

Skills Programme 3: Written Communication Skills (NQF 4)



Learner Guide

INFORMATION










LEARNER	
Name and surname	
Learner ID	
Cell Number	
E-mail Address	
Organisation	
Unit/Dept	
Facilitator	

COPYRIGHT

All rights reserved. The copyright of this document, its previous editions and any annexures thereto are protected and expressly reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission.

ICONS

The following icons may be used in this Learner Guide to indicate specific functions:

Title	Icon	Description
Books		This icon means that other books are available for further information on a particular topic/subject.
References		This icon refers to any examples, handouts, checklists, etc.
Important		This icon represents essential information related to a specific topic or section of the guide.
Activities		This icon helps you to be prepared for the learning to follow or assist you to demonstrate understanding of module content. Shows transference of knowledge and skill.
Exercises		This icon represents exercises that must be completed on a specific topic individually or in a group.
Task/Projects		An important aspect of the assessment process is proof of competence. This can be achieved by observation, or a portfolio of evidence should be submitted in this regard.
Workplace Activities		An essential aspect of learning is through work experience. Activities with this icon can only be completed once a learner is in the workplace.
Tips		This icon indicates practical tips you can adopt in the future.
Notes		This icon represents important notes you must remember as part of the learning process.

INTRODUCTION

About the Learner Guide:

This Learner Guide provides a comprehensive overview of the Skills Programme 3: Communication Skills level 4. This is designed to improve learners' skills and knowledge, thus enabling them to effectively and efficiently complete specific tasks. Learners are required to attend training workshops as a group or as specified by their organisation. These workshops are presented in modules and conducted by a qualified facilitator.

Purpose:

A learner achieving this Unit Standard should be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of Skills Programme 3: Communication Skills level 4.

Outcomes:

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Use a range of reading and viewing strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts
- Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts
- Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context
- Explore and explain how language structures and features may influence a reader/viewer

Assessment criteria:

The only way to establish whether a learner is competent and has accomplished the specific outcomes is through assessment. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence about the learner's ability to perform a task. This guide may include assessments in the form of activities, assignments, tasks, or projects, as well as practical workplace tasks. Learners are required to perform tasks on the job to collect enough and appropriate evidence for their portfolio of evidence, proof signed by their supervisor that the tasks were completed successfully.

To qualify

To qualify and receive credits towards the learning programme, a registered assessor will conduct an evaluation and assessment of the learner's portfolio of evidence and competency

Range of learning

This describes the situation and circumstance in which competence must be demonstrated and the parameters in which learners operate

Responsibility

The responsibility of learning rest with the learner, so:

- Be proactive and ask questions,
- Seek assistance and help from your facilitators, if required.

LEARNING UNIT 1

USE THE WRITING PROCESS TO COMPOSE TEXTS REQUIRED IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

US: 12153 – NQF 4 – 5 Credits

The purpose of the Unit Standard requires learners to follow a process in writing texts and reports required in business. It is intended to promote clear, unambiguous communication in plain language and to improve the quality of written reports and other texts that are specific to a business environment, require a particular format and may include specified legislated requirements. The Unit Standard enables learners to recognise and effectively use textual conventions and features specific to business texts.

Learners credited with this Unit Standard can:

- Using textual features and conventions specific to texts
- Identifying the intended audience for the communication
- Identifying the purpose of a text
- Selecting the appropriate text type, format, and layout for the purpose
- Organising and structuring a technical text appropriately
- Using appropriate grammar conventions
- Drafting and editing a technical text
- Recognising errors and checking for accuracy
- Presenting the same information in different ways
- Using plain language in business

Learning assumed to be in place:

There is open access to this Unit Standard. Learners should be competent in communication at level 3.

LEARNING UNIT 1

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

USE TEXTUAL FEATURES AND CONVENTIONS SPECIFIC TO BUSINESS TEXTS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

US: 12153

Learning outcomes:

1. Texts specific to a particular function in a business environment are identified, and an indication is given of industry-specific and/or legislative requirements for each text.
2. Texts specific to a particular function in a business environment are produced in response to defined requirements
3. The implications of not following the industry-specific or legislative requirements for a specific type of text are explained, and an indication is given of the possible consequences of non-compliance.
4. Terminology and conventions specific to a particular function in a business environment are used appropriately.

1. Use textual features and conventions specific to business texts for effective writing.

Organisations cannot operate without communication. Communication can take various forms, but all forms involve the transfer of information from one party to the other. For the transfer of information to qualify as communication, the recipient must understand the meaning of the information transferred to them. If the recipient does not understand the meaning of the information conveyed to them, communication has not taken place. Communication is the life source of organisations because organisations involve people. People cannot interact with each other without communication. In the absence of communication, everything would grind to a halt. For example, the workers in an organisation would not know the organisation's objectives, so they would not strive to achieve the organisation's objectives.

The workers in an organisation would not know what their roles and responsibilities are, so they would not be able to carry out their daily tasks and duties.

- The managers would not be able to train their workers' reports, so the workers would not possess the skills they needed to carry out their jobs.
- The managers would not be able to inform workers of changes
- The organisation would not be aware of its competitors' activities

And so, it goes on... Overall, people can communicate with each other as this is a basic human function. However, successful organisations strive not only for communication but effective communication.

When working with groups of people on different levels in the organisation and in various departments, one needs to make sure that when you compose communication, it is in line with what their requirements are. When working with a team of chemical engineers, and you are preparing a plan for them to improve their performance and time delivery in certain areas, you need to make sure that you use the same level of language which they are accustomed to. Not only the terms and chemical symbols are appropriate, but also the level of language which is used needs to be in line with what these engineers are used to.

Similarly, when doing a presentation on a new cleaning product for the floor-level cleaning staff, you need to make sure that the level of language is appropriate to the education of the people receiving the message. If you make use of chemical symbols and language which the people will not understand, your message will not be received correctly. You may very well lose your audience before you even get halfway through the talk. It is therefore imperative that you prepare your text in line with the requirements of your audience.

When preparing the text for a group of chefs in a restaurant, you would need to make use of the appropriate language. You should make use of French terminology for the preparation and cooking styles, as well as the correct methods which are used to plate and display the food. By ensuring that you use the terminology which the chefs are used to, you ensure that they fully understand what you require of them. You will also establish a level of understanding with them as well as build a mutually respectful relationship of trust.

Similarly, when dealing with the members of the board, you need to ensure that your level of language used is the same as theirs. Using terminology as what these people are used to, you will ensure that you captivate your audience and that they stay focused on the facts which you are trying to convey to them. When you are reporting back to the board on a sales project which has been completed, you need to make sure that your knowledge on the entire matter is up to date and as extensive as your report. Let's look at two examples of such written texts which can be used in a business environment. Firstly, we will look at a report. Take note of the type of language used in the report; identify the style of writing as well as the area in business to which the report pertains.

2. Report on stock control

Terms of Reference

The manager of the organisation gave instructions on the 25th of January 2007 that an investigation should be conducted into the serious problem of stock checking and pilfering at the end of each year and that a possible solution must be agreed on.

Procedure

- The office card index as well as the bin card system at the warehouse was investigated in the matter.
- The company auditors were also consulted in the matter.

Findings

- Quantity – There are more than 2500 items that must be checked every year
- Overtime – A great deal of overtime was needed to take stock at the financial year-end.
- Discrepancies – Any differences between bin cards and the card index system must be resolved by checking the original documents for the past twelve months.

Conclusion

- Wrong time – With year-end accounting dates to be met, there was not enough time available to check all transactions for the whole year for each item of stock. The financial year-end is not the best time for stock taking.
- Continuous stock checking – Under a system of continuous stock checking, the total stock would be checked in four months if a quarter of the stock items were checked each month. This would mean that each stock item would be checked four times a year.
- Discrepancies – Any discrepancies between bin card balances and the office card index system would involve a check of original documents dating back, at the most, four months

under the continuous card index system.

- Year-end stocktaking – The troublesome procedure of year-end stock-taking would not be required.
- Approval of company auditors – The company auditors agreed that a system of continuous stock checking would be acceptable and that, if all items were properly recorded on the card index system and the bin cards, the year-end stocktaking would not be required.

Recommendations

Continuous stock checking – a system of continuous stock checking should be carried out.

Nature of Continuous stock checking – thirty items should be checked every day.

Necessary action – The continuous stock checking procedure should be implemented from the 1st of May so that each stock item will be checked twice this year and then from there, three times per year. G. M. Schutte Stores Clerk Johnson Warehousing 2007-02-06.

LEARNING UNIT 1

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

IDENTIFY AND COLLECT INFORMATION NEEDED TO WRITE A TEXT SPECIFIC TO A PARTICULAR FUNCTION

US: 12153

Learning outcomes:

1. The intended or incidental audience for whom the text is to be written is identified for a specific field or sub-field to focus the information needs.
2. The purpose of the text is identified within a specific field or sub-field and according to the information.
3. Questions are asked to help understand client needs and to focus on information gathering.
4. Information required for the document is accessed from a variety of sources.
5. Information accessed is checked for accuracy, bias, stereotypes, and other offensive details.
6. The focus of the proposed text is defined, and a decision is made about what information should be included or omitted to ensure the focus.
7. A checklist is created to facilitate reflection and editing.

1. Identify and collect information needed to write a text specific to a particular function

In the next three sections, we will be compiling business letters. We will need to gather information and meet with the relevant people to ensure that we compile structure and present the letter correctly, according to their needs. Writing a letter can be a very daunting task and must be taken on with a professional outlook on the matter. Firstly, we will cover all the tips and tools which you will need to professionally compile your communication, after which you will then compile your communication in three stages.

2. Writing tips

Writing techniques for cover letters, adverts, brochures, sales literature, reports

Writing letters, reports, notes and other communications are important skills for business and personal life. Good letters help to get results, where poor letters fail. People judge others on the quality of their writing, so it's helpful to write well. Here are some simple tips for writing letters and communications of all sorts: Generally, whatever you are writing, get to the main point quickly and simply. Avoid lengthy preambles. Don't spend ages setting the scene or explaining the background, etc. If you are selling, promoting, proposing something, you must identify the main issue (if selling, the strongest unique perceived benefit) and make that the sole focus. Introducing other points distracts and confuses the reader. Use language that your reader uses. If you want clues as to what this might be, imagine the newspaper they read, and limit your vocabulary to that found in the newspaper.

Using the reader's language ideally extends to spelling for US English or UK English. It's difficult on this webpage or other communications designed for mixed audiences, but, when possible, in your own work, acknowledge that US and UK English are slightly different. Notably, words that end in IZE in US English can quite properly be spelt ISE in English, for example: organise/organise, specialise/specialise, etc. Similarly, many words ending in OUR in UK English are spelt OR in US English, for example, favour/favor, humour/humor, colour/color, etc. Avoid obvious grammatical errors, especially inserting single apostrophes were incorrect, which irritates many people, and which is seen by some to indicate a poor education.

Probably the best rule for safe use of apostrophes is to restrict their use simply to possessive (e.g., girl's book, group's aims) and missing letters in words (e.g., I'm, you're, we've). The following three paragraphs attempt to explain some of the more complex rules for apostrophes, and I'm grateful to David Looker for helping me to bring better clarity to this confusing situation. Language is not a precise science, and certain aspects, notably rules governing the use of apostrophes, are open to interpretation. By way of introduction to apostrophes, here are some examples of common mistakes:

- The team played its part (should be the team played its part - its, although possessive, is like his, my, hers, theirs, etc., and does not use the possessive apostrophe).
- It's been a long day (should be it's been a long day - it's is an abbreviation of it has)
- Your correct (should be you're correct - you're is an abbreviation of you are)
- One months' notice (should be: one month's notice - the notice is governed by the month, hence the possessive apostrophe)
- The groups' task (should be the group's task - group is a collective noun and treated as singular, not plural)
- The women's' decisions (should be the women's decisions - same as above - women is treated as singular, irrespective of the plural decisions)

The purpose of a single apostrophe is to indicate missing letters, as in I'm happy, or you're correct, and word constructions like don't, won't, wouldn't, can't, we've, etc. Apostrophes are also used to indicate when something belongs to the word (possessive), as in the girl's book. This extends to expressions like a day's work or a month's delay. The possessive apostrophe moves after the S when there is more than one subject in possession, for example, the girls' fathers, or the footballers' wives, or three weeks' notice, but not for collective nouns like the children's toys, the women's husbands, or the group's aims. And take care with the word its, as in the dog wagged its tail, where (as with his and hers) the apostrophe is not used, and should not be confused with its, meaning it is, which does use the apostrophe according to the missing letters rule. Apostrophes are generally considered optional but are not 'preferred' (which basically means that fewer people will regard the usage as correct) in pluralised abbreviations such as OAPs and tend not to be used at all in well-known abbreviations such as CDs and MPs.

Increasingly, apostrophes in common abbreviations such as CD's and MP's are considered by many to be incorrect, and so on balance are best avoided. The use of apostrophes is more likely to be preferred and seen as correct where the abbreviation contains periods, such as M.P.'s or Ph.D.'s, although in general, the use of periods and apostrophes in abbreviations is becoming less popular and therefore again is probably best avoided. In single-case communications (all capitals, or no capitals - which is increasingly popular in e-mails and texts), omitting apostrophes in pluralised abbreviations can cause confusion, so forms such cds or CDS should be avoided, if possible, although the 'correct' punctuation in this context is anyone's guess. Grammatical rules change much slower than in real life.

Other plural abbreviations or shortened words such as photos (photographs), mics (microphones) could technically still be shown as photos and mic's, reflecting older traditional use of the apostrophe in abbreviated words, but these days this is generally considered to be incorrect. The use of apostrophes in numbers, such as 1980's or over-50's, is also less popular than a generation ago, and whilst optional, apostrophes in numbers are increasingly regarded as incorrect, so the safer preferred forms for the examples shown are 1980s and over-50s. The use of apostrophes is still preferred for pluralising short words which do not generally have a plural form, such as in the statement: there are more x's than y's, or do's and don'ts. The last example makes for a particularly confusing form and is another commonly spoken term that's probably best avoided putting in print or in any sort of formal communication (because even if you get it right, there's a good chance that the reader will think it wrong anyway.) Aside from the safe recommendation above to generally restrict apostrophes to missing letters and possessive words, if in doubt, try to see what rules the reader or the audience uses for such things - in brochures, on websites, etc., and then, unless they are patently daft, match their grammatical preferences accordingly. Use short sentences. More than fifteen words in a sentence reduces the clarity of the meaning. After drafting your communication, seek out commas and 'and's, and replace them with full stops. Write as you would speak - but ensure its grammatically correct. Don't try to be formal. Don't use old-fashioned figures of speech.

Avoid 'the undersigned', 'aforementioned', 'ourselves', 'your good selves', and similar nonsense. You should show that you're living in the same century as the reader. As to how informal to be, for example, writing much like normal everyday speech (for example I'd, you'd, we've) bear in mind that some older people, and younger people who have inherited traditional views, could react less favourably to a writing style which they consider to be the product of laziness or poor education. Above all, it is important to write in a style that the reader is likely to find agreeable. Avoid jargon, acronyms, technical terms unless essential.

Don't use capital letters - even for headings. Words formed of capital letters are difficult to read because there are no word shapes, just blocks of text. (We read quickly by seeing word shapes, not the individual letters.) Sans serif fonts (like Arial, Helvetica and this one, Tahoma) are modern and will give a modern image. Serif fonts (like Garamond, Goudy and this one, Times) are older and will tend to give a less modern image.

Sans serif fonts take longer to read, so there's a price to pay for being modern. This is because we've all grown up learning to read serif fonts. Serif fonts also have a horizontal flow, which helps readability and reading comfort. (Serif fonts developed before the days of print when the engraver needed to create a neat exit from each letter.) Avoid fancy fonts. They may look clever or innovative, but they are more difficult to read, and some are nearly impossible. Use 10–12-point size for body copy (text). 14-20 point is fine for main headings, bold or normal. Sub-headings 10-12 bold.

Any printed material looks very untidy if you use more than two different fonts and two different point sizes. Generally, the fewer, the better.

- If your organisation stipulates a 'house' font, then use it.
- If your organisation doesn't, then it should do.
- Black text on a white background is the easiest colour combination to read. Avoid coloured backgrounds and black.
- Avoid background graphics or pictures behind the text.
- Italics are less easy to read. So is heavy bold type.
- If you must break any of these font rules, do so only for the heading.
- Limit main attention-grabbing headings to no more than fifteen words.
- In letters, position your main heading between two thirds and three quarters up the page. This is where the eye is naturally drawn first.
- Use left-justified text as it's easiest to read.
- Avoid fully justified text as it creates uneven word spaces and is more difficult to read.
- Remember that effective written communication enables the reader to understand your meaning in as few words as possible.

Writing letters

Generally, if you can't fit it all onto one side of a standard business sheet of paper, start again. Whether writing a letter of complaint, introduction, or proposition - you must keep it brief. If your letter can't be read and understood in less than 20 seconds, it has limited chances of success. It used to be 30 - this time limit gets shorter every year. Think about the purpose of your letter. It will rarely be to resolve something completely. It will more often be to establish a step along the way. So, concentrate just on that step. For example - letters of introduction should not try to sell a product. They should sell the appointment.

Writing reports - template structure

Typical structure template for writing a report:

- Title, author, date.
- Contents.
- Introduction and Terms of Reference (or aims/scope for report).
- Executive Summary (1-2 pages maximum) containing main points of evidence, recommendations and outcomes.
- Background/history/situation.
- Implications/issues/opportunities/threats, with source-referenced facts and figures evidence.
- Solution/action/decision options with implications/effects/results, including financials and parameters inputs and outputs.
- Recommendations and actions with input and outcomes values and costs, and if necessary, return on investment.
- Appendices.
- Optional Bibliography and Acknowledgements.

Map out your structure before you begin researching and writing your report. Ensure the purpose, aim and scope of the report is clearly explained in your terms of reference.

The executive summary should be very concise, summarising the main recommendations and findings. Provide interpretation of situations and options. Show the important hard facts and figures. Your recommendations should include implications, with values and costs where applicable. Unless yours is a highly complex study, limit the executive summary to less than two sides of a standard business paper.

The body of the report should be divided into logical sections. The content must be very concise. Use hard facts and figures, evidence, and justification. Use efficient language - big reports with too many words are not impressive. The best reports are simple and quick to read because the writer has properly interpreted the data and developed viable recommendations.

Do not cram lots of detail, diagrams, figures, evidence, references etc., into the main body of the report. Index and attach these references as appendices at the end of the report. Where you state figures or evidence, you must always identify the source. Show figures in columns. Try to support important figures with a graph. If it's appropriate to acknowledge contributors, then do so in the introduction or a separate section at the end.

Writing reports when you're not sure what's required

If ever you are confronted with the task of writing a report, and you are unsure of how to go about it, here are some tips. It's common to be asked to write reports in business and organisations, for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes reports are required for good reasons - sometimes they are simply a waste of time. Sometimes reports are requested with clear terms of reference and criteria, but mostly they are not. It's common for reports to be requested with only a vague idea given as to what is needed - commonly, there is no written 'brief' or specification.

The writer then spends days agonizing over what the report should include and look like, how long it should be, whether to include recommendations, whether to attach detailed information, etc. All this confusion is unnecessary and can be avoided by asking some simple questions. Many people new to report-writing think that it's not the one thing to ask what the report should look like, often for fear of appearing unsure or incapable. But the fact is that before writing reports or business plans of any sort, the writer should always first seek clarification of exactly what's required. Don't assume that the request is reasonable and properly thought-through - in many cases, it will not be. If the request for a written report is not perfectly clear, ask for clarification. Experienced people ask and seek clarification all the time - it's perfectly sensible and logical to do so.

Seeing sample reports from other industries and organisations is not always very helpful. Sample reports from completely different situations can be very misleading, aside from which, good sample reports are quite difficult to find anyway because most are subject to commercial or other confidentiality. In any event, there are so many different types of reports and report formats that there's no guarantee that an example from elsewhere would be right for your situation. You are often better simply to follow the guidelines above and avoid wasting time looking for elusive report examples.

Trust your own judgment. Creating a sensible structure and building your own report is generally quicker and better than seeking inspiration elsewhere. Importantly ask your employer or boss, or client (whoever has requested the report) for their ideal format and, if appropriate, ask for examples of what they consider a suitable format for them. It's perfectly reasonable to seek clarification in this - you are not a mind-reader.

There's a whole load of mystique around reports and business plans, which is rarely dispelled because folk are afraid to ask - so break the cycle of doubt and assumption - ask. As already explained, when writing anything - especially reports - the shorter, the better is normally the case, especially when the audience is senior and strategic management or directors. In truth, most long reports generally don't get read, and what's worse is that some bosses don't have the sense to help the writers see how they could have submitted something far shorter.

So, the mystique persists. Everyone - especially people new to report-writing thinks they should know how to do it, and nobody generally puts their hand up and dares to break the taboo by asking, "What exactly do you want this report to look like?" In fact, many bosses can't write a decent report themselves, which makes them even less likely to offer to explain what's required. So, when faced with your next vague request to "write a report..", cut through the crap, as they say, break the taboo, and ask people what they want: Discuss and agree on the report specification with the person requesting it - if they aren't sure themselves, then help them to define the criteria by asking helpful questions, such as -

- Is there a written specification or 'terms of reference' for this report?
- Where did the original request for this report come from, and what do you think they expect and need?
- Can we find out more about what is expected from this report?
- How many words or pages?
- Who is this report for, and what will they use it for?
- What format do you (or they) prefer?
- Would people prefer a PowerPoint presentation of the main points instead of a bloody great big report that no one will bother to read?
- Do you want recommendations and actions in the report? Or just a conclusion?
- Do you want detail referenced and appended or available on request?
- Is this report really truly necessary? - might there be a better quicker, more effective way to give the person asking for it what they need, whatever that is?

If you don't know what someone wants a report to be like or what the report is for, then don't let people kid you into thinking that you should be able to guess. Ask some helpful questions to agree on a sensible report format, length, outcomes, etc., and you'll avoid the agonizing guesswork and save everyone's time.

Finally - when you yourself next have to ask one of your people, or a supplier, or anyone else for that matter, to "write a report..", think about all of the above carefully and ask yourself the questions that will help you first confirm that a report is actually necessary, and then to define and provide clear and helpful guidelines, or a specification, or 'terms of reference', so that the person having to write the report can fully understand what sort of report is required and why.

LEARNING UNIT 1

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

COMPOSE A TEXT USING PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR A SPECIFIC FUNCTION

US: 12153

Learning outcomes:

1. A format and structure are selected for the text that is appropriate for the intended audience and function.
2. The main points to be included in the text are identified, and the necessary supporting details are added.
3. A first draft of the text is written that collates the necessary information in a rough framework.

