decorate" a document. Theoretically, every visual should be able to stand alone, but its true purpose is to clarify the text it accompanies.

Like good writing, effective visuals are simple, clear, and easy to understand. It's also very important to choose the most appropriate *type* of visual for the task at hand. When using any kind of visual aid, however, you must observe the following fundamental rules:

- Number sequentially and title every visual in your document, with outside sources—whether of the visual itself or of the data used to create the visual—clearly identified. If the document contains only one visual, you can omit the number. Titling a visual is much like writing a subject line for a memo or e-mail. The title should be brief, accurate, and informative. To write a good title, answer this question: In just a few words, what does this visual depict?
- Any information you provide in a visual you must first discuss in the text. The text should refer the reader to the visual (for example, "See Figure 5"), and the visual should be positioned logically, as soon as possible *after* the reference.
- Present all visuals in an appealing manner. Each visual should be surrounded by ample white space, not crowded by the text or squeezed between other visuals.
- Clearly label all elements of the visual and provide a "key" whenever necessary to show scale, direction, and the like. Labels must be easy to read, with their