



Writing Effectively

Communicating often requires effective writing skills. Do you know how to write a letter, memo or e-mail that will convey your message and get the results you want? Reviewing these guidelines for good writing will help.

Ask Yourself...

- Why am I writing?
- Who am I writing to?
- What information or message am I trying to convey?
- What results do I want?

First, Plan What You'll Write...

Plan your message with a formal outline or a list of the contents you want to include. Planning involves three steps:

- **Step 1:** List the major points you want to cover.
- **Step 2:** Arrange the points in order.
- **Step 3:** Fill in the details.

Begin Writing

Most letters contain three to four parts:

- **an opening or instruction:** gets the reader's attention, contains reason for writing
- **the main message:** contains the details
- **the result you want:** states the information or action you're seeking
- **the closing:** a summary of the major ideas

Good Writing Tips

- Include all needed information.
- Write only what's necessary.
- Be specific.
- Use as few words as possible.
- Cover only one major idea per paragraph.
- Limit paragraphs to five or six lines each.
- Use lists rather than narratives for lengthy details.
- Use positive words and phrases.
- Avoid big words.
- Avoid clichés, slang, abbreviations and jargon.
- Use the active voice.
- Use correct grammar.
- Eliminate unnecessary closings.
- Check for accuracy before sending the final copy.
- Proofread for correct spelling and usage of words.

Writing E-mails

Although e-mail has emerged as an easy and fast way to communicate, keep in mind that work e-mail should be treated as a letter or memorandum. Use proper grammar and avoid using slang or abbreviations when writing a professional e-mail.

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