1. Tips and tools for effective writing skills

Seven General Concepts

- Stating your purpose quickly
- Separating details from actions
- Writing conversationally to engage your readers
- Updating your writing style for today's business environment
- Being specific and concrete
- Being personal and positive
- Avoiding overworked words and phrases

Organising information

- How to start writing quickly
- Organise information to help your readers
- "Data dumping" and mind-mapping as organisational tools

Being concise and clear

- Measure your writing efficiency
- Recognise and eliminate unnecessary words, phrases, and repetition
- Techniques for writing concretely
- Substitute heavy, confusing phrases with simple language

Using strong verbs

- How strong verbs improve writing
- Identify and avoid masked and passive verbs

Writing letters

- Salutations and openings that get attention
- Effective transitional sentences and closings
- Personalize your letters to create interest and establish credibility
- How to be positive and convey sincerity
- Write refusal letters with clarity and tact

Reviewing mechanics

- Correct grammar, punctuation, and word usage
- Parallel construction
- Proofreading techniques

Showing emphasis

- Structure your sentences for greater impact
- Reduce unnecessary story details
- Design your page effectively

Writing e-mails, memos, and reports

- Write simple, to the point e-mails
- Create attention-getting subject lines
- How to write a strong lead sentence
- Use a reader-friendly layout to emphasise main ideas
- Best practices of e-mail etiquette
- Organise your findings into a concise, effective format
- Design strong paragraphs to state your case powerfully
- Add graphic elements to organise and support your ideas
- Use an effective format for proposals

2. 10 Tips for Effective E-mail

- Think before you write. Just because you can send information faster than ever before, it doesn't mean that you should send it. Analyse your readers to make certain that you are sending a message that will be both clear and useful.
- Remember that you can always deny that you said it. But if you write it, you may be held accountable for many, many moons. You may be surprised to find where your message may end up.
- Keep your message concise. Remember that the view screen in most e-mail programs shows only approximately one half of a hard-copy page. Save longer messages and formal reports for attachments. On the other hand, do not keep your message so short that the reader has no idea what you're talking about. Include at least a summary (action or information?) in the first paragraph of your message.
- Remember that e-mail is not necessarily confidential. Some companies will retain the right to monitor employees' messages. (Refer to #1 and #2 above.) Don't send anything you wouldn't be comfortable seeing published in your company's newsletter (or your community's newspaper).
- Don't attempt to "discipline" your readers. It's unprofessional to lose control in person—to do so in writing usually just makes the situation worse.
- Don't "spam" your readers. Don't send them unnecessary or frivolous messages. Soon, they'll quit opening any message from you.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS! IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE YELLING AT THE READERS! Remember, if you emphasise everything, you will have emphasised nothing.
- Don't type in all lower case. (Unless you're e E.E. Cummings.) If you violate the rules of English grammar and usage, you make it difficult for the reader to read.

- Use the “Subject” line to get the readers’ attention. Replace vague lines (“Information on XYZ Project,” or “Status Report Q1”) with better “hooks”: “Need your input on Tralfamadore Project,” or “Analysis of recent problems with the new Veeblefetzter.”
- Take the time to proofread your document before you send it. Rub the document thru the spell checker and/or the grammar checker. Even simple tips will make you look sloppy and damage your professional credibility.

3. Tone in business writing

What is Tone?

"Tone in writing refers to the writer’s attitude toward the reader and the subject of the message. The overall tone of a written message affects the reader just as one’s tone of voice affects the listener in everyday exchanges" (Ober 88). A business writer should consider the tone of their message, whether they are writing a memo, letter, report, or any type of business document. Tone is present in all communication activities. Ultimately, the tone of a message reflects the writer, and it does affect how the reader will perceive the message.

How can I make sure my messages have the appropriate tone?

The writer should consider several things when preparing to write. The following questions will help you to determine the appropriate tone for your message.

- Why am I writing this document?
- Whom am I writing to, and what do I want them to understand?
- What kind of tone should I use?
- Why am I writing this document?

You should take time to consider the purpose of your document to determine how you should express the message you wish to convey. Obviously, you want the message to reach your audience, and you will probably want the reader to take some action in response to your message. When you consider the message and how you wish to express it, the tone of your message will become apparent. For example, Suzy is writing a job acceptance letter to an employer but is unsure of the tone she should take in the message. She has decided to accept the position. When she asks herself, "What is my intent upon writing?" she answers, "I want to accept the position, thank the company for the offer, and establish goodwill with my new co-workers." As she writes the letter, she quickly assumes a tone that is appreciative of the offer and enthusiastic about beginning a new job.

Whom am I writing to, and what do I want them to understand?

Who is your audience? Whether it is an employer or a fellow worker, it is essential that you consider your reader before writing any document. Your message will be much more effective if you tailor the document to reach your specific audience. The message you wish to express must be written in a way that will effectively reach the

reader. The tone that you use to write the document directly affects how the reader will interpret what is said.

For example, Bob is writing a cover letter for a position as a Sales Representative for a newspaper. He is unsure that he will be able to succeed at such a position and uses phrases such as: "I hope that you will contact me..." "I know that my qualifications are not very impressive, but..." The reader is likely to interpret these phrases to mean that Bob isn't really qualified for the position or that he doesn't really want the position. Clearly, Bob is not assuming an appropriate tone. He must consider that:

- He is applying for a position as a Sales Representative.
- He wants the employer to ask him to come in for an interview.
- The employer will look for highly motivated and confident individuals.

If Bob were to consider these things, he might rewrite his cover letter to include such phrases as: "You can reach me at 264-2233; I look forward to hearing from you." "My qualifications make me an excellent applicant for this position..." The tone of the message has changed drastically to sound more confident and self-assured.

What kind of tone should I use?

Fortunately, you can use the same kind of tone for most business messages. "The business writer should strive for an overall tone that is confident, courteous, and sincere; that uses emphasis and subordination appropriately; that contains non-discriminatory language; that stresses the "you" attitude, and that is written at an appropriate level of difficulty" (Ober 88). The only major exceptions to these guidelines are when you need to write a negative business message, such as when you deny a job offer or a customer request.

Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind when considering what kind of tone to use in your letters and how to present information in that tone:

- Be confident.
- Be courteous and sincere.
- Use appropriate emphasis and subordination.
- Use non-discriminatory language.
- Stress the benefits for the reader.
- Write at an appropriate level of difficulty.

Be confident

You can feel confident if you have carefully prepared and are knowledgeable about the material you wish to express. The way you write should assume a confident tone as well. As you prepare business documents, you want the reader to do as you ask or to accept your decision. To make the document effective, you must write confidently. Consequently, a confident tone will have a persuasive effect on your audience. The reader will become more inclined to accept your position and will notice the confidence that you have. Employers are inclined to hire individuals that appear confident and sure of their abilities. This does not mean, however, that you should appear overconfident. This can easily be interpreted as arrogant or presumptuous. For example: Not: You must agree that I am qualified for the position. But: My qualifications in the areas of accounting and customer service meet your job requirements.

Be courteous and sincere

A writer builds goodwill for him or herself by using a tone that is polite and sincere. It is important to strive for sincerity in tone because without sincerity, politeness can sound condescending. Consider the words and phrases you use in your document and how your reader will likely receive them. If you are respectful and honest, readers will be more willing to accept your message, even if it is negative. For example: Not: You didn't read the instructions carefully; thus, your system has shut down. But: The system may automatically shut down if any installation errors occur.

Use appropriate emphasis and subordination

You can help your readers to understand which of your ideas you consider most important by using emphasis and subordination. You can choose from a variety of strategies to emphasise an idea or to subordinate it. To emphasise an idea, place it in a short sentence. A short and simple sentence will most effectively convey an important idea. You can provide further explanation, sufficient examples, or evidence in the following sentences. To subordinate an idea, place it in a compound sentence.

Emphasis	Subordination
Smoking will no longer be permitted in the building. The committee on employee health and safety reached this decision after considering evidence from researchers and physicians on the dangers of second-hand smoke.	The committee on employee health and safety has finished considering evidence, and they have reached the decision that smoking will no longer be permitted in the building.

Active	Passive
Scientists have conducted experiments to test the hypothesis.	Experiments have been conducted to test the hypothesis.

Note: In most non-scientific writing situations, active voice is preferable to passive for most of your sentences. Even in scientific writing, overuse of passive voice or use of passive voice in long and complicated sentences can cause readers to lose interest or to become confused. Sentences in active voice are generally—though not always, clearer, and more direct than those in passive voice.

You can recognise passive-voice expressions because the verb phrase will always include a form of be, such as am, is, was, were, are, or been. The presence of a be-verb, however, does not necessarily mean that the sentence is in passive voice. Another way to recognise passive voice sentences is that they may include a "by the..." phrase after the verb; the agent performing the action, if named, is the object of the preposition in this phrase. You can also emphasise and subordinate information by letting readers know how you feel about the information. The amount of space that you devote to an idea will help convey the idea's importance to the reader. Discuss ideas that you want to emphasise in more detail than you do ideas that you want to subordinate.

The language you use to describe your ideas can also suggest how important that idea is. Use phrases such as "most important," "major," or "primary" when discussing ideas, you want to emphasise and phrases such as "a minor point to consider" or "least important" to discuss ideas you want to subordinate.

Emphasis	Subordination
Our primary consideration must be cost.	A minor point to consider is appearance.

Repeating important ideas is a good way to emphasise them as well. Be careful not to overuse this strategy; you will lose your readers' interest if they believe you, are needlessly repeating information.

Our primary consideration must be cost – cost to purchase, cost to operate, and cost to maintain.

Any information that stands out from the rest of the text will be emphasised. Bolding, underlining, CAPITALIZING, indenting, and highlighting will convey emphasis to your reader. Do not use this strategy frequently, or the design effect will be lost.

Use non-discriminatory language

Non-discriminatory language is language that treats all people equally. It does not use any discriminatory words, remarks, or ideas. It is very important that the business writer communicates in a way that expresses equality and respect for all individuals. Discriminatory language can come between your message and your reader. Make sure your writing is free of sexist language and free of bias based on such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.

Suggestion	Not	But
Use neutral job titles.	Chairman	Chairperson
Avoid demeaning or stereotypical terms.	After the girls in the office receive an order, our office fills it within 24 hours.	When orders are received from the office, they are filled within 24 hours.
Avoid words and phrases that unnecessarily imply gender.	Executives and their wives	Executives and their spouses
Omit information about group membership.	Connie Green performed the job well for her age.	Connie Green performed the job well.
If you do not know a reader's gender, use a non-sexist salutation.	Dear Gentlemen:	To Whom it May Concern:
Do not use masculine pronouns.	Each student must provide his own lab jacket.	Students must provide their own lab jackets. Or Each student must provide his or her own lab jacket.

Stress the benefits for the reader

Write from the reader's perspective. Instead of simply writing from the perspective of what the reader can do for you, write in a way that shows what you can do for the reader. A reader will often read a document wondering, "What's in it for me?" It is your job to tailor your document accordingly. Not: I am processing your order tomorrow. But: Your order will be available in two weeks. Stressing reader benefits will help you to avoid sounding self-centred and uninterested.

Write at an appropriate level of difficulty

It is essential that you write at an appropriate level of difficulty to clearly convey your message. Consider your audience and prepare your writing so that the reader will clearly understand what it is that you are saying. In other words, prepare your style of reading to match the reading abilities of your audience. Do not use complex passages or terms that the reader will not understand. Accordingly, do not use simple terms or insufficient examples if the reader can understand your writing. A competent writer will match the needs and abilities of their reader and find the most effective way to communicate with a particular reader.

What kind of tone should I use with a negative message?

It is especially important to consider tone when you are writing a negative message. In a negative message, such as a document that rejects a job offer or denies a request, be sure to assume a tone that is gracious and sincere. Thank the reader for their input or involvement and carefully state that you cannot comply with their wishes. Follow this response with an explanation as necessary. It is best not to draw attention to the person performing the action that will likely displease the reader. Therefore, you may want to avoid using active voice when delivering negative messages. You might also avoid stressing the reader benefits unless there are clear benefits to the negative message. It can sound insincere to stress reader benefits in a negative message.

Not - Thank you for offering me the position of General Manager at Simon's Inc. Unfortunately, I am unable to accept the position. I did not think that the position you offered me would utilize my communication and customer service skills to the degree that I wanted. Therefore, I have accepted a position as Assistant Director at a different company.

But - Thank you for offering me the position of General Manager at Simon's Inc. I appreciate your prompt and generous offer. Unfortunately, I am unable to accept the position. I have accepted a different position that will allow me to utilize my communication and customer service skills.

In some negative messages, you may need to address faults or issues concerning an individual. When writing messages such as this, maintain a professional tone that does not attack the individual, but that makes your position on the issue clear. For example: Not: I do not understand why you made such discriminatory remarks. But: Discriminatory remarks are not tolerated in this organisation.

Word choice active vs passive voice makes life easier for you and your reader. Often, short sentences written in active voice will more clearly communicate your thoughts. In active voice, the doer (subject) comes first and does the action (verb). Here are some examples:

- Active: Anthony broke the window. (STRONG)
Passive: The window was broken by Anthony. (WEAK)
- Active: The boys raked the leaves. (STRONG)
Passive: The leaves were raked by the boys. (WEAK)
- Active: Jill will not call Rosa. (STRONG)
Passive: Rosa will not be called by Jill. (WEAK)

Subject/Verb Agreement Identify the subject.

- The subject – usually a noun or a pronoun representing a person, place, or thing – performs the action asserted by the verb. A singular subject must have a singular verb.
- A plural subject must have a plural verb.
 - * Subjects and verbs should agree even when other words come between them: The stories in this book are interesting.
 - * Most indefinite pronouns (pronouns that refer to a single unspecified person or thing, e.g. Everyone, someone, anybody, each) are singular and take a singular verb. One of the most often confused indefinite pronouns is "everyone", which sounds plural but is singular: Everyone in the room takes the test at the same time.
- Use a singular verb with titles and when defining words: "The Outsiders" remains one of my favourite books. "Scares" is a synonym for "frightens". (Notice that the words being defined are put in quotations marks.)

Articles

Articles are those little words that precede and modify nouns: the teacher, a college, an idea. These words alert the reader or listener to the object's specificity (the) or generality (a, an).

Frequently misused words

There, their, and they're:

- THERE - denotes a place. The train station is over there.
- THEIR - denotes people possessing something. Their dogs ran all over the house.
- THEY'RE - is a contraction for "they are." They're going to the mall.

Its and It's:

- ITS - is possessive. The possessive form of "its" never takes an apostrophe. Its contents are top secret.
- IT'S - is a contraction meaning "It is." It's hot outside.

Lay and lie:

- TO LAY - is a verb that means "to put" or "to place" and requires a direct object (something or someone receiving the verb's action). I lay the box down. I laid the box down. She lays the box down.
- TO LIE - is a verb that means "to recline" or "to be situated" and does not require an object. Present Tense Past Tense I lie in bed. I lay in bed. She lies in bed. She lay in bed.

Affect and effect:

- AFFECT - is a verb meaning "to influence" or "to bring about a change." The tornado did not affect my neighbourhood.
- EFFECT - can be used as a noun meaning "the result of an action." "The effect of the president's encouraging speech was remarkable. ("Affect is sometimes a noun and "effect" is sometimes a verb; however, these uses are not common.)

Between and among:

- BETWEEN - implies two people or things. Jane and Bob have \$50 between them.
- AMONG - implies more than two people or things. Carl, Sue, and John shared the work among themselves.

Advice on Punctuation Commas

Most people use too many commas. It is not necessarily true that a comma should be used each time you draw a breath when reading a sentence. If you've been taught "the breath rule" in the past and are following this rule now, please stop.

Semicolons: are frequently misused. Semicolons are very different marks of punctuation from commas. Generally, use a semicolon only where you might also have been able to use a period. There are other rules for semicolon use, of course, but this general advice is good to follow.

Colons: have a very different use than semicolons. Unless you are writing a sentence presenting a list of items or a series of ideas, you probably don't need to use a colon.

Organisation

A clear thesis introduces the argument of the paper. Your major point(s) should be addressed in your thesis paragraph to give a road map for the paper. Each point in your thesis should be expanded upon in a paragraph or more within the body of your paper. Transitions, logical paragraphing, and headings all convey your central points and make your paper more readable. Use clear transitions to move from one point to the next. Headings may make your logic even more clear to the reader. Your conclusion should mirror and expand upon your opening thesis statement. A good conclusion reinforces your argument and lets readers know why the ideas are significant.

Citing your work

- All direct quotes - words taken word for word from a research source - must be cited. If there is any doubt whether information should be cited, be cautious and cite the material.
- Any material you summarise or paraphrase from a research source must be cited.
- Plagiarism is using another's words or ideas without giving credit to the author. You might be guilty of plagiarism if you summarise or paraphrase someone else's work without citing the source. You also might be guilty of plagiarism if you seem to be summarising or paraphrasing but only change a few of the original words.
- Don't let your paper become too filled with paraphrasing and summarising. Include your own thoughts and arguments.

Revision

Get used to writing multiple drafts. Good writing comes through revision (even for the best of writers). READ YOUR PAPER ALOUD TO YOURSELF. If you have trouble reading a sentence clearly and smoothly, it probably needs to be rewritten. REWRITE! REWRITE! REWRITE! PROOFREAD!

Questions to consider as you revise:

- Does your paper answer the assignment? Check the assignment to see if you repeated keywords or ideas from the assignment in your thesis paragraph.
- In the opening paragraph, do you have a thesis statement, a sentence or two that states the main point or argument of your essay? Do you have a conclusion that ties together all the points made in your paper?
- Does the paper flow? Make sure ideas connect clearly and logically. Do you repeat keywords from your thesis paragraph throughout the body of your paper? Do the topic sentences of each paragraph relate to one central thesis and to one another?
- Is all the information correct and adequately documented? Do you consistently and properly use the SOM's preferred method of documentation? 5) Do you use specific language? Avoid vague language like "aspects," "thing," "factors," and "society" and over-reliance on unclear pronouns like "this" and "it." Be Clear.

4. Top Ten Tips for Writing Better Business Letters Business writing has only two goals:

1. To make people understand you.
2. To get them to take some action.

Your readers take the proper action only when they know not just what you say but what you want. Do you want them to:

- Buy your product or service?
- Confirm a decision?
- Simply like you and think you're good to do business with?

All those things, buying, confirming, even liking, and thinking, are actions. For your reader to understand what you want (and then do it), he or she must first understand precisely what you mean in your writing. If he or she must guess, there's a good chance the guess will be wrong. People who read your letters, e-mails, faxes, reports, and memos have no opportunity to interpret your body language or tone of voice as they would in a conversation.

So, although you should write much as you speak, you should think of the times when you speak at your best, when your words, sentences, and paragraphs are more precise than your typical, everyday speech. Even when it's structured and precise, good writing helps your reader see you as a real person and treats him or her as one too. Many business writers are tempted to hide behind officious, complex language, using it both to avoid saying what they mean and because so many others use it. They shouldn't, and you don't have to either.

To write effectively, to say what you mean, and to make sure your readers understand you, keep these ten rules in mind:

1) Write concisely

Some editors estimate that a third of the words in a typical letter is wasted. At every stage of writing your letter, look at it and decide what to remove – there will always be something. Remember that you want your reader to understand you and act. Anything that does not help him or her do that is unnecessary. Avoid repeating anything other than for specific emphasis. Remove needless words from every sentence, needless sentences from every paragraph, and needless paragraphs entirely.

2) Be complete

Don't take conciseness too far. You should write not just what must be said but also what should be said to achieve your goal. Your letter should not read like a telegram but should tell your reader everything he or she needs to know and then prod for action. Make sure that you include enough background for your reader to get what you mean and that you come across as tactful and polite, not terse, and unfeeling.

3) Use nouns and verbs

If you think of writing as driving a car, nouns and verbs are the wheels and engine, while adjectives and adverbs are the body and trim. No matter how fancy the paint and details, without power and grip, your car goes nowhere. Adjectives and adverbs can enhance sturdy nouns and verbs, but they can't rescue weak ones. Instead of "I definitely believe that the performance will be a very successful one," write "I know the performance will succeed." The second sentence is both stronger and shorter.

4) Write actively

Good writers use the active voice whenever they can. In active sentences, people do things -- they act and interact. The active voice is vigorous and brief, showing who acts and how. In passive sentences, things are done -- people are acted upon or, worse, disappear entirely. In most contexts, the passive voice is vague and evasive, making your reader unsure who is doing what. So instead of "The report will be sent to you" and "The source of your problem has been determined" (passive), write "I will send you the report" and "Our technical team has found what caused your problem" (active). Remove "there is," "it appears," "are done," and similar phrases by rebuilding passive sentences as active ones.

5) Be specific

Most people use specific language when they talk casually: they tell stories with details, colours, and smells. Write the same way. Use words to paint pictures in your reader's mind, not to ask him or her to dissect abstract concepts. If you have numbers, use them. Don't discuss ideas without examples. Avoid abbreviations not everyone knows. Everybody understands words that apply to everyday life, so use everyday words, and your reader will understand you.

6) Write interesting sentences

Vary the length of your sentences to avoid lulling your reader to sleep. Make some short and sharp. Draw others out by linking two or three together: clip with commas, stitch with semicolons; even staple with dashes -- if you like. Don't make all your sentences the same.

7) Write to your readers, not down to them

Most people understand far more words than they use, either in writing or speech. If you read any general how-to book, business letter, newspaper, or even these writing guidelines, you will find each written at roughly the same level of language. None treats its readers as children, but none is likely to use the word "turpitude" either. Even if you are writing to tell your readers something they know nothing about, think of them as intelligent but uninformed, not dumb. Avoid using "we" if you don't have to -- use it if you are really talking about a group opinion, position, or action (such as a company policy or a decision voted on at a meeting), but don't use it to replace "I" with something more pompous. Readers like to see that you are a person, not a vague corporate "we" or an impersonal "the writer." Your reader isn't stupid and doesn't like being talked down to.

8) Use a positive tone

Use negatives such as "don't," "won't," and "not" only to deny, not to evade or be indecisive. Instead of "We can't decide until tomorrow," write "We should decide tomorrow," or, better yet, "We will decide tomorrow." Even many negative statements have single words that work better than negative statements: "disagreeable" instead of "not nice," "late" instead of "not on time," "wrong" instead of "non-optimal," "rarely" instead of "not very often," and so on.

9) Be correct

Good writing is correct in two ways:

- In technique.
- In facts.

Reference books, such as style guides and dictionaries, will help you write with proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and formatting. The facts, however, are yours alone. Letters serve as records of what you say, often spending years in filing cabinets for later reference, so your facts must be correct. If you have relevant information, present it. If you are uncertain, say so. If you merely suspect something, make the suspicion clear, so your reader does not think you know more than you do. Check your letter over before you send it to save the awkwardness of correcting a mistake after your reader sees it.

10) Be clear

Good business writing is all about being clear. A letter is not a poem, a mystery story, or a morality play. It should not have subtle allegorical overtones requiring careful study or different shades of meaning. In short, it should not be open to interpretation. Every word should mean one thing, each sentence should say one thing, and together they should create a tool for achieving your goal. If your reader understands you, then does what you intend, then you're writing, whether a letter, e-mail, memo, fax, or report, succeeds.

5. Writing effective business e-mail

Watson, come in here! My in-box is full!

When, on May 24th, 1844, Samuel B. Morse sent the first telegraph message, it stated simply, “What hath God wrought!” and was a profound moment in the history of human communications. (Rumour has it that during the subsequent celebration, nobody noticed the response, which read “Stanley’s Liniment, good for all ailments of the human frame. Free shipping.”).

