

Professional Writing Skills course

COURSE PLAYLIST: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzLHunnjEdX-YLYtSFgTfVJovtc8l4prp>

NOTE: Open this PDF on a desktop or tablet for clickable links to the YouTube course playlist and other materials.

Keep any business document clear, concise, and focused on your business needs with this five-part video training. The lesson numbers below match the number of each video.

This is one of our most popular training courses; we designed it for businesspeople who need to get their points across clearly and quickly. You'll learn practical techniques you can apply to every document you send on the job. The result will be clear, concise writing that always advances your professional needs.

Workbook: *Professional Writing Skills* (available on Amazon [in print](#) and [as an ebook](#))

QUESTIONS

LESSON 1: Develop a writing plan in five steps

1. What's the rough percentage of time you should set aside to plan a business document?
 - A. 5%
 - B. 25%
 - C. 55%
 - D. 80%
2. What's the rough percentage of time you should set aside to write, revise, and proofread a business document?
 - A. 5%
 - B. 25%
 - C. 45%
 - D. 80%
3. Which of the following is NOT a benefit of planning a document?
 - A. Fewer miscommunications
 - B. Less time spent clarifying
 - C. Less time spent rewriting
 - D. Less time spent proofreading for punctuation errors

4. Which of the following is NOT a form of persuasive writing?
- A. To ask the reader to correct a problem
 - B. To pass on important information
 - C. To ask the reader to clarify something confusing
 - D. To ask the reader to send a file
5. Some documents have a primary purpose to inform readers, rather than persuade them to take action. Which one of these purposes is NOT centered on simply giving a reader information?
- A. To pass on crucial facts the writer is aware of
 - B. To announce the consequences of actions or failures to act
 - C. To ask the reader to take a specific action
 - D. To mention a proven solution to a problem
6. Which sentence represents writing to persuade?
- A. “Please let me know by August 31 whether you will be available to speak to us in early October.”
 - A. “We will hold our first GCC meeting on Thursday, October 11 at 6:30pm at the Tiptop Cafe, and we hope to see you there.”
7. Which sentence represents writing to inform?
- A. “Please let me know by August 31 whether you will be available to speak to us in early October.”
 - B. “We will hold our first GCC meeting on Thursday, October 11 at 6:30pm at the Tiptop Cafe, and we hope to see you there.”
8. What is the primary purpose of the following message, which starts with a key sentence? “Here’s the agenda for our next meeting. I’ve listed the topics we’re discussing so you can come prepared. You may skip this meeting if you’re not involved in any of the agenda issues.”
- A. To persuade
 - B. To inform
9. What is the primary purpose of the following message, which starts with a key sentence? “I’d like to suggest that you prepare and distribute an agenda several days before each monthly meeting. I’d be happy to help prepare or distribute the agendas; just let me know anything I could do.”
- A. To persuade
 - B. To inform
10. Which of these three themes could make a good way to organize details in a business document?
- A. Pros/cons
 - B. Advantages/disadvantages
 - C. Meets/fails to meet our criteria
 - D. All three of these themes are valid organizational strategies

11. Suppose you needed to write an article about the following six sports: surfing, basketball, rollerblading, canoeing, skiing, and rock climbing. Which of the themes below could make a good way to organize your details?
- A. Water related; not related to water
 - B. Cost, from free to expensive
 - C. Popularity among coworkers surveyed
 - D. All three of these themes are valid organizational strategies

LESSON 2: Write the first draft

12. Which of these statements would be a more effective way to start a business letter?
- A. “We hereby acknowledge receiving your message dated April 20. Your complaint has been taken under advisement.”
 - B. “Thank you for telling us about the missing parts in the equipment you recently purchased. We will be happy to replace the parts, but we need the information listed below.”
13. Which of these sentences is more effective?
- A. “We are in receipt of your message in regard to the vacant position.”
 - B. “As you requested, we are happy to send you an application for the position of Community Relations Director.”
14. Which statement would make a more effective closing?
- A. “If you need a map or more detailed directions, please let me know.”
 - B. “Do not hesitate to contact this writer should you require additional information.”
15. Which of these ideas is NOT a task that a closing paragraph for a long business letter should achieve?
- A. Wrap up any loose ends
 - B. Introduce the topic of the letter
 - C. Remind readers what they need to know or to do

LESSON 3: Use concise language

16. Which sentence is more focused?
- A. “The manager made an offer to buy everyone coffee.”
 - B. “The manager offered to buy everyone coffee.”
17. Which sentence is more focused?
- A. “I believe this procedure will improve how reports are filed.”
 - B. “My belief is that this procedure will make an improvement in the way that reports are filed.”

18. Which sentence is more focused?
- A. “There was a problem that came up during the last meeting.”
 - B. “A problem came up during the last meeting.”
19. Which of these items would NOT belong in a list with the introductory statement, “We need to buy more of the following office supplies this week: ...”?
- A. More paper
 - B. Hand sanitizer
 - C. Sufficient time to reorganize the cabinets
 - D. Printer ink
20. If the following items appeared together in a list, which item would show a breakdown in parallel formatting?
- A. more paper
 - B. hand sanitizer
 - C. We need printer ink.
 - D. masking tape

LESSON 4: Use clear language

21. Which sentence features active language?
- A. “The design document has been completed by the team.”
 - B. “The team has completed the design document.”
22. Which sentence features specific language?
- A. “Ask the client to complete the paperwork in a timely manner.”
 - B. “Ask the client to complete the new account application form within ten working days.”
23. Which sentence would be easier for a general reader to understand?
- A. “We need to drill down and get all our ducks in a row for this project.”
 - B. “We need to examine our options more carefully and come up with a careful plan for this project.”

LESSON 5: Write effective email

24. Which sentences would probably NOT belong in a professional email?
- A. “Welcome back, and I hope you’re feeling over your cold. We have a lot to catch up with. First, Lee announced at the meeting last week that he’s leaving the company.”
 - B. “By the way, I heard that your manager is thinking about leaving the company. His daughter told my daughter in gymnastics class.”



25. Which of these goals does NOT represent writing to inform?
- A. Answer a question
 - B. Verify information
 - C. Request prompt action
 - D. Make your opinion known
26. Which of these questions does NOT represent writing to persuade?
- A. Sell something
 - B. Ask for help
 - C. Answer a question
 - D. Request prompt action
27. Which sentence could project a risky tone in an email?
- A. "Let me know if you do not understand."
 - B. "Please let me know if I can further explain any of this information."

ANSWERS

EACH CORRECT ANSWER IS IN BOLDFACE BELOW.

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