Fully 160 years later, we have e-mail, which speeds messages, documents, and images at the speed of light to all corners of the Earth (and even space.) Even though it has become ubiquitous in business, many messages are sent without thought as to the impression they’re making on the receiving end. Most of these problems are easy to address with simple procedural changes. Some of the practical suggestions below may help you avoid problems and project a positive image to the recipients of your messages.

The poor neglected subject: When writing a subject for your e-mail, remember how they are used. They are in a long list, with dozens if not hundreds of other messages. If you use the subject “Question,” you are not giving any clue about the contents. “Please send the latest pricing for widgets” is vastly better.

How will it look when they open it? Lisa Davis of One Alliance Communications has won awards for e-mail writing. She recommends you take a moment to put yourself in others’ shoes. “Looks matter!” says Davis, “Visualize how your e-mail looks to the recipient. Using teeny-tiny type or a font style that is clownish or childlike speaks volumes.” For critical messages, send a message to a co-worker to scrutinize – not just on the text, but the overall impression it makes.

Consider establishing a company policy. This can give your employees a consistent guide for e-mail use as well as limit liability. By using such a policy, your firm can demonstrate reasonable efforts to provide a fair, harassment-free working environment.

Don’t forward offensive content. Obvious? You’d think so... but half of US employers have disciplined or terminated employees for sending sexually suggestive or explicit material via the office e-mail system.

Always include previous messages in a reply. You’d never pick up the phone and begin the conversation “Do you agree?” if the last time you spoke was several days back. Bandwidth is cheap, and it’s okay to send the entire message thread. (Related tip: Be careful what you include when you’re forwarding. Private messages often lurk way, way down in the thread.)

Name your attachments with care. Remember, they may be saved and searched for later. An attachment named “Proposal from Acme Industries - 072805.pdf” (rather than “proposal.pdf”) would make a huge difference. If you’re using a Macintosh – grumble if you must but adding an appropriate three-letter extension would be nice to us poor Windows users.

Think hard before CC’ing or Replying to “All” It used to be true that physical barriers (such as standing in front of a photocopy machine or carbon paper itself) naturally limited this phenomenon. At least we thought about it. But “cc” and “reply all” on e-mails is too easy.

“BCC” when recipients shouldn’t see other recipients. E-mail privacy is important, and to receive a mailing that exposes everyone else’s address in the “cc” field is a breach of trust. In addition, Customers often “reply to all” ...and you surely see the problem. I recently received an e-mail from an industrial client exposing all FOUR HUNDRED of their e-mail contacts to every recipient.

Be careful with a promotional text. If you find that your messages aren’t being delivered, this could be the reason. Even short promotional messages like “Ask about free shipping” can flag Microsoft Outlook to mark the message as junk.

Don’t forward scams or virus warnings. These are almost always hoaxes, and therefore by forwarding them, you are the virus. The industry has ways of warning people about viruses and scams. Leave it to them.

Never use e-mail for confidential information. Unless you’ve set up an encryption method, confidential information should not be sent via e-mail. Think of e-mail as an unlined envelope – someone really wanting to can read it without you ever knowing.

Get your own domain name and e-mail account with that name. This can solve many problems in one action. For example, if your company changes ISPs, you won’t have to print new business cards, and each message you send re-enforces your name brand. You can even be clever with an address like “greatsolutions@acme.com.”

Don’t send an e-mail at all. If it doesn’t feel right to send a computer message, then don’t. Every now and then, turn off the computer and go visit the person; shake their hand, sit, and chat. At least pick up the phone. Even a perfectly written e-mail is still cold, without emotion or nuance. It can’t buy you a cup of coffee or smile and say, “thanks for your business – I really appreciate all you’ve done.”

If it doesn't feel right to send a computer message, then don't. Every now and then, turn off the computer and go visit the person; shake their hand, sit and chat. At least pick up the phone.

6. Seven tips for fine-tuning your business writing skills

Writing skills are important in business because clients often use them to measure a company's ability. Customers tend to have a negative view of firms that misspell names, use vague phrases, disseminate written materials with many errors, and use a condescending tone. Fortunately, there are several techniques that can be used to ensure that written messages are clear and accurate and that they are composed concisely and quickly. Business writers should keep their documents short and simple, specific, and devoid of generalizations, and correct in terms of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. They should also use the active voice, arrange their sentences with parallel structure, organise their writing by following an outline, and use a tone that will give readers a positive mental picture of [the] writer. Fifteen common usage errors to avoid are enumerated. Full text: COPYRIGHT California Society of Certified Accountants 1995. Why should you be concerned about writing? Because your clients and employers want you to be. Clients frequently judge a company's ability by its written materials. And they notice errors. A condescending tone can cost your business. With the advent of the Internet, e-mail, and online services, some people have been quick to say that writing is going out of style. This couldn't be further from the truth. Computers, e-mail, and fax machines have made writers out of us all.

Never has it been more important to compose clear, accurate messages - and to compose them quickly and concisely. If your letters, e-mails, or reports show signs of inaccuracy or sloppiness, how do your clients know that you're more careful with their money? If your documents aren't bold, brief, and clear, what message are you conveying about your overall business philosophy? You may feel burdened by the task of composing business letters, memos, and reports, but take heart: The following tips can help you clean up your business writing in seven easy steps without going back to English class.

- 1) **Keep It Short and Simple** Do your readers a favour: write in short sentences and use simple words. We are wrong to believe that big words and long sentences indicate intelligence. A concise letter or report is more effective; it saves reading and writing time. Your main points won't fade into a background of unnecessary words. Read sentences out loud to check their length. If you run out of breath, they're too long. Better yet, read your writing to someone else. If your listener forgets the beginning before you finish, you need to break your thoughts into two or more sentences.

Eliminate extra words whenever you can. For example, "It has come to our attention that your account is three months in arrears" can be edited to read: "Your account is three months past due."

- 2) **Be Specific and avoid Generalizations.** Use specific, concrete words instead of vague generalizations. Don't make your readers guess about the meaning of your message; it wastes their time as well as yours. For example, which of the following sentences conveys the most information? "Please get back to us as soon as possible regarding your return," or: "To complete your 1040 form before the deadline, we must hear from you before April 1."
- 3) **Use the active voice to avoid dead,** dull-sounding writing by sticking to the active voice, in which the subject is the doer of the action. "The client filed the Schedule C" is an active sentence. "The Schedule C was filed by the client" is passive. The passive voice makes sentences longer and more impersonal. The active voice sounds alive, personal, and demanding. For example, "Your prompt attention to this letter will be appreciated" is considerably crisper in the active voice: "Please attend to this matter promptly." When you write, look for the following words, which signify the passive voice.: *is *is being *were *was *are *has been *have been *had been.
- 4) **Use Parallel Structure Organise your sentences with parallel structure.** Your writing will be much smoother and clearer if you put related ideas in the same tense and form. For example, "I came, I saw, I conquered" sounds a lot snappier than "I arrived, then having seen, I proceeded to conquer." When you're writing a letter to a prospective client, it's awkward to write: "Our firm offers a range of services: preparing financial statements, help your plan your strategies, train you in computers and provide business consulting." Instead, use a parallel structure to write: "Our firm offers a range of services, including *financial statement preparation. *strategic planning, *computer training, and *business solutions."
- 5) **Organise your writing;** always create an outline before starting to write. Even if you only jot down five or six words, it will save you writing time and remind you of where you're headed. More importantly, your readers won't get lost in a poorly organised document that causes them to ignore or misunderstand your message. Get to the point immediately. Busy readers should be able to get your message in the first two or three sentences of your document. Start with the conclusion or call to action, then list your primary arguments. Provide the backup or discussion material at the end for anyone who has time to read that far.

Once your document is written, you can visually organise your message to make it even clearer and easier to read. Use headings to group related paragraphs. Indent and space your lines to provide increased white space. Number or bullet your points.

- 6) **Watch Your Tone** The way you "talk" in writing gives your readers a mental picture of your personality. Write informally, as a friendly, concerned professional. If you sound too formal or long-winded, that's how your readers will envision you.

Use positive words and expressions instead of negative ones. If you want to motivate your readers, positive language works best. Avoid writing "you claim," which implies: "you say so, but I don't believe you." Words such as "failed to," "neglected to", or "lack of" can sound accusatory. For example, instead of: "This notice is regarding your failure to remit payment on our invoice," you might use: "Did you receive our invoice of Sept. 12, 1995?"

To keep your writing from sounding static, which can bore your readers, try alternating longer sentences with shorter ones. Also, keep in mind that cliché business phrases such as "we are in receipt of" or "attached please find" can sound pompous or stuffy.

- 7) **Edit for Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling.** Spelling and grammatical errors not only convey a sloppy image but also can cost your business. For example, a hyphen in the wrong place can inadvertently offend your readers: "We are always happy to serve small business owners" is different from: "We are always happy to serve small business owners." Always let someone else edit your writing. Although most word processors have a spell check function that can catch some errors, none of them will catch words that are spelt correctly but used incorrectly in a sentence.

There's no substitute for the human eye - especially the fresh eye of a person who hasn't been looking at the document repeatedly. Several excellent handbooks review common grammatical errors and discuss how to fix them. One of the best is William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White's classic *Elements of Style*. It's short, focused, and entertaining. Quality writing will make your life easier and more profitable. As you communicate more effectively, you will more successfully persuade others to share your point of view. Quality writing saves time, positions you as an authority and enhances self-esteem. As you increase the quantity of quality messages you send out, you're bound to experience an increase in the quantity of positive responses you receive.

- 1) **Biased Language** avoids unnecessary references to gender, age, disability, or ethnicity. Construct sentences as plural so you may use their rather than gender-specific pronouns or him/her. Use: CPAs will need to bring their own golf clubs. Do not use: Each CPA will need to bring his or her own golf clubs.
- 2) **Tax Season** Should be lowercase. CPAs everywhere dread tax season.
- 3) **CPAs** No periods between letters. No apostrophe if not possessive: I am a member of the California Society of CPAs. Singular possessive: The client's records were a CPA's nightmare. Plural possessive: The CPAs' golf tournament was successful. Follow the same guidelines for IRS.
- 4) **To avoid using "as to."** Replace with concerning or about. Do not use I am not clear as to his motives. Instead, use: I am not clear about his motives.
- 5) **Affect, Effect:** Affect as a verb can mean to cultivate or to influence. Effect as a verb means to put into effect. The decision affected millions. The committee will try to affect the decision.
- 6) **Thousands** Don't use K to refer to thousands of rands.
- 7) **Nationwide, Statewide one word** Do not hyphenate.
- 8) **People** Do not use persons.
- 9) **Specialise** Don't use specialise when referring to CPAs. It is preferable to use areas of expertise.
- 10) **Fewer** Less few refers to the number, less to quantity. The firm has fewer returns to process this year. The partners will earn less money than they did last year.
- 11) **Hopefully** Hopefully is an adverb meaning with hope. Use: We hope the information is accurate. Do not use: Hopefully, the information is accurate.
- 12) **Andor** Do not use. Choosing and or is preferable
- 13) **Years' Experience** Use as a plural possessive. Write 3-4 years' experience. Do not write 3-4 years' experience or 3-4 years' experience.

14) **Review** Do not use review in engagement letters unless you are going through specific review procedures. Otherwise, look at or check over.

15) **Last, Latest** Last means final; latest, most recent.

7. General Writing tips

Plan your document

Before you begin drafting your document, you need to decide exactly what it aims to do. Whom will the readers be? Do they have little or no knowledge of the subject or a good understanding? What do they want to know? What is the best way to present the information?

Put the reader first

Once you know who your readers are, try to put things from their point of view rather than your organisation's perspective. Write directly to the reader, as though you were explaining the facts in person. Use "we" and "you". It is friendlier than "the department/bank/council" and "the client/customer/ratepayer".

Use words your reader will know

About 50 per cent of adults can't cope with a level of writing more complex than found in a popular newspaper. So, if your documents are aimed at the public, you will need to pitch your writing at this level. Don't use technical or specialised terms unless you know that your readers will understand them. If it's important that readers understand a specific term, explain it. Avoid archaic words like "heretofore", "herein", and "aforementioned".

Use everyday language

Your writing will be easier to understand -- and much more reader-friendly -- if it's in plain, everyday language. Of course, plain English isn't merely a matter of replacing pompous words with plain ones. But it's a good start to write in the same kind of language you would use if you were talking directly to the reader.

Here are some examples of expressions commonly used in business letters and other written communications with some clearer alternatives:

Use short sentences and brief paragraphs

Write in short sentences. Have only one or two ideas in each sentence. If you need to explain a term or qualify a point, use a separate sentence. But don't sacrifice clarity for brevity. Just because a sentence is short doesn't necessarily mean it is clear. You may need to use more, rather than fewer, words to get your message across. Don't slavishly follow any rule which says a sentence should only contain a certain number of words. A better guideline is to use only as many words as necessary. Organise your thoughts into brief paragraphs, with one central topic in each. This makes your writing much easier to read and understand.

Use active rather than passive voice

Office staff often writes in the passive voice. For example, applications will be processed within two weeks. In this sentence, it is not clear who will be carrying out the action. The reader may also be uncertain about what "processed" means. But writing the same sentence in the active voice is far more direct: We will reply to your application within two weeks. The reader now knows who will be carrying out the action and what to expect, a reply within two weeks.

Avoid overcapitalisation

The unnecessary use of capitals is old-fashioned and can also be intimidating to the reader. The tendency to overcapitalise persists in some forms of business writing. For example, many public servants would write:

When the Department issued its annual report, the Minister tabled it in parliament. Yet reputable publications such as The Star and the Pretoria News follow a more modern (and readable) style: When the department issued its annual report, the minister tabled it in parliament.

Be unambiguous

Make sure that your writing doesn't have an unintended second meaning. Signs in the London Underground railway used to state: Dogs must be always carried. Did this mean that everyone using the underground must carry a dog? Or does it mean that if you are travelling with a dog, you must always carry it?

Tell the reader where they can get more information

Your document should provide as much information as your reader needs to know. But many people may still have questions. So, you should always tell them where they can get more information or advice.

LEARNING UNIT 2

WRITE / PRESENT / SIGN FOR A WIDE RANGE OF CONTEXTS

US: 119459 – NQF 3 – 5 Credits

Learners at this level read and view a range of texts. People credited with this Unit Standard can read and view a variety of text types with understanding and to justify their views and responses by reference to detailed evidence from texts. They are also able to evaluate the effectiveness of different texts for different audiences and purposes by using a set of criteria for analysis.

Learners credited with this Unit Standard can:

- Use a range of reading and viewing strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts
- Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts
- Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context
- Explore and explain how language structures and features may influence a reader/viewer

Learning assumed to be in place:

The credit calculation assumes that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this Unit Standard: the NQF Level 2 Unit Standard, entitled maintain and adapt oral/signed communication.

LEARNING UNIT 2

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

WRITE/SIGN FOR A SPECIFIED AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

US: 119459

Learning outcomes:

1. The purpose for writing/signing, the target audience and the context are clear in relation to the learning task or activity.
2. The text type, style, and register selected are appropriate to the audience, purpose and context.
3. Language appropriate to socio-cultural sensitivities is selected and used in an appropriate manner without compromising own values or arguments.
4. Writing/signing is well-structured and conveys its message clearly.
5. Critical thinking skills are used as strategies for planning.
6. Writing/signing reflects a clear point of view with sound reasons and facts to support arguments and the logical development of a clearly articulated premise.
7. Research skills are evident in the way data and information relevant to the context is identified, located, selected, and synthesised for inclusion in the final text.

Why are you writing, and whom are you writing for?

Why you are writing falls into four general categories:

- to provide information
- to persuade the reader
- to give instructions
- to enact (or prohibit) something

Whom you are writing for is determined by your identification of:

- reader type and their level of expertise - i.e., are they experts, managers, technicians
- or laypersons, as well as a mixed group of readers
- reader's purpose in using the document
- reader's attitude to both you and the content of your document

1. Writing to provide information

There are various styles to use when writing to provide information.

Narrative

- The purpose is to relate or narrate a series of real or imaginary events:
- Simple language is usually the most effective.
- Long passages of pure narration are rare - without description or exposition, it soon bores the reader.
- Present tense may be used but be consistent! Use the same tense throughout.

Reflective

- The writer gives their own opinions on a particular topic.
- The writer is seeking not to establish the truth but to air his/her opinions.

Descriptive

- The purpose is to paint a clear and distinct picture of the person, place, issue, or thing being described.
- Try to avoid over-using 'you' - instead use:
 - the passive voice
 - a fictitious observer.

Expository

- The purpose is to inform the reader.
- It is an explanation or process that emphasises well-organised and concise information.
- Be careful not to show personal feelings.
- Report the facts as accurately as possible.
- Ask who? What? Where? When? Why? And how?

Electronic texts

- The purpose is to represent, store or transmit information by electronic systems.
- Transmission of information, messages, facsimiles, etc., from one computer terminal to another.

Multi-media presentations

- The purpose is to write presentations to be given as slide shows or presented on the computer.
- Mainly intended as compositions in which you combine illustrations, texts, photo's, etc.
- Use skills in drawing, graphics and image editing, animation, photography, video and presentations, and the use of the Internet and the Web.

2. Writing to persuade the reader**Discursive**

- The purpose is to argue about a subject.
- Must give both sides of the argument.
- Sum up at the end where you may give your own point of view.

Argumentative

- The primary purpose is to sway the reader to accept your point of view.
- The issue must be arguable.
- Avoid issues that cannot be won.
- Become an expert on the issue.
- Discuss the issue in depth so that the reader will understand the issue fully.
- The writer must take a clear position.
- The tone must be reasonable, professional, and trustworthy.

3. Writing to give instructions

Transactional

- The purpose is to get things done: to inform or persuade the reader to understand or do something.
- Takes the form of letters, memos, abstracts, summaries, proposals, reports, and planning documents of all kinds.
- Must be done clearly, correctly, concisely, coherently, and carefully.

4. Writing to enact (or prohibit) something

Business correspondence

- comprises letters, faxes, e-mails, memos, but usually letters.
- The purpose is to introduce yourself and state your objective.
- Try to address it to a particular person by name.
- It should be kept to one page only.
- It should be unique and specific to the individual.
- Remember the aesthetics - no errors, neat, good paper - proofread!

opening lines:

- to refer to previous correspondence
- to say how you found the recipient's name/address
- to say why you are writing to the recipient

closing lines:

- to make a reference to a future event
- to repeat an apology
- to offer help

Examples of ten good opening lines:

- With reference to your letter of 8 June, I ...
- I am writing to enquire about ...
- After having seen your advertisement in ..., I would like ...
- After having received your address from ..., I ...
- I received your address from ... and would like ...
- We/I recently wrote to you about ...
- Thank you for your letter of 8 June.
- Thank you for your letter regarding ...
- Thank you for your letter/e-mail about ...
- In reply to your letter of 8 June, ...

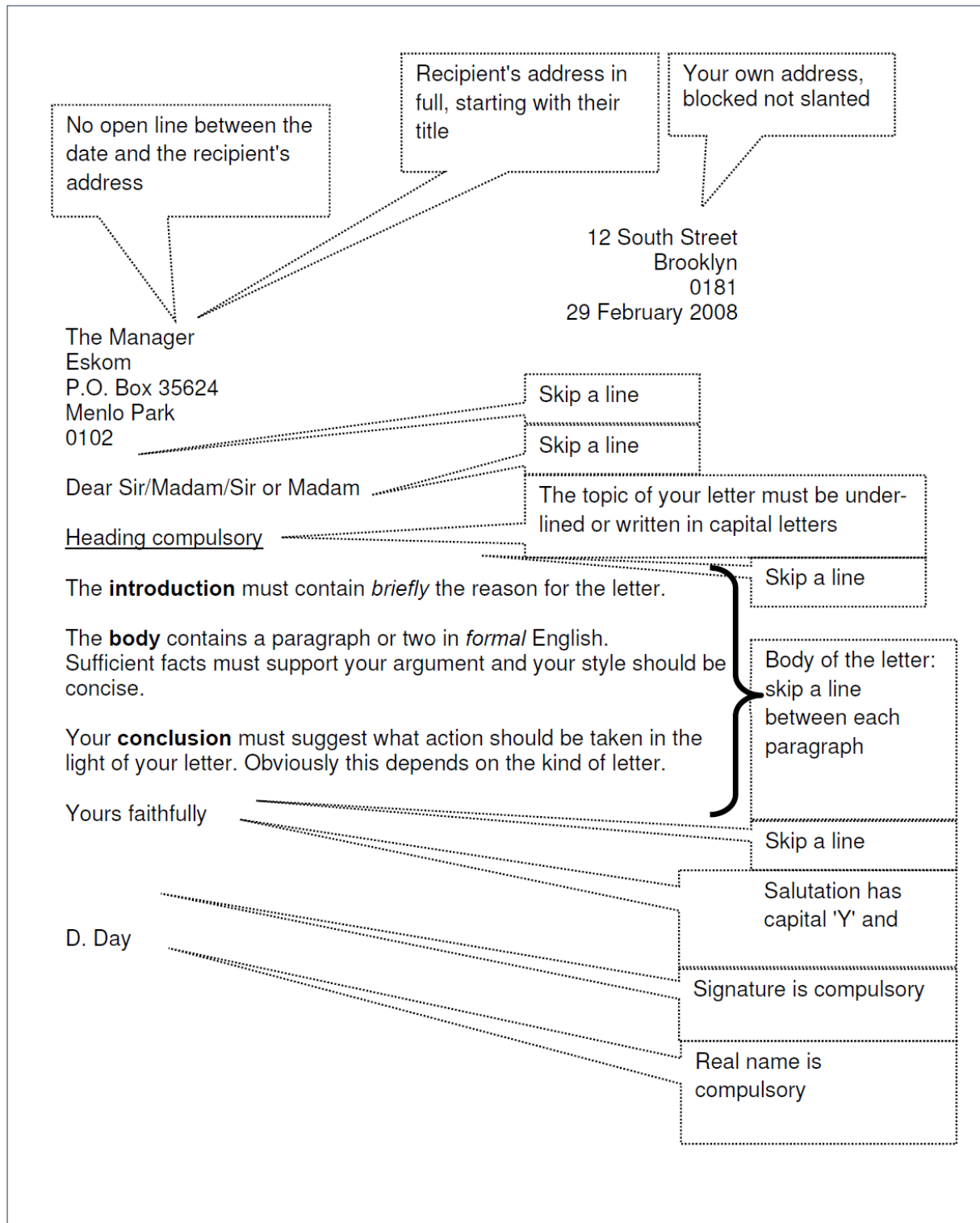
Examples of ten good closing lines:

- If you require any further information, feel free to contact me.
- I look forward to your reply.
- I look forward to hearing from you.
- I look forward to seeing you.
- Please advise as necessary.
- We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future.
- Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.
- Once again, I apologise for any inconvenience.
- We hope that we may continue to rely on your valued custom.
- I would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.

When 'Yours faithfully' and when 'Yours sincerely' in a business letter:

- Recipient's name is unknown to you:
 - Dear Sir / Madam / Sir or Madam Yours faithfully
- Recipient's name is known to you:
 - Dear Mr Day / Mrs Day / Miss Day / Ms Day Yours sincerely
- Addressing a good friend or colleague:
 - Dear Jack Best wishes / Best regards
- Addressing whole departments:
 - Dear, Sirs Yours faithfully

Format of a business letter:



Whatever writing you do, it should always have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This is so that the reader immediately knows what he/she is going to read about (introduction), gets all the relevant information (body) and can make sure that he/she has understood correctly and knows what to do (conclusion).

5. Reader type and their level of expertise

- Where are the readers from?
- Are they from within the organisation or from outside?
- Are they from the same socio-cultural group, or do they form a mixed group where various sensitivities may be present?
- Are they experts? (Do they perhaps know more than you about what you have written?)
- Are they managers? (Do they have more power than you? do they also know more than you about what you have written?)
- Are they technicians? (Do they have more technical knowledge about what you have written?)
- Are they laypersons? (Are they ordinary people who know something, or nothing, about what you have written?)
- Do the readers form a mixed group from all the above?

6. Reader's purpose in using the document

- Do they have to read your work?
- Do they want to read your work?

7. Reader's attitude towards you and the content of the document

- Are they positive or negative towards you?
- Do you hold a higher position?
- Is there some reward in it for them?
- Does it mean more work needs to be done?
- Does it make them feel more positive or more negative?

8. Writer's choice of text type, style, and register

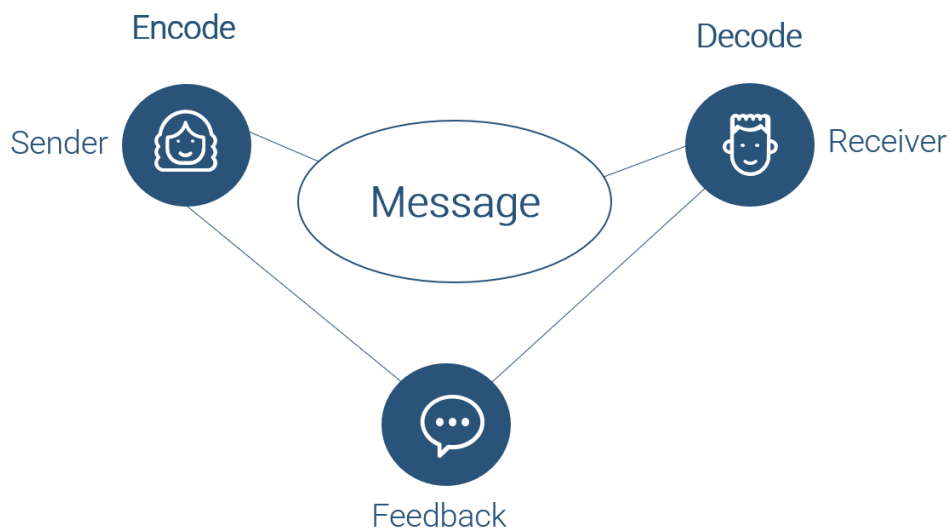
- How we present and tell depends on the purpose of the written task. At the beginning of this unit, we looked at the purpose of a written task - please refer.
- How we present and tell also depends on the readers that are going to read the written task - please refer to the previous three sections.

For the writer to communicate the message successfully, style, text types, and register need to be well selected.

- Style is the way a writer addresses a matter, a manner which reveals the writer's personality, or 'voice'.
- Text types are used to achieve the above (style). There are ten basic text types, namely: description; discussion; explanation; exposition; information report; narrative; poetry; procedure; recount and response.
- Register reflects the situation and determines the most appropriate language. Socio-cultural sensitivities must be kept in mind so that offensive language is not used. Own values or arguments must, however, not be compromised in doing so.

9. Writing must convey the message clearly

To convey a message clearly, you need to understand the communication model.



There are many factors that influence the communication process, all of which impact each other in a variety of ways.

- Sender - the sender is the speaker/writer. A sender starts with an impulse he or she wishes to express and then must encode that idea into symbols (words) and signs (facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.).
- Message - the message is the symbols and signs which are transmitted. All messages are carried by a channel (face-to-face, over the phone, e-mail, letter, etc.).
- Receiver - the receiver is the listener/reader. The receiver must decode the symbols and signs of the message sent through the channel. Decoding involves working through one's own perceptual filters to arrive at thoughts that approximate the sender's original intent.

- Feedback - Feedback is the signs the receiver projects while the sender is sending the message. Feedback allows the sender to know how his or her message is being received and whether the received message is the same as the intended message.
- Environment - Environment is the physical, social, and emotional influences (often referred to as 'noise') the communication takes place in. Environments can place expectations and/or constraints on communication.

10. Critical thinking skills are to be used as strategies for planning

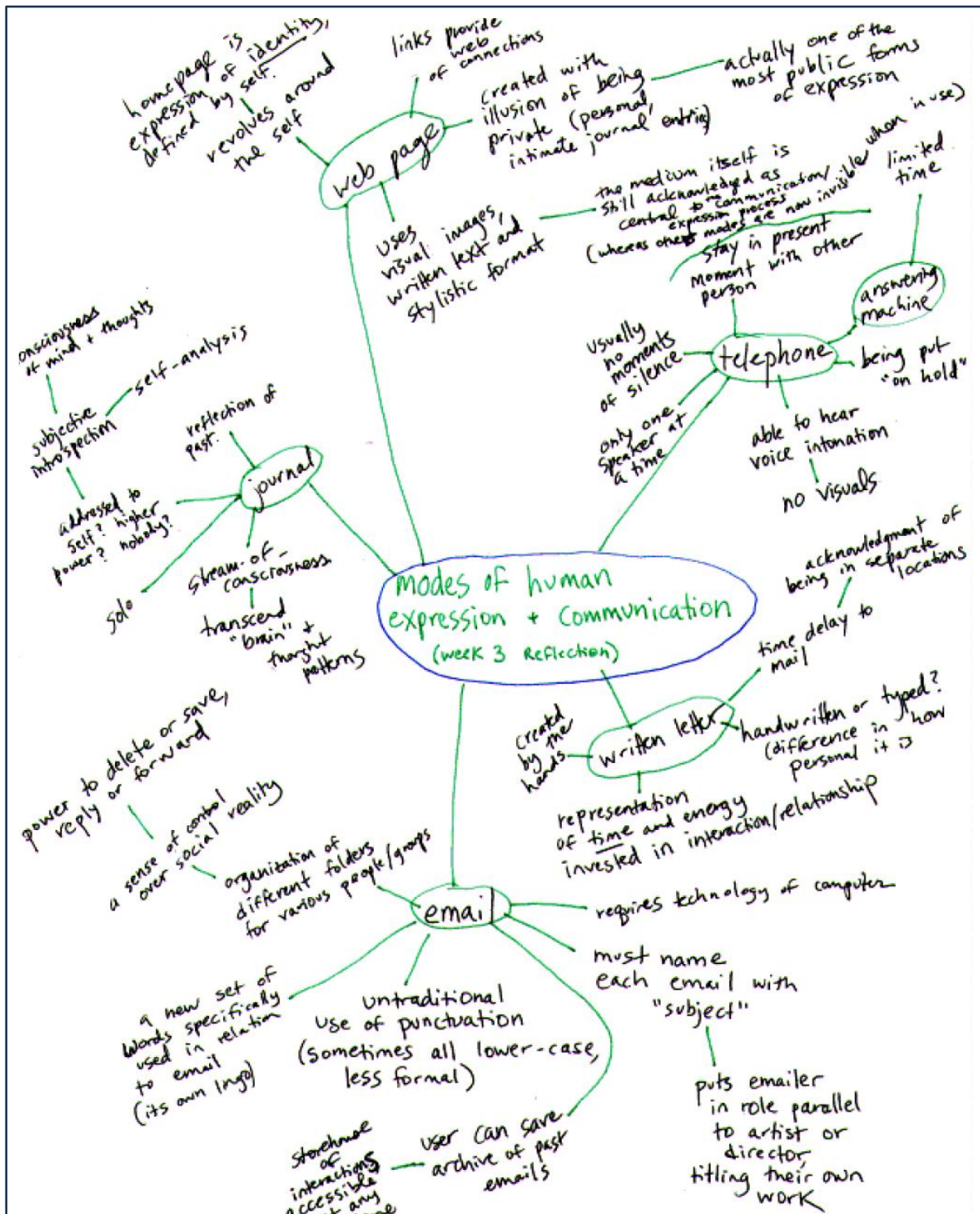
Brainstorming

Brainstorming is when different people who have a vested interest in the matter get together and share thoughts and ideas on a specific topic. These thoughts and ideas should not be pre-meditated.

The following guidelines apply to ensure a successful session:

- Write the objective - what you want to accomplish. Distribute it to the attendees and post it for all to see during the session.
- Invite a mix of contributors/participants. Split large groups into teams to compete.
- Set a time limit: 30 mins - 4 hrs.
- Announce the objective and explain the rules.
- Weird, wild, wacky, and off-the-wall ideas are welcome; negativity is not.
- Build on ideas; don't shoot them down.
- No interruptions from outside allowed (that includes cell phones!).
- Take a short break every hour.
- Capture all ideas as they flow from the group.
- Evaluate the ideas, selecting the best.
- Assign next steps.

Example of brainstorming:



Mind-mapping

Mind maps are tools that help you think and learn. It involves writing down a central idea/topic and thinking up new and related ideas which radiate out from the centre. By focussing on key ideas written down in your own words and then looking for branches out and connections between the ideas, you are mapping knowledge in a manner that will help you understand and remember information.

Here are some guidelines to help you do this successfully:

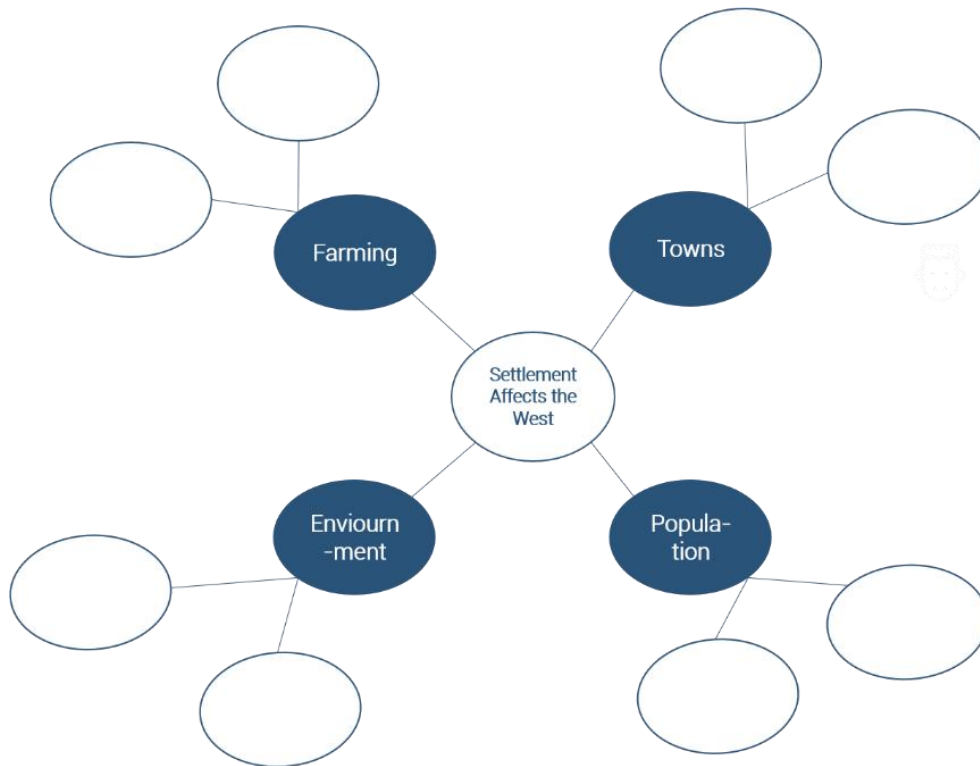
- Put the main idea in the centre: most people find it useful to turn their page on the side and do a map in 'landscape' style. With the main idea/topic in the middle of the page, this gives the maximum space for other ideas to radiate out of the centre.
- Draw quickly on unlined paper without pausing, judging, or editing; it is important to get every possibility into the mind map. There will be plenty of time for modifying the information later.
- Write down key ideas.
- Look for relationships: use lines, colours, arrows, branches, or some other way of showing connections between the ideas generated on your mind map.
- Leave lots of space: after the initial drawing of the mind map, you may wish to highlight things, add information, or add questions.

Example of in mind mapping:



Spider diagrams

Spider diagrams are useful because they allow you to think about the main idea and then how the ideas are seen to be present elsewhere.



Highlighting

Highlighting words, sentences or paragraphs enables you to see what is important or relevant in a text briefly. Take extra care when highlighting, not to highlight unnecessary information. Use highlighters that are clearly visible.

New software features:

- New, easier-to-use interface.
- Quicker output to image file formats.
- Better integration with Microsoft Excel.
- One-click buttons for often-used tasks.
- Simplified screens.
- Ability to split the screen to see more than one set of data at a time.
- Faster saving.

11. Research skills focus

- What is my research challenge? Purpose?
- What are the critical questions?
- Define the topic statement.
- Who is my audience?
- What do I know? What do I need to know?
- What will my product be?
- How will I plan my time?

<p>Find and filter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate different types of resources (All formats). • Decide which resources might be suitable. • Select the most appropriate resources. • Do the resources answer your critical questions? • Did you find information that points you in another direction? • Revise research questions if necessary. 	<p>Work with the information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, review, listen. • Interpret, record, organise. • Collect Works Cited information and quotations. • Look for patterns. Make connections. • Check for understanding. • Review, revise, reorganise, and edit
<p>Communicate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare results. • Prepare Works Cited list. • Share ideas, findings, and products. • Act on findings. 	<p>Reflect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did we learn about the topic? • How does this new knowledge fit in a wider context? • What worked well? • What would we do differently next time? • What did we learn about research?

LEARNING UNIT 2

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

USE LANGUAGE STRUCTURES AND FEATURES TO PRODUCE COHERENT AND COHESIVE TEXTS FOR A WIDE RANGE OF CONTEXTS

US: 119459

Learning outcomes:

1. Meaning is clearly expressed using a range of sentence structures, lengths and types.
2. The use of paragraph conventions and links between paragraphs in texts promotes coherence and cohesion in writing/signing. Their use is explained with reference to logical progression, cause, and effect and/or contrast.
3. The overall structure of a piece of writing/signing is controlled, and the conclusion is clearly formulated.

For you to be able to produce coherent and cohesive texts, there are certain things you need to do:

- Make your paragraphs coherent. If necessary, rearrange sentences for better paragraph flow and logic.
- Use the active voice whenever the passive voice is not clearly more appropriate.
- Eliminate unnecessary words and phrases.
- Simplify your sentences. Break long sentences into manageable units.
- Condense repetitious or closely related material. Look for ways to combine or delete words and sentences that repeat information.
- Be specific. Replace vague phrases and words with more descriptive ones.
- Use words accurately. Look for phrases and words that don't stand up to scrutiny. To achieve the above, you need to understand something about the structure of the English language.

The two fundamental parts of every English sentence are the subject and the predicate.

A simple sentence can also be described as a group of words expressing a complete thought. Subjects can be described as the component that performs the action described by the predicate.

A simple sentence or independent clause must have a verb. A verb shows action or state of being. The subject tells who or what about the verb.



Sentence = Subject + Predicate

1. What makes a complete sentence?

If it helps you, think about a sentence as if it were a skeleton, the skeleton contains various bones, and these bones are put together to form different parts of the body. So are sentences formed by words; the words are the bones, and they are put together in different ways to form sentences.

Simple sentences

A simple sentence contains a single subject and predicate. It describes only one thing, idea or question, and has only one verb - it contains only an independent (main) clause. Any independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. It has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought

Even the addition of adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases to a simple sentence does not change it into a complex sentence.

The brown dog with the red collar always barks loudly. Even if you join several nouns with a conjunction or several verbs with a conjunction, it remains a simple sentence.

Examples	Correlative Conjunctions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple subject and predicate – Fred slept. • Understood subject (for command, directives) – Sit! • Questions – What are you throwing? • Interjection – Man, that hurt! • Compound predicate – The bear howled and scratched ferociously. • Compound subject and predicate – Fred and Mary worked hard and then rested. • Three subjects – John, Fred and Cameron are working. • Direct object – To send the letter. • Compound direct objects – Tend sent cards and letters. • Passive verbs - the ball was kicked • Three direct objects – Ted sent posters, cards, and letters. • Compound predicate with direct objects. • Compound predicate with one direct object – Sam proofreads and edits his essays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect object – The teacher gave the children homework. • Compound indirect objects – The teacher gave Tess and Sam quizzes. • Predicate noun – John is a coach. • Objective complement – Jonny painted his front porch white. • Direct address – Herold, tell the class now. • Adjective – Athletic moves excite the crowd. • Compound adjectives – The little old lady hit the tall and distinguished gentleman. • Compound predicate adjectives – The engine was powerful but expensive. • Comparative adjectives – Joe is considerably older than his brother. • Adverb – Fred works quickly. • Adverbs modifying other adverbs – My dog wags its tail quite often.

Compound sentences

Compound sentences are made up of two or more simple sentences combined using a conjunction such as and, or but. They are made up of more than one independent clause joined together with a coordinating conjunction.

"The sun was setting in the west, and the moon was just rising."

Each clause can stand alone as a sentence.

"The sun was setting in the west. The moon was just rising."

Every clause is like a sentence with a subject and a verb. A coordinating conjunction goes in the middle of the sentence; it is the word that joins the two clauses together, the most common are (and, or, but):

- I walked to the shops, but my husband drove.
- I might watch the film, or I might visit my friends.
- My friend enjoyed the film, but she didn't like the actor.

Complex sentences

Complex sentences describe more than one thing or idea and have more than one verb in them. They are made up of more than one clause, an independent clause (that can stand by itself) and a dependent (subordinate) clause (which cannot stand by itself).

"My mother likes dogs that don't bark." Dependent clauses can be nominal, adverbial, or adjectival.

2. The anatomy of a sentence

The verb

The verb is the fundamental part of the sentence. The rest of the sentence, apart from the subject, depends very much on the verb. It is important to have a good knowledge of the forms used after each verb (verb patterns), for example: to tell [someone] TO DO [something]

Here we can see that the verb to tell is followed immediately by a person (the indirect object, explained later), an infinitive with 'to', and, possibly, an object for the verb you substitute for DO.

Verbs also show a state of being. Such verbs, called BE VERBS or LINKING VERBS, include words such as am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being, became, seem, appear, and sometimes verbs of the senses like tastes, feels, looks, hears, and smells.

"Beer and wine are my favourite drinks." The verb "are" is a linking (be) verb.

Fortunately, there are only a limited number of different verb patterns. Verbs can describe the action (something the subject does) or state (something that is true of the subject) of the subject.

- ACTION: I play football twice a week.
- STATE: I've got a car.

Some verbs can represent both actions and states, depending on the context.

- ACTION: David's working in the bank.
- STATE: David works in a bank.

Finding the verb

When you analyse a sentence, first identify the verb. The verb names and asserts the action or state of the sentence.

- "Working at the computer all day made David's headache."
- The main verb of the sentence is "made", not working.

Verbs identify our activity or state such as eat, sleep, run, jump, study, think, digest, shout, walk.

The subject

The subject is the person or thing the sentence is 'about'. Often (but not always), it will be the first part of the sentence. The subject will usually be a noun phrase (a noun and the words, such as adjectives, that modify it) followed by a verb.

Finding the subject

Once you determine the verb, ask a wh...? question of the verb. This will locate the subject(s).

- David works hard.
 - Who "works hard"? = David does = the subject.
- Beer and wine are my favourite drinks.
 - What "are my favourite drinks"? Beer and wine are = the subjects.

The subject(s) of a sentence will answer the questions, "who or what."

The predicate

Once you have identified the subject, the remainder of the sentence tells us what the subject does or did. This part of the sentence is the predicate of the sentence. The predicate always includes the verb and the words which come after the verb.

- Michael Schumacher drove the race car.
 - "Michael Schumacher" is the subject; "drove the race car" is the predicate.

Parts of a Sentence	Description
Adjective	Describe things or people
Adverb	Alters the meaning of the verb slightly
Article	A, an – indefinite articles The – definite articles
Conjunction	Joins words for sentences together
Interjection	A short word showing emotion of reeling
Noun	Names things
Preposition	Relates to one thing to another
Pronoun	Used instead of a noun to avoid repetition
Proper noun (subject)	The actual names of people or places etc
Verb	Action or doing word

3. Four kinds of sentences

Let's look at four kinds of sentences: declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory.

- Declarative sentence - The hockey finals will be broadcast tomorrow
- Imperative sentence - Pass the puck to the open man.
- Interrogative sentence - Do you know the rules of hockey?
- Exclamatory sentence - Stop that man!

Declarative, imperative, or interrogative sentences can be made into exclamatory sentences by punctuating them with an exclamation point.

4. Paragraph conventions

- Organise writing with a beginning, middle and ending
- Organise ideas into logical chunks of information (e.g., paragraphs)
- Use transitions to connect episodes, descriptions, explanations, or facts (e.g., afterward, later, in addition, also)
- Describe procedures sequentially (e.g., steps in a scientific experiment)
- Write a variety of beginnings and endings (e.g., begins with an amazing fact or background information; ends with something new to think about or a cliff hanger).
- Organise narratives with an evident problem and solution

A paragraph is a coherent block of text, such as a group of related sentences that develop a single topic or a coherent part of a larger topic.

The beginning of a paragraph is indicated by:

- The beginning of the content, that is, the paragraph, is the first content in the document, or;
- exactly one blank line preceding the paragraph text.

The end of a paragraph is indicated by:

- the end of the content, that is, the paragraph is the last content in the document, or
- one or more blank lines following the paragraph text

A paragraph should:

- Have a topic sentence - a topic sentence is a sentence whose main idea controls the rest of the paragraph and is usually the first sentence of the paragraph, but not necessarily; it may even be at the end of the paragraph
- Have a body - The body of a paragraph explains, develops, or supports, with evidence, the topic sentence's main idea - it usually consists of supporting ideas.
- Be coherent - Supporting ideas must clearly relate to the topic sentence - when sentences are connected or organised in a paragraph, a reader can easily follow a writer's train of thought. A writer can use a variety of coherence devices, such as conjunctions and pronouns, to achieve overall paragraph coherence (conjunctions - join words together; pronouns – connect ideas)

Conjunctions:

As their name implies, conjunctions join elements of thought - words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Coordinating conjunctions are the simplest kind, and they denote equality of relationship between the ideas they join. Their relatives, correlative conjunctions, not only denote equality, but they also make the joining tighter and more emphatic.

Coordinating Conjunctions	Correlative Conjunctions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and • but • or • nor • for • so • yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOTH ... and • Not only ... but also • Either ... nor • Neither ... nor • Whether ... or • Just as ... so too

- John and Sally built a fishpond.
- The train was late, and Tom was tired.
- Just as the smell of baking brought back memories, so too did the taste of the cider.

Coordinating and correlative conjunctions are great when two ideas are of the same importance, but many times one idea is more important than another. Subordinating conjunctions allow a writer to show which idea is more and which is less important. The idea in the main clause is the more important, while the idea in the subordinate clause (made subordinate by the subordinating conjunction) is less important. The subordinate clause supplies a time, reason, condition, and so on for the main clause.

Subordinating Conjunctions					
Time	Reason	Concession	Place	Condition	Manner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After • Before • Since • When • Whenever • While • Until • As • As ... as • once 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because • since • so that • in order that • why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • although • though • even though • while 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where • wherever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if • unless • until • in case • provided that • assuming that • even if 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as if • as though • how

- Sally steamed the corn while Fred fried the steaks.
- After the rain stopped, the dog ran into the mud to play.
- The snowman melted because the sun came out.
- Even though John fell asleep, the telephone salesman kept talking.

Conjunctive adverbs make up an even stronger category of conjunctions. They show logical relationships between two independent sentences, between sections of paragraphs, or between entire paragraphs. Conjunctive adverbs are so emphatic that they should be used sparingly; however, when used appropriately, they can be quite effective.

Coordinating Conjunctions	Correlative Conjunctions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also • Hence • However • Still • Likewise • Otherwise • Therefore • Conversely • Rather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequently • Furthermore • Nevertheless • Instead • Moreover • Then • Thus • Meanwhile • Accordingly

- If the salmon is grilled, I will have that; otherwise, I might have the chicken.
- James has a garage full of woodworking tools. He might, however, have some metric wrenches, too.
- I do not recommend that you play with a stick of dynamite lit at both ends. Rather, a ham sandwich would be better for you.

Relative pronouns and relative adjectives are also used to join ideas together by creating adjective or noun clauses, which allow a writer to create smoother, more flowing, and effective sentences by combining ideas.

Relative pronouns and Relative adjectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who • Whom • Whose • Who ever • Whom ever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which • That • What • Which ever • What ever

- This is the man who sells peanuts.
- Tell me what you want.
- Hers is an idea that I would like to think through.
- The shirts, which are in the laundry, will need ironing.

Adverbs of time, place, and sequence are transitions of logic, but as such, they also have conjunctive force because they connect ideas by showing a time relationship.

- The twilight glides away. Soon night will awake.
- First, get a pad and pencil. Next, find a quiet place to think.

Expletives are closely related to conjunctive adverbs. The "official" line on expletives is that they convey no meaning of their own but instead serve only to emphasise the statement to which they are attached. As such, then, they technically do not show a logical relationship like time or cause between ideas, and that fact prevents them from being true-blue conjunctive adverbs. But it could be argued that expletives create a relationship of emphasis between ideas: this new idea is important considering what preceded it. Indeed, that is why they are included here.

Expletives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of course • Indeed • Naturally • After all • In short • I hope • At least • Remarkably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fact • I think • It seems • In brief • Clearly • I suppose • Assuredly • Definitely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be sure • Without a doubt • For all that • On the whole • In any event • Importantly • Certainly • Naturally

- The flashlight hit the floor and broke into a hundred pieces. At least there was a candle in the room.
- They all began to use appropriate expletives in their writing. They were convinced, I suppose, by the excellent examples.
- The conjunction list has left the building. Overall, I hope you enjoyed it.

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can replace or substitute a noun or a noun phrase.

Expletives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I • Me • Mine • Myself • Some • Any • You • It • My • His • Their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Nobody • No one • Nothing • This • That • She • We • Your • Its • Somebody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These • Those • What • Which • Who • Whom • He • They • Her • Our • All

- Clutching the coin, Maria ran to the shop. She went straight to the counter and bought the sweets. ("She" replaces the noun 'Maria')
- The 8-mile walk passes through parkland and woodland. It takes you alongside many points of interest, including a disused airfield. ("It" replaces the noun phrase 'the 8-mile walk')

Conclusion

First and last impressions are important in any part of life, especially in writing. The introduction is what makes the reader want to continue reading your paper. The conclusion is what makes your paper stick in the reader's mind. The conclusion to any paper is the final impression that can be made. It is the last opportunity to get your point across to the reader and leave the reader feeling as if he or she learned something.

LEARNING UNIT 2

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

DRAFT OWN WRITING/SIGNING AND EDIT TO IMPROVE CLARITY AND CORRECTNESS

US: 119459

Learning outcomes:

1. Writing/signing produced is appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. Corrections are an improvement on the original.
2. Control of grammar, diction/clarity of sign, sentence and paragraph structure is checked and adapted for consistency.
3. Logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity is achieved through redrafting.
4. There is clear evidence that major grammatical and linguistic errors are edited out in redrafts.
5. Inappropriate or potentially offensive language is identified and adapted/removed.
6. Writing/signing reflects a clear point of view with sound reasons and facts to support arguments and the logical development of a clearly articulated premise.
7. Experimentation with different layouts and options for presentation is appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task.

1. Drafting

This is because it allows you to put down your initial thoughts and then refine them into a coherent piece of writing by redrafting until you are satisfied with the completed product.

Steps to follow:

- Write down your title (heading). Make sure you are not misinterpreting your topic.
- Decide on the tone of your written work - will it be formal, friendly, demanding, outraged.
- Choose your tense. The past tense is the easiest to use. Do not attempt mixing tenses unless you are very skilled at using the language.
- Start with a brief introduction. Write three options and decide which is the strongest.
- Divide paragraphs to preserve continuity. One event follows another in chronological order.
- Build sentences carefully but plainly (less is sometimes more!). Vary the lengths, and don't repeat yourself.
- Vary types of sentences - statements, descriptive and more complex.
- Avoid starting sentences with conjunctions (and, but, so, then, because, well, etc.).
- Watch spelling, punctuation, and tenses.
- Use all your senses to obtain detail.
- End with a conclusion that has an impact. The ending is important as it's the last impression you leave your reader with. It must be strong, revealing, and conclusive. It is always the final word that counts! It must give satisfaction to you as well as the reader - it must give closure.

2. Editing

Editing is when you check your essay for mistakes and correct them. No matter how sound your document may be technically, your credibility will be undermined by errors in sentence construction or grammar, word choice and usage, punctuation, mechanics, or spelling. Use a ruler and don't make a sudden, hurried sweep, but look for one type of error at a time. The editing stage goes hand in hand with drafting, as you will see that some of the steps are repeated.

- Chapter headings: place chapter headings at the top of a new page. Sub-sections, unlike chapters, do not start on a new page but are separated from the preceding section by an empty line
- Quoting: this means reporting someone else's words. Remember to use quotation marks/inverted commas at the beginning and the end of the actual words that were spoken. Write the way you talk to your reader - simply 'talk' on paper
- Use ordinary words: here are two points to think about:
- Good professionals use ordinary words unless they need something more precise.
- Bad amateurs use impressive words all the time unless they can't think of them.

LEARNING UNIT 3

ENGAGE IN SUSTAINED ORAL / SIGNED COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATE SPOKEN / SIGNED TEXTS

US: 119462– NQF 4 – 5 Credits

Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They listen effectively and critically. They can identify or adopt the style and language register required in different situations. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences in what people say/sign. They speak/sign fluently and confidently in both formal and familiar settings and can articulate their purpose and meaning clearly. They can use language to convey detailed information, and to express their ideas and feelings. They control complex sentence structures and language conventions in their spoken/signed communications.

Learners credited with this Unit Standard can:

- Respond critically yet sensitively as a listener/audience
- Analyse own responses to spoken/signed texts and adjust as required
- Use strategies to be an effective speaker/signer in sustained oral/signed interactions
- Evaluate spoken/signed discourse

Learning assumed to be in place:

The credit calculation assumes that learners are already competent in terms of the full spectrum of language knowledge and communication skills laid down in the Revised National Curriculum Statements and unit standards up to NQF level 2.

LEARNING UNIT 3

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

RESPOND CRITICALLY YET SENSITIVELY AS A LISTENER / AUDIENCE

US: 119462

Learning outcomes:

1. Responses show a clearly developed understanding of complex issues under discussion in one-on-one or group situations. Own understanding is clarified and further developed during discussions, and opportunity is provided during interactions for the clarification of one another's understanding.
2. Discussions and/or conflicts are managed sensitively and in a manner that supports the goal of the group or one-on-one interaction.
3. Characteristics of a speaker's/signer's style and tone/register that attract or alienate an audience are identified with reference to the effect of each feature in creating audience response.
4. The underlying assumptions, points of view and subtexts in spoken/signed texts are identified and challenged when appropriate to clarify understanding, remove bias and/or sustain interaction.

Responses show a clearly developed understanding of complex issues under discussion in one-on-one or group situations. Own understanding is clarified and further developed during discussions, and opportunity is provided during interactions for the clarification of one another's understanding.

Effective responses for healthy communication are those perceived as being empathetic, caring, warm and thoughtful. The eight responses listed are in the order of most effective to least effective. Remember, however, that each of these responses could be effective depending on the context in which it was used.

1. Understanding

An understanding response is most likely to create a climate where honest and frank communication can occur. It is a feeling-oriented response that conveys sensitivity and understanding. Strong negative feelings can become a barrier to communication; this response can diminish those feelings. Understanding is empathy or accurately tuning in to what the other person is feeling at the time. It implies listening beyond the words and reflecting the feelings.

By focussing on others' feelings, you recognise them as individuals, persons worthy of your concern. This type of response can reduce hostile feelings in normal persons. It can also be used with persons when they are over-emotional, crying, or fearful, to get beyond those feelings or reactions. Understanding or empathy can repair a damaged relationship.

2. Clarification

The clarification response indicates your intent to comprehend what the other is saying or to identify the most significant feelings that are emerging. It indicates that what others are saying is important, and you are checking it out to ensure your perceptions. This can be done in several ways: echoing the last few words spoken, summarising the points that seem most relevant or paraphrasing. A response of this nature can be followed profitably by a period of silence. This gives the others a chance to draw thoughts together or to correct your impression. Clarification responses reinforce your desire to see from the other's point of view.

This response is useful in reducing hostility. It not only encourages the others to explain more fully but also serves to focus the discussion, especially when followed by silence on your part. It gives the others a chance to draw their thoughts together and to take responsibility for coming up with their own ideas. Another use for clarification responses is to stall for time to think of a more appropriate response.

3. Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure shows your attempts to give others insight into who you are. It is sharing something about yourself that relates directly to the conversation: your personal beliefs, attitudes, values, or an event from your past. Self-disclosure can reduce anxiety by reassuring others that they are not alone in their feelings or fears.

Self-disclosure is useful in connecting with another person who has similar problems or life concerns. In peer support groups, this lets newcomers know that they have come to the right place, that there are people here who have experienced similar problems. Overuse of this response is not helpful because it focuses attention on the wrong person. It can be viewed as an attention-getting device. Use sparingly for the best effect.

4. Questioning

Like it sounds, the question response seeks to elicit information. It allows others to develop a point. Open questions focus on the others' general situation, thoughts, reactions, and feelings. They tend to promote communication. Closed questions focus on specific facts or aspects of the other's situation, generally evoking "yes" or "no" answers.

Open questions are recommended for exploring a broad topic. Closed questions can be interspersed to get to specific facts or can be used to cut off long, irrelevant explanations. In either case, listening to the answer, both what is said and what is left unsaid, is vital to the questioning process. Caution is needed with questions beginning with "why." They pressure the other for an explanation and can cause resentment. "Why" questions can seem to express disapproval, being perceived as a cut-down or criticism.

5. Information

Giving Information giving involves relating facts in an objective manner without judgment or evaluation. It leaves the other person free to accept or reject the facts. It allows the other to take responsibility for using the information. This response is useful in giving both positive and negative feedback (confrontation). The others relate only to what has occurred and the effect that this has had. Words such as "always," "never," "should," "ought" to be only used in setting limits. (The facts about what must or must not be done, time frames and limitations.)

6. Reassurance

Reassurance responses reduce anxiety, diffuse intense feelings, and express confidence. They provide a pat on the back but imply that certain feelings or thoughts should be dismissed as being "normal" or "common." This response does not foster a relationship because it tends to discount people's problems. Cliches fall into this category. Reassurance is often used by people who come upon a situation that is out of their realm of experience; they don't know what to do or say, and they may be embarrassed.

This response could be reworded into an understanding, clarifying or information giving response and be more effective. Used as an expression of sympathy in conjunction with other responses can be helpful. For example, instead of “You will manage,” substitute “You have handled this situation before. Relax and use your best judgment. Do what you feel is right for you” (information giving) and “I have confidence in you” (reassurance).

7. Analytical

The intent of the analytical response is to analyse, explain or interpret the other person's behaviour and feelings. It goes beyond whatever the other has said to explain or connect ideas and events. Unlike clarification, this response adds something from your own thoughts, feelings, and values. It implies that you are wise; you know more than the other person. Under most circumstances, the analytical response leads to resentment in others.

The analytical response is more appropriate for therapists where there is an ongoing counselling relationship and where the patient needs to become aware of certain behaviour or reaction patterns. Even then, it sometimes works better to use an information giving response. Interpretation is a poor response to use in confronting a person with behaviour of which you disapprove.

8. Advice giving

Advice giving is usually unproductive. It implies that you can know the reasons for the other person's problems and what she ought, must or should do about them. You are, thus, judging the goodness, appropriateness, effectiveness, or correctness of the other's actions. Others are being measured by your personal value system and are found somehow lacking. This is a process of blaming others for their own problems.

Telling people what to do takes away their responsibility for decisions and problem-solving. Advice often arouses resistance and resentment, even when there is outward compliance. Giving advice, even when requested can, foster dependency. Reword advice into information giving a response or a question.

9. How can Empathy be Conveyed?

Responding in a healthy manner means conveying understanding, referred to as empathy. One effective technique used to convey empathy is reflection, which acts as a mirror to provide feedback. It conveys understanding to both the emotional content of what is said and the environmental components (events having an impact on the emotions expressed).

Being in tune with others provides valuable feedback, which is useful in improving the effectiveness of your communication. When others see that what they say and feel is important enough to be listened to, a warm, respectful kindred feeling evolves. This affinity contributes to unity in the relationship and increases task abilities and motivation. Also, since you become more sensitive to others' needs, you can respond accordingly. Reflection of empathy means responding with intense interest using different words to convey the original meaning.

Tips for responding to others to create a supportive relationship:

Respond in a way that focuses attention on the issues and concerns. Clarify inconsistencies and gather facts quickly and unobtrusively.

- Let the other person know that you are listening and following what is being said. Give an occasional "Yes, I see," or "Uh-huh."
- Probe with open-ended statements to gain more information. Use "Tell me more about ...", "Let's talk about that," or "I'm wondering about ...". Responding in this manner is usually more effective than using specific who, what, when, where, and why questions.
- Ask for clarification. For example, "I'm having trouble understanding what you're saying. Is it that ...?" or "Could you go over that again, please?"
- Use understandable words. Listen to the vocabulary of the other person to get a clue to their level of understanding.
- Try not to preach, blame or be demanding.
- Try to avoid straying from the topic.
- Show understanding and sincerity in your responses, so the other person will feel comfortable discussing additional information.
- Try not to talk excessively about yourself. Keep self-disclosure to a minimum.
- Give responses appropriate for the age, sex, and emotional state of the other person.
- Avoid responses that put you on the defensive. "I'm sorry, I really didn't mean that," is a bad approach.
- Be comfortable with silence. Don't feel that silence needs to be filled with talk. Don't do all the talking.
- If you become tangential (straying from the topic), try to refocus the discussion.
- Use responsive body language by making eye contact and leaning forward

10. **Discussions and/or conflicts are managed sensitively and in a manner that supports the goal of the group or one-on-one interaction.**

Part of the task of any group leader is to solve problems. And when it comes to managing personality conflicts amongst group members, it may seem like you're more a referee than a manager.

Conflicts within groups occur for several reasons. They could come from personality clashes, poor communication and misunderstandings, or anger for legitimate reasons, such as a member not doing his or her work or taking credit for things, he or she didn't do.

Regardless of the cause of the conflict, if you are dealing with some level of group conflict, it is important that you resolve it for several reasons. Conflicts or problems that are left unchecked can result in unproductivity in groups

When working to solve interoffice conflicts, there are several ways you can address the conflict, including:

1. Collaboration: With this solution, those who are against each other work together to come up with a solution that benefits both parties.
2. Compromise: With a compromise, the individuals both give a little to reach an agreement that both are satisfied with.

Other ways to address conflict include avoiding or ignoring the situation completely, which can lead to a blow-up and increased frustration, or competing to get what you want. These are not constructive ways to handle conflict within the office and could compromise your work performance and maybe even your job.

The following are some tips for resolving group conflict:

1. Approach the individual in person, privately. Don't confront someone where everyone can hear or when there are other people present. In addition, don't take the easy way out and send an e-mail or leave a note. This looks cowardly and is unproductive as well.
2. State the cause of the problem. This is important to make sure everyone is on the same page because one person may think the problem lies elsewhere or could be upset about something completely different. Make sure the person knows why it is a problem. Chances are, the person doesn't even know they have done anything, or they don't know how it affects you.
3. Focus on the issue at hand. If your discussion gets heated, avoid bringing up past issues or those that don't have anything to do with the problem. Stick to the problem at hand.
4. Be aware of your wording. Be careful not to make such statements as "You always" and other "you" statements that sound like personal attacks. Instead, try to make statements that reflect your feelings and how you are affected.
5. Be friendly. Often, a person will not even know there is a problem and will gladly stop what they are doing if you approach them professionally and in a non-confrontational manner. For example, if you say, "I'm having trouble concentrating with your music, would you mind turning it down?" sounds much better than, "Your music is always so loud, and it's giving me a headache."

Personality conflicts are inevitable in most office environments. Bringing different personalities, tastes, and opinions together is bound to result in some type of clash sooner or later. However, by being professional and understanding, you can resolve inter office conflicts by practising some of the above tips and suggestions.

11. Characteristics of a speaker's/signer's style and tone/register that attract or alienate an audience are identified with reference to the effect of each feature in creating audience response.

When making an oral presentation, it is important to always maintain the audience's interest. One's presentation style and tone should be able to achieve this. It is important to:

1. Speak clearly. Don't shout or whisper - judge the acoustics of the room.
2. Don't rush or talk deliberately slowly. Be natural - although not conversational.
3. Deliberately pause at key points - this has the effect of emphasising the importance of
 1. a particular point you are making.
4. Avoid jokes - always disastrous unless you are a natural expert.

To make the presentation interesting, change your delivery, but not too obviously, e.g.:

- speed
- pitch of voice

12. The underlying assumptions, points of view and subtexts in spoken/signed texts are identified and challenged when appropriate to clarify understanding, remove bias and/or sustain interaction.

When one is listening to spoken text, one must deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes. This helps to clarify understanding and remove bias

Critical listening strategies

These are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input.

Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top-down strategies include:

- listening for the main idea
- predicting
- drawing inferences
- summarising

Bottom-up strategies are text-based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include:

- listening for specific details
- recognising cognates
- recognising word-order patterns

Strategic listeners also use met-cognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening.

- They plan by deciding which listening strategies will serve best in a particular situation.
- They monitor their comprehension and the effectiveness of the selected strategies.
- They evaluate by determining whether they have achieved their listening comprehension goals and whether the combination of listening strategies selected was an effective one.

Listening for meaning

To extract meaning from a listening text, students need to follow four basic steps:

- Figure out the purpose for listening. Activate background knowledge of the topic to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies.
- Attend to the parts of the listening input that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory to recognise it.
- Select top-down and bottom-up strategies that are appropriate to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves, and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to construct meaning.
- Check comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternate strategies.

LEARNING UNIT 3

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

ANALYSE OWN RESPONSES TO SPOKEN / SIGNED TEXTS AND ADJUST AS REQUIRED

US: 119462

Learning outcomes:

1. Own responses to spoken/signed texts are analysed in relation to audience, purpose and context. Inappropriate responses are identified and adjusted accordingly.
2. When confronted by opposing views, own position is put forward with confidence in a manner appropriate to the interaction.
3. Tone/register, approach or style is appropriate to context and is adapted to maintain oral/signed interaction when it breaks down or is difficult to initiate or maintain. Pedantic, illogical, or aggressive language is identified and modified to sustain interaction.

1. Own responses to spoken/signed texts are analysed in relation to audience, purpose, and context. Inappropriate responses are identified and adjusted accordingly.

When responding to spoken texts, it is helpful to consider three types of response. However, when responding, it is likely that one will combine elements of more than one response type or even using elements of all three techniques. Even so, it is beneficial in the beginning to have writers separate the techniques and learn the fundamentals of each one.

Any type or combination of responses should be supported by details, examples, facts, and evidence. This support can take the form of personal experience, evidence from the primary text, or evidence from other texts. Also, the response should focus on making a single, overall main point.

Agree/disagree response

This form of response is not merely the listener's opinion. In crafting this response, one might find that he/she disagrees with some of the speaker's points but agree with others. In that case, their response will be a combination of agreeing and disagreeing. Whether they agree or disagree, or some combination of both, the writer must support their response with details, examples, facts, and evidence. Again, this support can take the form of personal experience, evidence from the primary text, or evidence from other texts.

Interpretive/reflective response

In this type of response, one focuses on a key idea from the spoken text, explaining and/or exploring it further. They also might reflect on their own experiences, attitudes, or observations in relation to the ideas of the text. The listener might use their response to consider how the speaker's ideas might be interpreted by other listeners, how the ideas might be applied, or how they might be misunderstood.

Analytic response

This sort of response analyses key elements of the text, such as the purpose, the audience, the thesis and main ideas, the argument, the organisation and focus, the evidence, and the style. For example, how clear is the main idea? What sort of evidence is used to support the speaker's thesis, and is it effective? Is the argument organised and logical? How are elements such as the speaker's style, tone, and voice working? This type of response looks at the essay in terms of the effectiveness of specific elements, whether they are working or not. Part of the listener's response might include suggestions for how the speaker could have made the spoken text more effective.

2. When confronted by opposing views, own position is put forward with confidence in a manner appropriate to the interaction.

In any discussion, there are many different facets of communication. Depending upon the nature of the discussion, there may be physical aspects and, more importantly, mental connections. Communication is one of the most important parts of any group discussion. Alas, with communication comes opposing views/disagreement. Although some people feel as though disagreements are all bad, a good argument can help each other see different points of view. Unfortunately, most people don't know how to argue properly and turn it into a spiteful and hateful episode. If your group discussions are to be healthy ones, you need to be a good arguer so that your viewpoints are put forward and accepted by fellow members. Here are some tips to help you become just that.

Soft & steady

When debating, you should never raise your voice. You should always remain calm. The louder you talk, the louder your opponent talks – and the result is a yelling match. And of course, it goes without saying that you should not resort to violence. You can even try to talk quieter than normal – as this can draw people into you, and it can make you appear wise.

An argument is not won by the person with the loudest voice; it is won by the person with the most compelling arguments.

Get your opponent on your side

It is a good idea to try to get your opponent on your side by making statements that you know he agrees with – this puts you in a strong position in the debate. You don't even need to use a fact relating to your debate – you could, for example, in a debate about the existence of God, state, "I am sure you agree with me when I say that petrol is overpriced". As soon as your opponent agrees, you have won a psychological battle. You are no longer the opponent – you are a comrade. This technique is so effective it is used by telemarketers all the time.

Don't attack

It is not a good idea to blatantly tell your opponent that he is wrong – instead, you should show that he is wrong through good counterarguments. Telling a person, they are wrong merely annoys them and does nothing for your argument as (at least until you can prove it), it is a subjective comment. Be humble in the debate and show goodwill – not only will it make you look good if you win, but it will also show that you are a worthy opponent even if you lose.

"Don't Play Dirty."

Never resort to name-calling – even if your opponent does. You must attack your opponent's argument – not their person. As soon as you begin to criticize your opponent, it becomes obvious that you have run out of ways to defend your view. These types of insults (ad hominem) are a sure way to lose a debate. You should be pleased if your opponent resorts to this feeble attempt to escape the real debate as it means you are close to victory.

Define the fundamentals

When arguing, both parties need to agree on fundamental "truths" to begin with – if you don't, there can be no debate. What is the point of arguing that the Bible was written by God when your opponent doesn't even believe in God? First, you should debate the existence of God. If you both agree that He exists, you can then debate the smaller points.

If your opponent convinces you that God cannot exist, there is little point in arguing about the authorship of the Bible.

Stick to the subject

When a person is beginning to lose an argument, it is quite common to see them try to divert the topic at hand to another – thereby hoping you will not notice their weakness and will get entangled in a whole new debate. When this happens, don't fall for it. Return to the original topic immediately. Do not give any time to other topics (no matter how tempting it may be) until you have completed the first.

Ask questions

This is the "Socratic method". When your opponent states a "fact" – probe deeper into the fact with questions that are designed to expose its flaws – these are usually "tell me more" type questions: "can you give me an example?", "Another way of looking at this is ..., does this seem reasonable?". These questions will invariably lead your opponent to the truth – and if they are honest, they will concede. Unfortunately, this is not always the case – I have seen frustrated people depart the debate in anger because they believe you are "trying to trick" them. But don't worry – this is a win if it happens.

Be silent

After making a strong argument, let your opponent do all the talking – especially if he lacks the facts to oppose you. He will bluster and fumble – giving you a variety of new weapons with which to attack him. This may not lead to him conceding defeat – but it may lead to him walking away from the debate – a clear victory for you. Many an argument has been won by not arguing at all! As an aside, this is an excellent method for getting your own way – make your request, and when it is declined, remain silent. This usually makes the other person so nervous (as no one likes silence) that they may give in just to get out of an uncomfortable situation.

Know your facts

Do not state that something is "true" unless you absolutely know it is – be prepared to prove it if necessary. It is incredibly annoying to debate a topic with a person who is simply making up their argument on the fly. You wouldn't like it if people did it to you – so don't do it to others.

Only engage in a debate that you know you can win based on facts.

Know When you are beat

If you have all the facts to back you up, you should be able to win your argument if your opponent is honest. But there will always be times when your opponent gets the better of you, and they corner you. When this happens, be a gentleman and concede the win. You should always be graceful in defeat. Nothing is worse than a person who argues simply for the sake of it and absolutely will not give in – no matter how obvious their loss.

3. Tone/register, approach or style is appropriate to context and is adapted to maintain oral/signed interaction when it breaks down or is difficult to initiate or maintain. Pedantic, illogical, or aggressive language is identified and modified to sustain interaction.

Our voice is a tool and used effectively; it is one of the most powerful in our toolbox. Just as important as what we say, however, is how we say it – the tone of our voice is part of that.

Intonation

Intonation is the way that the sender's pitch of voice rises and falls when speaking. For example, it shows the interpreter whether the speaker expresses his or her message in the form of a question or statement. In the first case, the voice rises at the end of the phrase or the sentence and in the second case, it falls. At the same time, intonation indicates the end of an entity of information, which – in written communication – is shown by means of a comma, semicolon, point, exclamation mark or question mark. Another function of intonation is to lay emphasis on a particular word or idea, a detail that the interpreter must not fail to be aware of.

Tone of voice

The tone of voice is a means by which the speaker implies his or her attitude to the message. It is also a means by which he seeks a reaction from the hearer. In a political debate, for instance, the tone of voice is likely to be rousing, whereas, on television, the daily news is communicated in a more factual tone. Other examples of tone of voice are aggressive, critical, nervous, disappointed, monotonous, friendly, enthusiastic, vivid, persuasive, etc.

LEARNING UNIT 3

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

USE STRATEGIES TO BE AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKER / SIGNED IN SUSTAINED ORAL / SIGNED INTERACTIONS

US: 119462

Learning outcomes:

1. Planning of content and presentation techniques is evident in formal communications.
2. The impact of non-verbal cues/body language and signals on audiences is analysed and used appropriately.
1. The influence of rhetorical devices is analysed and used for effect on an audience.

1. Planning of content and presentation techniques is evident in formal communications.

Formal communications can take place in a range of settings: the small group classroom, the workplace, as a section of a large lecture, in a one-to-one tutorial, in a team meeting. Presentations take different forms, from read-out mini-lecture to an improvised explanation or elaboration of a series of key points, to a question-and-answer session, to an audience-activity workshop, or a blend of all of these. The format may be flexible or fixed whenever you need to deliver a presentation; however, there are several basic facets that you will need to make sure you consider.

- When planning the presentation's content, consider your audience.
- Are there different expectations (for example, are there lay, people, technical experts)?
- What will members of the audience want, need, or expect to learn from you?
- Think about how to make the most effective use of the time you have available, planning your work so that it runs to Schedule, and having a strategy to monitor your progress as you talk.
- Work on your delivery and ways of engaging your audience. What ways of providing and responding to information are appropriate in your context?

There is a lot to learn about presenting well; it is certainly a skill that demands practice and reflection. But the resources found via the sign will help you to develop it.

2. The impact of non-verbal cues/body language and signals on audiences is analysed and used appropriately.

Facial expression

Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication. Consider how much information can be conveyed with a smile or a frown. While nonverbal communication and behaviour can vary dramatically between cultures, the facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, and fear are similar throughout the world.

Gestures

Deliberate movements and signals are an important way to communicate meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, and using fingers to indicate number amounts. Other gestures are arbitrary and related to culture

Paralinguistic

Paralinguistics refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. This includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, inflection, and pitch. Consider the powerful effect that tone of voice can have on the meaning of a sentence. When said in a strong tone of voice, listeners might interpret approval and enthusiasm. The same words said in a hesitant tone of voice might convey disapproval and a lack of interest.

Body language and posture

Posture and movement can also convey a great deal of information. Research on body language has grown significantly since the 1970s, but popular media have focused on the overinterpretation of defensive postures, arm-crossing, and leg-crossing. While these nonverbal behaviours can indicate feelings and attitudes, research suggests that body language is far more subtle and less definitive than previously believed.

Proxemics

People often refer to their need for “personal space,” which is also an important type of nonverbal communication. The amount of distance we need and the amount of space we perceive as belonging to us is influenced by several factors, including social norms, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity. For example, the amount of personal space needed when having a casual conversation with another person usually varies between 18 inches to four feet. On the other hand, the personal distance needed when speaking to a crowd of people is around 10 to 12 feet.

Eye gaze

Looking, staring, and blinking can also be important nonverbal behaviours. When people encounter people or things that they like, the rate of blinking increases and pupils dilate. Looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions, including hostility, interest, and attraction

Haptics

Communicating through touch is another important nonverbal behaviour. There has been a substantial amount of research on the importance of touch in infancy and early childhood. Harry Harlow’s classic monkey study demonstrated how the deprivation of touch and contact impedes development. Baby monkeys raised by wire mothers experienced permanent deficits in behaviour and social interaction

Appearance

Our choice of colour, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting appearance are also considered a means of nonverbal communication. Research on colour psychology has demonstrated that different colours can invoke different moods. Appearance can also alter physiological reactions, judgment, and interpretations

3. The influence of rhetorical devices is analysed and used for effect on an audience.

Rhetorical devices are an effective way of conveying ideas to the audience. In both speech and writing, rhetorical devices can be used to generate interest in an audience, highlight certain ideas, improve the flow of words, or otherwise direct attention to a specific idea. Commonly used rhetorical devices include alliteration, allusion, parallelism, simile, metaphor, and personification.

Rhetorical Device	Meaning
Allusion	A reference, sometimes indirect, to a person, place, theory etc., of which the reader is assumed to have some knowledge. e.g., a Biblical allusion with which the reader is assumed to be familiar.
Analogy	A parallel case with one or more points of resemblance. This is often used by writers to help the reader to understand a complex or abstract point.
Emotive language	Language deliberately designed to arouse emotions. (Often to be found in tabloid newspapers) e.g., murderers described as "beasts" or people who might have unusual views on something being described as "raving lunatics", etc.
Metaphor	A comparison but this time, one thing becomes another in every sense, except the literal. There is no "like" or "as" acting as links: e.g., The man was a mountain. The wind was a knife, cutting through outer garments to attack the defenceless body.
Rhetorical Question	This is a literary device used to indicate a question to which no answer is expected: the answer is implied in the question. e.g., Is there such a thing as evil in the human child?
Simile	A literary device whereby two things or actions are compared to each other, linked by the words "as" or "like". e.g., The litter drifted around the playground like tattered butterflies lost in flight.
Tone	This is the emotional feel of the passage, the unspoken voice of the writer. e.g., amused, mocking, angry, indignant, sympathetic, approving, cynical, scathing, indifferent. (N.B. a tone can also be neutral, as in an informative passage where the writer is not conveying any point of view).

Slang	A more extreme form of colloquialism of a racy, offensive, or abusive nature. e.g., Referring to the police as "pigs".
Register	This is a technical term for words, phrases or sentence structures that are associated with a particular group of writers or professionals. e.g., legal, medical, pop musical, computer magazine, specialised instruction manuals etc. These will all use a particular type of specialised language or jargon which is peculiar to their genre.

LEARNING UNIT 3

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 4

EVALUATE SPOKEN / SIGNED DISCOURSE

US: 119462

Learning outcomes:

2. Points of view in spoken/signed texts are identified and meaning described in relation to context and purpose of the interaction.
3. Values, attitudes, and assumptions in discourse are identified, and their influence on the interaction described.
4. Techniques used by speakers/signers to evade or dissipate responsibility for an issue are identified, and interpretations of the text reflect this insight.
5. The impact (e.g., clarity of purpose, speaker's/signer's capability) is described, explained, and judged.

1. Points of view in spoken/signed texts are identified and meaning described in relation to context and purpose of the interaction.

Point of view (POV) is the unique perspective given by the narrator in a piece of fiction or nonfiction. The listener senses the world of the spoken text, hears characters, and perceives the behaviours of characters and the action through the narrator's point of view. The POV directly influences how the listener experiences the message. One can best identify and best understand POV by doing the following:

Understand first-person

First person is told from the "I" perspective. This POV places the audience in the speaker's head and with the speaker's voice. A first-person narrative does not have to be from the protagonist's POV. The audience will not know other characters' true thoughts and feelings unless other characters express them in dialog, or their behaviour gives them away. However, the first-person speakers can misperceive or not completely understand the actions of other characters. The speaker will also have certain biases and values that will colour how she sees the world and those around her. This makes all first-person speakers somewhat unreliable; an unreliable speaker is not credible, and the audience must judge what is and isn't true

Understand third person limited

This point of view uses the pronoun "he" or "she," based upon the focus character. Third person limited is like first person, but it is not as intimate. While the audience is in the first-person narrator's head, they are distanced somewhat from the third-person limited speaker. It's like the audience is looking over the speaker's shoulder or walking behind them. Like first person, third person limited gives the audience the focus character's perceptions on events, thoughts and feelings. This point of view can also provide a somewhat unreliable narrator. It is possible to tell a story from multiple third-person limited POVs. The story can shift from character to character to reveal what is going on in the story and how the characters are responding to events.

Understand third-person objective

Third-person objective is like third person limited, but it does not give the audience any of the characters' internal thoughts.

Understand third-person omniscient

This point of view uses a "godlike" speaker. The speaker is aware of all characters' thoughts and feelings and action in the story. The omniscient speaker may follow one character around and give the perspectives of characters he encounters, or it may follow several characters. Third-person omniscient is not as popular as it used to be.

Understand second person

Seen as more experimental, second person uses the pronoun "you" and has the effect of placing the reader in the story. The "Choose Your Own Adventure" series, "Bright Lights, Big City" and "If upon a winter's night a traveller" all use second person. Some audience see second-person narration as gimmicky. But if you're a speaker thinking about using this POV, consider why it is the most appropriate point of view for the story.

2. Values, attitudes and assumptions in discourse are identified and their influence on the interaction described

Values

These make up our belief system. Values are beliefs that guide our behaviour. However, they are socially constructed and devised to allow society to operate with the least amount of conflict. VALUES define what we accept as good, right or acceptable. We may have our own personally thought-out and constructed values but many of the values we accept are socially or culturally constructed. Authors can shape reader's values and so can speakers. These groups can change audience's perception of values.

Society develops a value system or a set of values and conveys these to us through publications for examples.

Attitudes

Attitudes are how values are manifested in our actions and thoughts to others. ATTITUDES are our feelings towards certain idea or issues. Attitudes dictate how we react in concrete situations. Authors reveal certain attitudes within their texts whether these texts be fiction or non-fiction, print or non-print. As readers or viewers, we need to be aware that texts position us to accept certain attitudes so that we can either accept or reject these attitudes.

Remember to distinguish between:

- the reader's attitudes and values.
- the author's attitudes and values.
- or the attitudes and values revealed within the text (which may be different to the author's values and attitudes in satire for example).

3. Techniques used by speakers/signers to evade or dissipate responsibility for an issue are identified and interpretations of the text reflect this insight

Speakers and writers sometimes are faced with writing or speaking on controversial issues that will course public outcry. Speakers and writers tend to use fictional characters and satire when dealing with such subjects. Good authors will bring out and tackle the issue using evading tactics so that they are not pinpointed as custodians of the thought. They aim to evade responsibility.

4. The impact (e.g. clarity of purpose, speaker's/signer's capability) is described, explained and judged

A common obstacle that many people who speak face is being able to speak clearly. This is more of an issue for those who speak infrequently as opposed to those who speak regularly – those in the former category are often unaware of the issue.

You can have a well written speech, practice it until you know it cold and then deliver it with confidence. But if your audience can't understand what you're saying, it'll have minimal impact. You've probably seen speakers like this. So, what are some of the things that can interfere with the clarity of your speech and what can you do about it? Let's start with some of the reasons an audience doesn't understand your talk:

- You're speaking too softly or too fast.
- You're using language that the audience doesn't understand.
- You have a thick or heavy accent.
- English is not your first language.
- Your grammar usage or pronunciation is unusual.
- Your ideas are presented in a confusing or hard to follow manner.

There are many other reasons, but these are the most common. Again, many of us are unaware of these issues so I highly recommend recording one of your presentations so you can get a more realistic view of your presentation abilities. A video recording is best because you can also evaluate the visual aspects of your presentation style, but audio is adequate for improving your speech clarity. If you have friends that will provide you with honest feedback, you can ask them about your clarity when you speak. Another great option is a Toastmasters club – just make sure you don't choose a club that only gives softball evaluations.

Once you know what the issued you need to work on are, you can start addressing them. So, here are some ways that you can improve your clarity.

Watch your voice

Do you speak too fast or too slow? Are you speaking loud enough or into the microphone so people can hear you? Often, people tend to speak faster when presenting to a group – this is often caused by nervous energy. If you catch yourself speaking too fast, practice slowing down. A recorder (again, audio is all you need) can help you see if you're improving. If you're one of those rare breeds that speaks too slow, practice your talk at varying speeds to see if there's any improvement. Regardless of your pace, make sure that you sound natural.

Speaking too softly is a common problem as is not speaking directly into the microphone. There's nothing wrong with asking people in the back of the room if they can hear you – in fact, I recommend this. It allows you to adjust your volume at the beginning. However, many speakers tend to dip their volume in the middle of their talks, so periodically checking with your audience can help you (just don't ask them every few minutes if they can hear you).

Watch your language

Are you using words, terms or acronyms that the audience is not familiar with? Are you mispronouncing words? One of the biggest mistakes that people make in all forms of communication is to use language that others many do not understand. Some people do it to show off their powerful vocabulary while others are completely oblivious of the issue.

Try to use words that are appropriate for your audience. A college educated audience can tolerate your verbal artistry more so than an audience made up of folks who barely graduated from high school. Likewise, if your audience is made up of people in the same industry, then it's okay to use technical terms from that industry. Otherwise, you may want to explain acronyms, jargon and technical terms to help those members of the audience that may not be familiar with them.

Mispronunciation and word misuse are common problems that can negatively impact your speech. Some people get really hung up on them and will find you less credible if you mix up affect and effect or pronounce the word "produce" as "per-deuce." There are several audio programs out there to help you improve your vocabulary. Many of which also will help you with pronunciation and grammar.

Improve your English

In a prior article, I went into detail about how people can succeed at public speaking when English is not their primary language. In general, you want to get feedback from others who are native English speakers as to what parts of your speaking need attention. Many people have problems with certain sounds such as “b”, “ch” or “k” so practicing these sounds can help. There’s nothing wrong with adults using the same techniques that children use to learn to speak English.

Organize your speech:

When you jump around from idea to idea, it’s difficult for people to follow you. Putting in the effort upfront when you’re creating your speech will improve its overall clarity. Make sure that thoughts and ideas flow neatly and naturally. If a point, thought or fact doesn’t fit in with the rest of your talk, leave it out. Many speakers make the mistake of trying to interject a funny quote or story into their speech that just doesn’t fit and all it does is make the speech less comprehensive.

Take the time to create an outline and only include the things that fit with your topic in your speech. Make sure your transitions are smooth or use pauses to move from one thought to another.

So, there are several things that you can do to improve the clarity of your speech and improve your audience’s retention. Figure out what you need to improve and experiment with some of these solutions. Read your audience to see whether they’re following you. If they’re not, take some of these actions to fix the situation.

LEARNING UNIT 4

READ, ANALYSE AND RESPOND TO A VARIETY OF TEXTS

US: 119469 – NQF 4 – 5 Credits

Competence at this level will enable learners to use analytical skills to make sophisticated judgements about complex human and social issues. They are aware of both the functions of language and of its drama and power. Learners are critical, reflective and responsive readers and/or viewers of written/signed and visual texts. They can draw comparisons between texts, and to compare themes and issues in texts with those in the contexts in which they live and work. They identify and analyse style and tone/sign size and pace and account for their effectiveness in different texts. They are willing to challenge the assumptions and values expressed in texts. They are especially critical readers/viewers of both the written/signed and/or visual mass media. They can access, process and use information from a wide variety of texts.

Learners credited with this Unit Standard can:

- Critically analyse texts produced for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
- Identify and explain the values, attitudes and assumptions in texts
- Evaluate the effects of content, language and style on readers'/viewers' responses in specific texts.

Learning assumed to be in place:

The credit calculation assumes that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard: NQF Level 3-unit standard entitled Interpret and use information from texts.

LEARNING UNIT 4

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

CRITICALLY ANALYSE TEXTS PRODUCES FOR A RANGE OF PURPOSES AUDIENCES AND CONTEXTS

US: 119469

Learning outcomes:

1. Reading and/or viewing strategies appropriate to the purposes for reading/viewing are adopted.
2. Organisational features of texts are identified. The role of each of the features is explained in relation to usefulness in making meaning of readings and/or viewing.
3. Synthesis of information from texts, and generalisation of patterns and trends, result in appropriate conclusions about purpose, audience and context.

1. Analysing texts

Reading and viewing strategies

Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text and is done three to four times faster than normal reading. Skimming can be used when:

- You have a limited amount of time and a lot of material to get through
- You want to see if something may be of interest
- You just need to get the main ideas
- You want to find specific information such as names, dates and places
- You want to review tables, graphs and charts.

Some skimming techniques include:

- Read the first sentence of each paragraph
- Read the first and last paragraphs
- Read the headings and subheadings
- Look at the illustrations and graphics

- Shift your eyes through the text quickly, focusing more on the relevant areas, words and sentences.

You may use one technique at a time, or you may need to use a combination of the techniques.

Scanning

Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down a page with the goal of finding specific information. Scanning can be used when:

- You know what you are looking for
- You are searching for key words or ideas.
- You want to find a specific word or phrase
- You want to find a resource that will answer a question

Some scanning techniques include:

- Look for bold faced words or italics words
- Look for words written a different font size, style or colour.
- Look at the organisers such as lettering, numbering or steps
- Look for the relevant key words

You may use one technique at a time, or you may need to use a combination of the techniques.

Prediction

Predicting involves previewing the text to anticipate what will happen next. Practising a prediction reading strategy will help the reader:

- To keep their mind actively focused on the meaning of the text
- To keep motivated and maintain a purpose for reading the text

Some techniques one can use to predict include:

- Look at the front cover
- Look at illustrations, captions, graphs and charts
- Look at the headings and sub-headings
- Use your prior knowledge on the theme, characters or setting
- Ask yourself the question: “Based on what I have seen and what I know, what do I think I will learn?”
- Ask yourself the question: “Based on what I know about this character, what do I think he/she will do next?”
- Ask yourself the question: “Based on what I know about the situation in this story and

other stories like it, what do I think will happen next?”

- Ask yourself the question: “Based on what I know about the subject, what do I think will happen next?”
- Ask yourself the question: “Based on what I know about the author, what do I think he/she will write next?”
- Revise, abandon and create new predictions as you read

When using a prediction strategy, the reader is also using the following thinking processes which are helpful in analysing texts:

- Filling in the gaps
- Making connections (to other areas of the text itself and to external factors)
- Using prior knowledge
- Inferring from the text (reaching your own opinions and conclusions)
- Thinking literally

Form and features of text types

When employing a reading strategy, it is important to be aware as to what type of text you are looking at.

Form of text type	Features of text type
Narrative Examples include: Plays; fairytales; myths; stories; cartoons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive language • Dialogue • Usually written in the past tense • Defined characters
Information report Examples include: Any organised and presented information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impersonal objective language • Paragraphs with topic sentences • Timeless present tense • Technical terms
Procedure Examples include: Recipes; instructions; rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking words • Use of precise vocabulary • Timeless tense • Use of action words (verbs)
Recount Examples include: Diaries; the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words to do with time such as “after”, “before” • Simple past tense • Nouns that identify people, things and animals • Use of action words (verbs)

Different genre

Different text may be classified according to different genres. Categorising a text by style, form or content will give you the genre.

Fiction genres are classified according to their content and include mystery, horror, science fiction, fantasy and romance. Different types of texts can be classified by their form into genres such as poems, diaries, letters, biographies, journals and essays. These texts can be further classified by their style into genres such as a basic essay and a five-paragraph essay.

Use the strategies of skimming, scanning and prediction to help determine which genre you are working with.

Organisational features of text

The content of a text can be organised in a variety of ways. A story can be organised into chapters, an essay can be organised into an introduction, paragraphing and conclusions and a business report can have tables, graphics and summaries. The writer will choose organising features that suit the purpose and the need.

Purpose, audience and context

When critically analysing text, one can make conclusions about the purpose, audience and context.

Purpose

To determine the author's purpose, ask yourself the question "What is the author trying to accomplish?" An author's purpose can include the following:

- To entertain
- To inform
- To educate
- To explain
- To persuade

The purpose of a text can influence the interpretation of the text.

Audience

To determine the author's intended audience, ask yourself the question "For whom is the author writing?" Types of audiences in terms of variety, category and scope can be quite broad. Audience types may be categorised by the following:

- Age
- Demographics
- Gender
- Beliefs
- Level of formality (informal/ formal)
- Economic status
- Societal roles
- Workplace roles

The audience may further be categorised by the level of information they have on the subject:

- The general reader reads for entertainment or to broaden their knowledge on a topic
- The lay person has no special knowledge on the topic, but reads the text out of human interest
- The managerial person may or may not have special knowledge on the topic, but they are required to decide on the topic
- The experts are the theorists, practitioners or specialists on a topic and will demand a high level of content in the text.

Context

The broader literal, social, workplace or cultural environment to which a text is related and which affects its readers/ viewers is called the context of the text.

Make appropriate conclusions about Purpose, Audience and Context

Two methods one can use to draw appropriate conclusions about the purpose; audience and context of a text include:

- Synthesising the information from the text (putting together the elements of the text to conclude)
- Looking at the patterns and the trends in a text

Trend and patterns can be picked up in the following:

- The type of language used
- The tone employed
- The way the information is arranged
- Repetition
- Layout
- Themes
- Concepts and ideas

LEARNING UNIT 4

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN THE VALUES, ATTITUDES AND ASSUMPTIONS IN TEXTS

US: 119469

Learning outcomes:

1. An understanding of surface and embedded meaning in the text is reflected in presentations of viewpoints.
2. Values and views in selected texts are identified and explained in terms of the impact on meaning and target audience.
3. Evidence cited from texts in defence of a position is relevant.

1. Meaning and viewpoints in texts

Surface meaning versus embedded meaning

Surface meaning	Embedded meaning
Obvious meaning	Not immediately obvious
Literal meaning	Figurative meaning
Usually just one interpretation	Different interpretations possible
Immediately clear	Not usually immediately clear
Not trying to disguise	May be deliberately disguised
Consciously done by the author	Can be unconscious on the part of the author

Values, views, attitudes and assumptions

Values are the beliefs that guide our behaviour. They define what is good or bad or right or wrong in terms of everyone's personal frame of reference. A personal frame of reference can be formed by the society that the individual lives in, the family they were raised in, their religious beliefs and the influencing media.

Views or viewpoints are opinions or ways of looking at something and are also based on an individual's frame of reference.

Attitudes are our values being manifested into thoughts or actions of other people or other things. A dominant attitude may prevail in a society at a specific time. For example, in the 1960's, the dominant attitude was freedom.

Assumptions are made when we accept something without proof or question. This is often the result of things we are so used to hearing or seeing that we take them for granted and they take on the appearance of truth. Often assumptions are made due to what is termed as "common sense".

THE WOMAN AND THE SAILOR

A ship sank in a storm. Five survivors scrambled aboard two lifeboats: a sailor, a young woman, an old man in one boat; the woman's fiancé and his best friend in the second.

During the storm the two boats separated. The first boat washed ashore on an island and was wrecked. The woman searched all day for the other boat, or any sign of her fiancé, but all her efforts were in vain.

The next day the weather cleared, and still, she could not locate her fiancé. In the distance she saw another island. Hoping to find her fiancé there, she begged the sailor to repair the boat and row her to the other island. The sailor agreed on condition that she sleep with him that night.

Distraught, she went to the old man for advice. "I cannot tell you what is right or wrong for you", he said. "Look into your heart and follow it". Confused but desperate, she agreed to the sailor's condition.

The next morning the sailor fixed the boat and rowed her to the other island. She jumped out of the boat and ran up the beach into the arms of her fiancé. Then she decided to tell him about the previous night. In a rage he pushed her away from him and said, "Get away from me! I don't want to se

ping, she started to walk slowly down the beach. The best friend, seeing her, went up to her and put his arm around her. "I can tell that you have had a fight", he said. "I'll try to patch it up but, in the meantime, I'll take care of you".

Citing relevant evidence from texts

Analysing and responding to a text often requires the reader to give their own viewpoint, opinion and argument. To defend a position, it is important to give evidence from the text.

Citing evidence may require the reader to:

- Quote the relevant information directly from the text
- Paraphrase someone else's words from the text that are relevant
- Supply the relevant numbers or statistics
- Use relevant information from graphs, tables or drawings.

IMPORTANT: When citing relevant evidence, it is important to use generally accepted practice such as using quotation marks and mentioning the author and dates of publication.

Sample Business Plan for American Management Technology (AMT):

Executive Summary

By focusing on its strengths, its key customers, and the underlying values they need, American Management Technology will increase sales to more than \$10 million in three years, while also improving the gross margin on sales and cash management and working capital.

This business plan leads the way. It renews our vision and strategic focus: adding value to our target market segments, the small business and high-end home office users, in our local market. It also provides the step-by-step plan for improving our sales, gross margin, and profitability.

This plan includes this summary, and chapters on the company, products and services, market focus, action plans and forecasts, management team, and financial plan.

Objectives

1. Sales increasing to more than \$10 million by the third year.
2. Bring gross margin back up to above 25% and maintain that level.
3. Sell \$2 million of service, support, and training by 1998.
4. Improve inventory turnover to 6 turns next year, 7 in 1996, and 8 in 1997.

Mission

AMT is built on the assumption that the management of information technology for business is like legal advice, accounting, graphic arts, and other bodies of knowledge, in that it is not inherently a do-it-yourself prospect. Smart businesspeople who aren't computer hobbyists need to find quality vendors of reliable hardware, software, service, and support. They need to use these quality vendors as they use their other professional service suppliers, as trusted allies.

AMT is such a vendor. It serves its clients as a trusted ally, providing them with the loyalty of a business partner and the economics of an outside vendor. We make sure that our clients have what they need to run their businesses as well as possible, with maximum efficiency and reliability.

Many of our information applications are mission cri

LEARNING UNIT 4

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

EVALUATE THE EFFECTS OF CONTENT, LANGUAGE AND STYLE ON READERS' / VIEWERS' RESPONSES IN SPECIFIC TEXT

US: 119469

Learning outcomes:

1. Content is outlined and its possible effects on different readers/viewers are explored.
2. The impact of different writing/signing techniques on reader/viewer perspective are identified and explained in terms of the effect produced by each.
3. The influence of specific language structures and features is analysed.
4. The effect of selected production techniques in visuals is explained.

1. Effects of Content, Language and Style

Content

The content outline of a text is the framework of a text and a summary of what is in the text.

To outline the content of a text, look at the following:

- The context of the text (does it come from the workplace, the home, the learning environment, the general environment)
- The type of text
- The date the text was written
- The author of the text
- The title of the text
- The headings in the text
- Any tables, charts, graphs or drawings
- Bullet points in the text
- Highlighted bolded or italicised portions in the text.
- The main ideas in the text
- The theme of the text
- The layout of the text

The content of a text will have various effects on different readers. Below are some examples of content outlines and some possible effects that the content could have on different readers:

Text type	Content outline	Possible effects on different readers/viewers
The fairytale “Cinderella”	A fairytale about a girl who is treated like the household servant by her stepmother and stepsisters after her father dies. She is helped by her fairy godmother who uses magic to transform rags into a dress for the royal ball which will last until midnight. She leaves a glass slipper behind in her haste to leave before the magic wears off. The prince uses the glass slipper to find her again.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little children will be enchanted by the story and possibly believe in the magic. • Adults will find the story to be light escapism from the harsh realities of life • Creative people may be inspired to paint, draw or make movies of the story • Businesspeople may see the content as an opportunity to market children’s products
A marketing plan for a company that sells breakfast cereals (includes tables, charts and graphs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing plan for June 2009 - June 2010. • Prepared by Head of the Marketing Department • Details the budgets for marketing • Details the types of marketing that will be done such as TV advertising and billboards. • Details the resources necessary to carry out the plan including the human resources and financial resources • Details the timeframes within which each aspect of the plan must be carried out. The tv advertising will role out by November. The billboards will be up by December. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in the marketing department will have to familiarise themselves with the content in detail to carry out the marketing • The accountants in the company will focus on the numbers • The senior executives will look at it from a strategic point of view • The secretary will not understand the content and will just see it as more filing
A psychology textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authored by Professor James Straus • Published in 2007 • Revised in 2008 • Chapter 1: • Chapter 2: • Chapter 3: • Chapter 4: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology students will see the content as knowledge that they need to study and write exams on • Lecturers will see the content as knowledge that they are familiar with that needs to be taught. • A lay person may read the textbook out of human interest • Qualified specialists will evaluate the content in terms of their own knowledge and experience.

Language Structures and Features

Language structures and features will influence readers' responses to a text. Below are some definitions of language structures to help you complete the next activity:

Language Structures	Definition
Bias	A term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology or result. One can be biased towards certain cultural, religious or peer preferences or one can be racist, sexist or ageist. Bias can also be a form of misrepresentation or discrimination.
Humour	A message with the power to evoke laughter.
Irony	Expressing something different from and often opposite to the literal meaning.
Sarcasm	Witty language used to convey insults or scorn. Stating the opposite of an intended meaning to mock.
Omission	To fail to include, to leave out.
Silence	A period without speech.
Figurative expressions	Expressions that are meant to convey additional layers of meaning, not just a literal meaning. Metaphors, similes and personification are examples of figurative expressions.
Repetition	The act or process of saying or doing something again.
Hyperbole	A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect (e.g. This book weighs a ton).
Generalisation	An idea or conclusion that is characteristic of the majority.
Stereotyping	Regarding a person as embodying or conforming to a set image or type.
Picture	A visual representation or image – painted, drawn or photographed.
Caption	A title, short explanation or description accompanying an illustration or photograph.
Typography	The arrangement and appearance of printed matter, the style of printing. Includes typeface, letter spacing, line spacing, line, length and point size.
Grammar	The rules in a language used to generate sentences.

Production techniques in visuals

The effect of a production technique will vary depending on the visual. In the next activity you will get to practise explaining the effect of production techniques on various visuals. Use the following definitions of production techniques.

Production technique	Definition
Composition	Arrangement of artistic parts to form the whole. Each composition will have a focal point or a main subject. Look at distance between objects. Look at positioning of objects.
Layout	Arrangement of the graphic matter on the page/ frame
Light	Quality, quantity and type of illumination. Lighting may be natural or artificial. Lighting can come from different angles. Lighting can reflect a mood.
Foregrounding	The scene is nearest to the observer / front part of the scene.
Backgrounding	The scene is farthest away from the observer/ back part of the scene
Perspective	The relationship of aspects of subjects/ objects to each other and to the whole. The perspective can also be as seen by a character.
Camera angle	The point of view of the camera. Where the camera is placed in relation to a subject affects the viewer's perception of that subject. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A long shot shows the overall scene. ● A full shot focuses on the entire object/ character ● A medium shot shows from the waist upwards ● A close shot focuses on a detail. ● A high angle shot makes the subject look small. ● A low angle shot makes the subject look powerful or important ● An eye level shot is neutral ● A bird's eye view shot is taken from directly above ● A worm's eye view shot is taken from directly below
Frame	One of the many single photographic images in a motion picture.
Sequence	The order of the frames or images
Use of colour or black and white	The effect produced by the image will vary depending on the use of colour or black and white. The effect will depend on the image.
Font type	The visual appearance and style of the font. The font may be bold or in italics. The font may take on various visual appearances and styles such as IMPACT, Times New Roman, Comic Sans etc.
Font size	The font may be large or small.

Headlines	The text at the top of an image or article.
Captions	Concise and descriptive piece of text that labels a picture, image, chart or table
Subtitles	Textual versions of the dialogue in films. May be the same dialogue in the same language to help the hard of hearing or may be translated into a foreign language so that foreign viewers can understand.
Borders	The edge of the image which may be demarcated by a line.
Overlays	Images or colours laid over each other
Selection / Omission	Images or parts of images are chosen or left out. Sometimes this is done after the fact using computer programs which can erase or change parts of the image
Scale	A proportion used to determine the dimensional relationship of a representation to that which it represents
Size	The physical dimensions, proportions, magnitude or extent of an object

Conclusion

In this unit you have learnt how to read/ view and respond to a variety of texts in socio-cultural, learning and workplace contexts.

To critically analyse a text, it is important to know how to skim, scan and predict the text. Knowing the form of the text type and its features will also assist with the analysis. Know what genre of text you are working with. Look at how the text has been organised. Text can be organised using headings, chapters, paragraphing, indexes, appendices etc. Make conclusions about the purpose, audience and context of the text by synthesising the information from the text and looking at the patterns and the trends.

Explaining values, attitudes and assumptions in texts requires the analyser to cite evidence in defence of their position or in defence of the author's position. Look out for surface and embedding meaning when presenting a viewpoint. Focus on the impact on the target audience. The effects of content, language and style can be evaluated. Outline the content and explore its effects. Identify the impact of different writing techniques and the influence of language structures and features. When analysing a visual, look at the effects of the production techniques.

LEARNING UNIT 5

ACCOMMODATE AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT NEEDS IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

US: 119472– NQF 3 – 5 Credits

Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They adapt their style and language register to the requirements of different situations. They can listen and speak/sign confidently in both formal and familiar settings. They can articulate their purposes and reasons for the adoption of a particular register and style in any situation. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences implicit in what people say/sign and how they say/sign it.

Learners credited with this unit standard can:

- Interact successfully in oral/signed communication
- Use strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience
- Identify and respond to manipulative use of language

Learning assumed to be in place:

The credit calculation assumes that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard: the NQF Level 2-unit standard, entitled Maintain and adapt oral/signed communication.

LEARNING UNIT 5

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 1

INTERACT SUCCESSFULLY IN ORAL / SIGNED COMMUNICATION

US: 119472

Learning outcomes:

1. Contributions to group work are appropriate to the task and nature of the group and promote effective communication and teamwork.
2. Interviews successfully establish a relationship appropriate to the context and provide a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information.
3. Participation in formal meetings is appropriate to the purpose and context of the meeting. Participation is consistent with meeting procedures and contributes to the achievement of meeting objectives.
4. Participation in discussions, debates or negotiations is appropriate to the purpose and topic. Participation is consistent with the formality of procedures and contributes to meaningful interaction between participants.
5. Responses to the ways others express themselves are sensitive to differing socio-cultural contexts.

1. Oral communication

Effective oral communication is an important skill in business, academic and scientific endeavour. Although there are some people who have a natural talent for delivering outstanding presentations, hard work and practice can carry most of the rest of us into the 'very good' level of presentation skills. You will find that presentation skills will benefit you, as they are an essential part of working life.

To interact successfully implies working well in a group. The group process leads to a spirit of co-operation, co-ordination and commonly understood procedures. If this is present within a group of people, then their performance will be enhanced by their mutual support (both practical and moral). Functional groups are ones in which members work effectively to enhance their own and other's learning. Working in a group enables you to:

- Develop communication skills: skills of listening, explaining, questioning, responding - the management of discussion.
- Develop intellectual and professional competencies: analysing; evaluating evidence or data; thinking critically; synthesizing; arguing rationally; transferring skills to new contexts; seeing new relationships and problem-solving.
- Personal growth: development of communication skills; thinking; self-confidence; managing your own learning; working with others and insight into yourself and others.

2. Group learning

The 5 basic elements of group learning:

- Positive interdependence
- Individual accountability
- Primitive interaction (face-to-face)
- Use of teamwork skills
- Group processing

Why you are communicating falls into four general categories:

- to provide information
- to persuade the listener
- to give instructions
- to enact (or prohibit) something

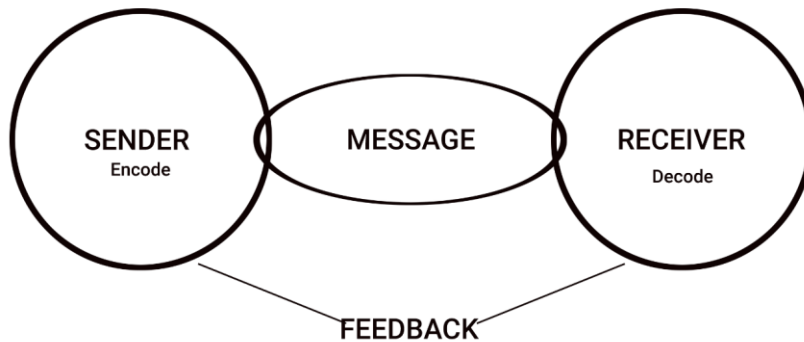
Once you have determined the above, together with the actual topic of discussion, you should know exactly what to say.

Who you are communicating with is determined by your identification of:

- Listener type and their level of expertise - i.e. are they experts, managers, technicians or laypersons, or a mixed group of listeners.
- Listener's purpose in using the information.
- Listener's attitude to both you and the content of your presentation.

On determining the above, together with knowing what to say, you should know exactly how to say it. For the oral transfer of information to be successful, we need to take some important aspects into consideration:

3. The communication model



There are many factors which influence the communication process, all of which impact each other in a variety of ways.

- Sender - the sender is the speaker/writer. A sender starts with an impulse he or she wishes to express and then must encode that idea into symbols (words) and signs (facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.).
- Message - the message is the symbols and signs which are transmitted. All messages are carried by a channel (face-to-face, over the phone, email, letter, etc.).
- Receiver - the receiver is the listener/reader. The receiver must decode the symbols and signs of the message, sent through the channel. Decoding involves working through one's own perceptual filters, to arrive at thoughts which approximate the sender's original intent.
- Feedback - feedback is the signs the receiver projects while the sender is sending the message. Feedback allows the sender to know how his or her message is being received, and whether the received message is the same as the intended message.
- Environment - environment is the physical, social and emotional influences (often referred to as 'noise'), the communication takes place in. Environments can place expectations and/or constraints on communication.

In looking at the above communication model, we must understand that the environment or 'noise' factor plays a larger role when it comes to oral communication. The reason for this, is that a person listening to another person, is far more easily distracted than a person reading something.

Take note of the following:

- When other people are talking nearby while you are listening to someone, you often 'eavesdrop' on their conversation and miss what is being said to you.
- When music is playing nearby, you often listen to that, instead of what is being said to you.
- When you see something interesting/funny/or a person nearby, you focus on that instead of on what is being said to you.

We can see from the above that it is vital to focus/pay attention, when wanting to receive oral information successfully.

4. Group dynamics

When people work in groups, there are two quite separate issues involved.

- 1) The first is the task and the problems involved in getting the job done. Often this is the only issue which the group considers.
- 2) The second is the process of the group work itself: the mechanisms by which the group acts as a unit. If both the task and the process issues are well managed, the worth of the group could be many times the sum of the worth of its individuals.

Therefore, successful group dynamics are just as important as the final presentation. The following information is designed to help you make the most of group work:

Meetings

The place for groups to make decisions is in a meeting. Once the group is set up and assigned a task it should:

- have an early first meeting,
- meet regularly,
- let everyone have a say.

Planning

To divide up a task between a group of people and deliver it to a schedule requires a plan. Planning can be formal or informal - a formal plan makes deadlines and responsibilities clear.

For a group work presentation:

- Make a plan,
- Assign clear responsibilities,
- Set deadlines,
- Monitor progress at the meetings,
- Do fair shares of the work.

Group/Individual Tasks: Divide up your project into group and individual tasks. Groups are best at:

- Generating ideas,
- Making plans,
- Checking and agreeing outputs.

Individual work is most suited to:

- Discussion leader: keeps group on track; maintains full participation,
- Recorder: records assignments, strategies, unresolved issues, data; convenes group outside of class,
- Reporter: reports out during whole class discussion; writes up final draft of assignments,
- Accuracy coach: checks group understanding; finds resources.

Further Points:

- Keep copies of work (someone else may lose it)
- Report any insurmountable difficulties to your leader
- Get the job done on time

Therefore, the main determinants of group effectiveness are:

- Equal distribution of work
- Efficient management and control of work
- Brainstorming - gathering ideas, information and suggestions
- Ground rules - e.g. - come to class on time everyday
 - ⇒ come to class prepared/with work completed
 - ⇒ notify group in event of absence
 - ⇒ be willing to share information
 - ⇒ respect the views, values and ideas of other members of the group
- Resolution of disagreements

Groups are like relationships - you must work at them. The individual's talents are better utilized in a group.

Dynamic areas where oral communication takes place:

Interviews

Companies do not interview every job applicant, they pre-screen. If you do not meet the preliminary qualifications, you are not interviewed. Some jobs that require interviews:

- Jobs working with the public,
- Jobs answering telephones,
- Jobs where special skills are needed (accounting, finance, banking).

Some jobs that would not require interviews:

- Digging ditches
- Pruning trees
- Digging graves

For an interview to flow smoothly, it must be carefully planned:

- The venue: The venue should be quiet (away from traffic and other noise, especially people who could cause a distraction) and comfortable (chairs should be soft and comfortable and there should be something pleasant to look at e.g. flowers or a good painting). This is the ideal situation, but it often cannot happen. It is then that the interviewer must be flexible and make do with the given circumstances. A good interviewer will be able to conduct a successful interview, irrespective of the circumstances!

- Background research: It is generally accepted that the more interviewee data can be gathered before the interview, the more reliable and easier the interview will be. Prepare for the interview by reviewing the application, resume (CV), test results and other materials submitted by the candidate. It is also imperative that the interviewer has extensive knowledge about the environment, its people and their jobs. He needs to know what is happening and what could happen in future.
- Thorough research about the interviewee serves three purposes:
 - Because the interviewer knows all the 'superficial' facts, he can focus on underlying problems, without having to do additional research,
 - The interviewer does not waste time with unnecessary questions,
 - It supplies guidelines as to the types of questions that need to be asked.
- The interview: A structured interview will prevent confusion and repetition on the side of the interviewee as well as the interviewer. It is, however, necessary to be flexible, depending on the circumstances. The amount of structure will be determined by the type of interview. Questions need to be planned and ordered in a meaningful way. Put the interviewee at ease and ask interview questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or a "no" response. Open-ended questions allow interviewees to talk about their skills, knowledge and abilities. For example: "Why are you leaving your current employer?" "Do you prefer routine, consistent work, or fast-paced tasks that change daily?" "And why?"
- Final preparation: The interviewer must prepare himself mentally and block out any thoughts that are not relevant to the interview. He must make sure that he is not biased and that he will assess the interviewee on their merits. Background research, the interview and final preparation should assure that the conclusions drawn are correct and fair.

Developing questions

- Descriptive: Does something need to be described? E.g. "How do graduates of the XYZ program for the unemployed seek out and find jobs in the community?"
- Normative: Does something need to be compared? E.g. "How well does the program meet its goals for placing graduates in jobs?"
- Impact: (cause + effect) Has something made a difference? E.g. "Why do some graduates find jobs and others do?"

There are different ways of asking the same thing: For example, when determining age: "How old were you on your last birthday?" OR "On what day, month and year were you born?" Both questions help you determine the individual's age, but the second question elicits much more information.

Interview problems to avoid

- Be familiar with topics that aren't permissible as interview questions. Don't ask a female applicant detailed questions about her husband /children and family plans. It could be used as proof of sex-discrimination if a male applicant is selected.
- Avoid making statements during the interview process that could be alleged to create a contract of employment. Terms like "permanent", "career job opportunity" or "long".
- Avoid making excessive assurances about job security unless the employer can prove that he did not do a good job. For example: The applicant is told "if you do a good job, there's no reason why you can't work here for the rest of your career". The applicant accepts the job and six months later is laid off due to personnel cutbacks, which he refuses to accept.

Disciplinary interview structure

Disciplinary and grievance interviews occur when either the employer or the employee has a cause for complaint against the other. They take place in a quasi-legal framework according to internally documented procedures designed to comply with legislation.

Rules for the interviewing manager conducting a disciplinary interview:

- Must be very clear about the reasons for the interview,
- Must articulate the reasons to the employee,
- Must ensure that investigations are conducted as quickly as possible,
- Must give clear and unambiguous warnings (verbal or written),
- Must state clearly what the employee is expected to do to rectify the situation,
- Must follow the internal procedure,
- Must keep records of the interview and any actions arising.

Structure:**Opening:**

- Tone: the interviewer should always be in control of the interview.

Discussion:

- Explaining: explain clearly the reasons for this interview, nature of complaint and company policy; refer to company procedures.
- Listening: allow the employee to tell his/her version of the facts or to offer mitigating circumstances.
- Outlining: explain what will happen next, the exact nature of warning the warning you are Giving and the consequences.

Conclusion:

- Agree: ensure that the employee has understood the understanding warning, the implications and what he/she must do next.
- Close out: terminate the interview and record it according to procedures.

1. Formal meetings

It is important to remember that matters discussed at a meeting can only be legally effective and binding if the following legal requirements have been met:

- The meeting must be properly convened. Notices must reach the members in accordance with the constitution of the organization.
- The meeting must be properly constituted. The right person must be in the chair, and there must be a quorum; in other words, the minimum number of members entitled to vote, must be present.

All types of meetings are subject to:

- The country's laws or statutes,
- The organization's constitution,
- The common law,
- The organization's own customs and practices.

Formal meetings are made up of (1) private meetings and (2) public meetings.

Private meetings

Only members are entitled to be present at private meetings. Sometimes an outsider is allowed to attend such a meeting as an observer, but he does not have the right to vote.

The following organizations, for example, hold private meetings:

- Companies with limited liability,
- Bodies such as church, school or city councils,
- Bodies such as private clubs or associations.

Public meetings include the following

- Conferences,
- Symposium,
- Seminars,
- Political meetings,
- National meetings.

Such meetings are advertised in the media or by mail and are attended by the public at large. The conveners usually appoint the chairman and the meeting then proceeds according to its usual custom.

Structure of a formal meeting:

- Booking the venue: Book the venue well in advance, keeping in mind the requirements of the meeting.
- Preparation: Simplify your arrangements as much as possible, by getting the logistics right, e.g. tables and chairs, lighting, stationery, name badges/stickers, programs/agendas, water jugs and glasses.
- Notice of a meeting: The timing and the form required is very important. Don't send the notices out too early, people forget easily and the notices may lose their effectiveness
- Agenda: The agenda is a list of matters to be discussed at a meeting in a specific order. The chairman may only change the order with the meeting's consent.
- Notes: Jot down only the most important points. Make a note of all the changes to the minutes.
- The minutes: These are a report of the decisions made at the meeting. They are the official historical record of an organization.

6. Discussions, debates or negotiations:

Discussion

A discussion is to have a conversation about, or consider by talking over, a specific topic/s.

Here are 10 discussion techniques:

1. Asking someone for their opinion about a topic,
2. Delaying strategies,
3. Presenting several arguments,
4. Giving your opinion about a topic,
5. Agreeing - completely or conditionally,
6. Disagreeing,
7. Countering,
8. Logical argument,
9. Clarification,
10. Expressing solutions and alternatives.

Discussions can be formal or informal and can play a very important part in the communication in an organization.

Debate

A debate is a formal discussion in which opposing arguments are put forward. It includes persuasion, which appeals to the emotional responses of an audience. The outcome of a debate may be decided by audience vote, by judges, or by some combination of the two. A debate can be informal or formal.

Informal debate has several advantages:

- Debating reflects the learning process. Debate establishes extremes, allowing the viewers and participants to see the areas in between more clearly.
- Debating allows students to explore ideas and arguments in a non-threatening atmosphere, because presentational guidelines are provided.
- Debating is an effective method of acquiring knowledge, as arguments need to be supported by relevant, accurate, and complete information.
- Students who debate informally learn to recognize the elements of a good argument and to develop further their abilities to speak confidently.

Structure of a formal debate:

- There are two teams with three speakers each.
- One team agrees with the moot (the Affirmative) and the other team disagrees (the Negative).
- Usually, you are given the topic and told whether your team is affirmative or negative. This means you may be debating a position you personally don't agree with. This is the skill of debating, and it helps you understand that there are two sides to most questions.
- Each team divides up the job of researching the evidence and preparing the case. Each team member writes speech notes. The first people to speak use their notes more, while the later speakers will be answering what their opponents have said (rebuttal).

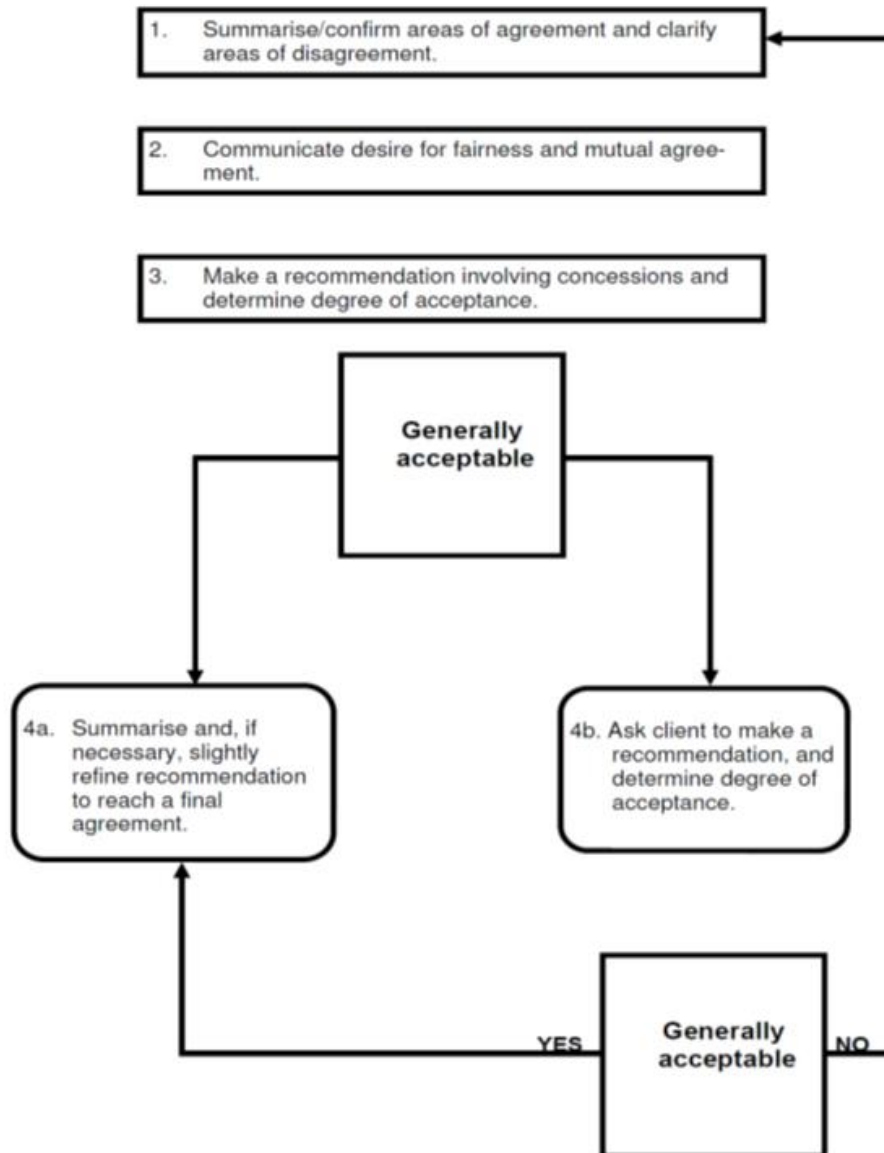
1.	Affirmative leader	Define moot, introduction
2.	Negative leader	
3.	Affirmative second speaker	Further arguments
4.	Negative second speaker	
5.	Affirmative third speaker	Mostly rebuttal
6.	Negative third speaker	
7.	Negative leader	Summary (no new arguments)
8.	Affirmative leader	

What is the Purpose of a Debate?

Each team is trying to win by doing the best job of arguing their case. This does not mean that one team must be right and the other one wrong. There are two sides to any debate, and either side could win.

Negotiations:

Broadly speaking, negotiation is an interaction of influences. Such interactions, for example, include the process of resolving disputes, agreeing upon courses of action, bargaining for individual or collective advantage, or crafting outcomes to satisfy various interests. Negotiation is thus a form of alternative dispute resolution. Negotiation involves three basic elements: process, behaviour and substance. The process refers to how the parties negotiate: the context of the negotiations, the parties to the negotiations, the tactics used by the parties, and the sequence and stages in which all of this play out. Behaviour refers to the relationships among these parties, the communication between them and the styles they adopt. The substance refers to what the parties negotiate over: the agenda, the issues (positions and - more helpfully - interests), the options, and the agreement(s) reached at the end.

NEGOTIATION MODEL

These three communication tools (discussion, debate and negotiation) are of great importance in an organization, and their use will be determined by the topic and the circumstances/situation. Register reflects the situation and determines the most appropriate language. Socio-cultural sensitivities must be kept in mind, so that offensive language is not used. Own values or arguments must, however, not be compromised in doing so.

LEARNING UNIT 5

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 2

USE STRATEGIES THAT CAPTURE AND RETAIN THE INTEREST OF AN AUDIENCE

US: 119472

Learning outcomes:

1. Key words/signs, pace and pause, stress, volume and intonation or sign size, pace, rhythm and non-manual features (NMFs) are used in appropriate ways to reinforce the message.
2. Body language is appropriate to context and topic and reinforces main ideas and points of view.
3. Formal communications are planned in writing/signing, and plans are detailed, complete, and realistic with respect to time allocation and content.
4. Visual aids are appropriate to topic and context and enhance the presentation and the transfer of information and understanding.
5. Techniques are used to maintain continuity and interaction.

1. Strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience

The material of your presentation should be concise, to the point and tell an interesting story. In addition to the obvious things like content and visual aids, the following are just as important, as the audience will be subconsciously taking them in:

Your voice

How you say it is as important as what you say. Throughout your presentation, try to convey your enthusiasm and belief in the topic. The use of your voice establishes:

- Rapport,
- Maintains interest,
- Emphasizes points and assists comprehension of the information by the audience.

This can be achieved by the following:

- Varying volume,
- Pace,
- Pitch,
- Pause and
- Tone.

Talk at a moderate pace if you have excellent content. If your arguments are weak, speak at a faster pace as this will give people less chance for developing counter arguments. Fast talkers are regarded as more competent, truthful, fluent, energetic, enthusiastic and persuasive. By talking fast, you move the attention from the content to yourself. It is important to match your pace to what needs to be said. Important instructions or explanations need to be presented at a moderate pace, whilst general information could be presented at a faster pace. Use a quiet, reasonable tone for the content, but still show some energy and interest. Pauses of two seconds before key points are recommended to create interest and attention in what follows. Pauses after key points allow people to reflect on what was said.

Body language

Your body movements express what your attitudes and thoughts really are. Your movements attract attention and give the audience something to follow. The following tips can assist you.

- If you have been standing still or behind a podium, move to the right or left or toward the audience.
- Use gestures to emphasize a point.
- Facial expressions also help to convey a message.
- Maintain eye contact and don't forget to smile!

First impressions influence the audience's attitudes to you. Dress appropriately for the occasion and to show you respect the audience.

As with most personal skills, oral communication cannot be taught. So as always, practice is essential, both to improve your skills generally and to make the best of each individual or group presentation you make.

2. Planning

Initial Planning: This is where you begin to tailor the talk to the situation, and for that reason, this stage is very important for a successful presentation. Begin this stage early, the more lead time you allow yourself, the more time you will have to think up potential approaches to the topic and the more interesting and substantial your presentation will be. Before you begin preparing the presentation, you'll need to determine:

- The type of talk you'll be expected to give: Will this be an informal chat, a seminar discussion, or a more formal presentation? Different talks have different purposes.
- The composition of the audience: Will you be speaking to a general audience or specialists? How many people are expected to attend?
- The time allotted for the talk: The longer the talk, the more freedom you will have to explore the topic. A short talk needs to be very clear and to address the topic directly. Let your audience know that you regard their time as precious. Keep to your allotted time. Do not extend it and do not keep rambling on just to fill your time slot. "If you haven't struck oil in five minutes - stop boring!"
- Expectations for information content: What is the purpose of your talk? Clarify the expectations beforehand and plan to address them during the presentation. Will you be presenting novel concepts to this audience, or building upon their prior knowledge? Either way, make sure you cover the basics clearly, and early in the talk, to avoid confusing the audience.

3. Visual aids:

Visual aids enhance the presentation, the transfer of information and the understanding thereof. They do, however, must be appropriate to the topic and the context.

- Cue cards: These are a visual aid for you, the presenter. The notes must be written boldly, in print not script, and must list key words only. The cards must fit in the palm of your hand.
- Handouts: Do not hand out material to read when you begin the presentation. It may cause the listeners to get out of step with the speaker, unless the handout contains information that needs to be referred to during the presentation.

The purpose of this material is to convey information more clearly and concisely than can be transferred orally.

Do not include anything that is unnecessary. All tables, charts, graphs, maps and diagrams should be made simple and as clear as possible. Too much detail will make them difficult to understand.

It is a good idea to include your references on a handout, so that people can follow up on them later. A paper record (handout) tells your audience that you are serious, responsible, exact and credible. It gives the audience something they can read, take away, make copies of and refer to at a later stage.

Multi-media and visual aids:

PowerPoint presentations, transparencies, or flip charts can help people follow the talk. This is especially important to show organization, present lists, highlight illustrations and exhibits, and summarize data. People think in pictures. Say Nike and people "see" the swoosh. Say Energizer and people "see" the bunny. Say (your name here) and what do people see? That is why logos and other graphical elements are so important. Tapping into the visualization part of the brain is probably the most powerful way to communicate with anyone.

When putting together a PowerPoint presentation, keep the following in mind:

- Key words on bullet points -this helps to retain audience attention and gives you a reason for being there (anyone can read, so you do not want to read to them).
- Omit anything that is not vital. PowerPoint often leads people to include irrelevant things (only if you have nothing important to say, should you use lots of bells and whistles).
- Only use colour when the colour has a meaning. Keep in mind that some people are colour-blind and others may make black and white copies of the slides, in which case the colour would be meaningless

4. Continuity and interaction:

Continuity and interaction are vital for a successful presentation. It is imperative that the speaker/presenter be very well prepared. This will ensure a smooth presentation and good timing. It will allow the speaker to pick up on any confused or perplexed listeners, as well as check understanding by asking questions. If questions and answers follow your presentation, remember to always repeat the question for the entire audience. Then look at the questioner when answering. If you are unsure, don't make up an answer, rather say you don't know and say you need to get back to them.

LEARNING UNIT 5

SPECIFIC OUTCOME 3

IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO MANIPULATIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

US: 119472

Learning outcomes:

1. Facts and opinions are identified and distinguished.
2. Omission of necessary information is noted and addressed.
3. The implications of how the choice of language structures and features, specifically tone, register, style and point of view affect audience interpretations of spoken/signed texts are explained
4. Distortion of a contributor's position on a given issue is explored with specific reference to what has been selected and omitted.

1. Identify and respond to manipulative use of language:

Humans all over the world tend to be manipulative beings. They achieve this through acts, but mostly through their choice of words.

To manipulate means to control or influence something or someone cleverly, deviously or skilfully, often for one's own advantage.

A person can say the same sentence twice but using a different body language or tone of voice the second time, and the listener/receiver of the message will receive two very different messages. E.g. "sit down" said in a gentle, kind manner, would make a person feel comfortable and nurtured, while "sit down!" shouted in an unfriendly way, would make a person feel nervous and expect trouble.

In the same way, a person can manipulate others by 'confusing' facts and opinions, by selective omission of necessary information and by subtly forcing their own point of view onto them. To avoid the above, one needs to be able to identify and distinguish facts and opinions:

- **Fact:** A statement of actuality or occurrence. A fact is based on direct evidence, actual experience, or observation. A fact is a statement that can be proven true
- **Opinion:** A statement of belief or feeling. An opinion expresses someone's belief, feeling, view, idea, or judgment about something or someone.

Guidelines to help keep fact and opinion apart:

Opinion:	Fact:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the author/speaker use words that interpret or label, such as: pretty; ugly; safe; dangerous; evil; attractive; well-dressed; good? • Are there words that clue you to statements of opinion such as: probably; perhaps; usually; often; sometimes; on occasion; I believe; I think; in my opinion; I feel; I suggest? • Can you identify differing opinions and their effect on the author's/ speaker's views? • Does the truth of the premise depend on us accepting a certain definition of key words or concepts? • Has the author/speaker defined the conditions for using the concepts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the fact be verified by direct observation? • Can the facts be trusted? How did the author/speaker come to the facts? • Does the author/speaker have the skill and experience to make such a statement? • Are the facts presented in an objective manner? (any bias evident or suspected?) • Does the author/speaker make clear the sources of statements from authorities? • Are these authorities reliable? • Can the study which generates the facts be duplicated? • Are the facts relevant to the point being made? • Have unfavourable or negative points been left out? (are there counter-studies?) • Do the facts prove the claim being made or do they merely suggest that the claim is reasonable?

Remember that your acceptance of an author's/speaker's opinion or claim depends on your own view of the subject and of the writer's/speaker's work. To help evaluate an author's/speaker's ideas, you need a clear understanding of your own opinions. For example: "Registration and control of firearms in Canada is not supported by the Canadian public and will not lead to a decrease in gun-related crime" The underlined statement is a fact. The statement in italics is an opinion. There is nothing wrong with mixing opinions and fact together in an argument. What is important is that the reader be able to distinguish the fact from the opinion, to make a sound judgment about the information they are receiving.

2. Omission

Just as opinions disguised as facts can mislead and manipulate readers/listeners, the omission of important/necessary information can do the same. A classic example of the consequences of omission, is when getting a recipe from someone! How often does a person not really want to share their culinary secrets with you but is obliged to do so. For their dish/product still to be the best, they leave out a specific ingredient, or a specific part of the method, which is vital to the success of the recipe.

Another example, which can have far reaching consequences and occurs regularly in the workplace, is when a subordinate becomes a threat to his/her superior. It is the superior's duty to lead by example and to teach/assist the subordinate when necessary. As soon as the superior realizes his/her position is in danger, he/she omits necessary information, which then makes the subordinate look bad when things go wrong that he/ she has done. If management does not pick up on this, it buys the superior time and sometimes favour.

Often people do not realize that necessary information has been omitted, because they do not have sufficient knowledge about the topic. To try and avoid this, it is necessary to get confirmation that your understanding is correct. It is also advisable to be aware of any negative attitudes that might be present.

When attending a talk or presentation, it is difficult to judge whether necessary information is being omitted. It is therefore necessary to check the reliability of the information by discussing it with other audience members - often some of them have sufficient knowledge on the topic.

3. Choice of language structures:

One of the easiest ways to manipulate people is by the choice of language structures and features, such as tone, register, style and point of view. These have been looked at before but need to be recapped.

- Register reflects the situation and determines the most appropriate language. Socio-cultural sensitivities must be kept in mind, so that offensive language is not used. Own values or arguments must, however, not be compromised in doing so.
- Style is the way a writer addresses a matter, a manner which reveals the writer's personality, or 'voice'.
- Tone is the sound of your voice, with reference to quality, pitch and volume.
- Point of view is your mental viewpoint or attitude.

Listen for tone, attitude, and clarity. Is the tone you project appropriate for your audience and your purpose? Is each sentence easy to understand? Are you speaking too rapidly? Are the major divisions in your presentation easy to hear? Are any sentences difficult to understand?

By looking at the above, it is easy to see how it can be used to manipulate an audience - positively or negatively.

The best examples of manipulation using language are found in the advertising world and political speeches.

#X i p t b z t l z p v b f f e b j s u j n f u p t u b m l @ #

As soon as you read the above, you think free calls! Whether you intended phoning someone or not, you start thinking of the possibilities, because you might not need airtime to do so. You have been manipulated! You are doing exactly what Vodacom wanted you to do, i.e. think about phoning someone.

The rest of the advertisement reads as follows: "Introducing Vodacom Reverse Charge. Simply dial 082 180 + the full number of the person you need to reach. Now all Vodacom contract customers can accept call charges from any Vodacom customer."

By reading the rest of the advertisement, you realize that you cannot phone for free - someone is still going to pay for it, even if it is not you. Vodacom did not lie to you by promising free talk time, they just manipulated you with their choice of words.

Another example: "Live in the spirit of Africa. Africa. The Serengeti - a place where your spirit can soar above endless, rolling grasslands."

Add to this a beautiful picture of a sunset over a plain with the silhouette of just one thorn tree, and you are transported to another world, free of stress and problems. Just the place most people would like to be!

The beginning of this advertisement has already manipulated your thoughts. You think of your present situation and often become disillusioned with it, or you start planning for something that you would love but can't really afford.

On reading the rest of the advertisement, you find a wonderful lifestyle that is out of reach for most of the population. Another example: "This is what you'll find once you secure a lifestyle at Serengeti Golf and Wildlife Estate. Within this 780ha estate you will not only find peace and tranquillity, but also a range of facilities for the whole family to enjoy: ..."

These are two examples where nothing wrong or dishonest has been done, but by clever use of language, have managed to manipulate the reader into thinking of previously insignificant things.

The following extracts are from remarks by President George W Bush to teachers and students at Townsend Elementary School in Townsend, Tennessee, on 21 February 2001.

Manipulative use of language

"Yesterday I also outlined some funding priorities of mine. I'm going to submit a budget next week to the United States Congress -- it's a budget that sets clear priorities. A priority is going to be to make sure that our Social Security system and the payroll taxes are saved for Social Security and the Social Security system is strong. A priority would be Medicare. A priority is going to be to make sure our troops are well-paid and well-housed and well-trained, so that we can keep the peace. A priority is going to be pay down debt. A priority is going to be tax relief, so hardworking Americans have got more money in their pocket to pay down their own debt and to cover the cost of high energy costs."

We can see in the first extract that President Bush was telling the teachers and students what they wanted to hear. His style and register were appropriate to his audience, which would most likely ensure their support for him.

In the second part of the extract, he spreads his manipulation even wider, to include the rest of the population. He addresses the Social Security System, which provides for the poor; he addresses salaries, housing and training for the troops; he addresses tax relief – which will affect the whole population. By his clever use of language, he manages to win the support of millions of people.

Distorting facts:

To distort means to alter or misinterpret facts, or to twist or pull out of shape. In the following extract from 'Distortion of Fact' by Andrew Burfield, we can see how the omission of vital information can distort the whole picture. The Commission had reported that there were nineteen hijackers, all of whom had died in the attack. "The omission of evidence that at least six of the alleged hijackers – including Waleed al-Shehri, said by the Commission probably to have stabbed a flight attendant on Flight 11 before it crashed into the North Tower of the WTC – are still alive." The above extract clearly illustrates how the credibility of "The Commission" is affected and the whole picture distorted, by the omission of credible reports that provide the necessary proof that those people are still alive.