

SECTION

1

The Writing Process

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

When planning to write a business document, the most important consideration is to understand your audience. You must adapt your writing to the needs and interests of the audience.

For most business documents, the audience falls into one of the following categories:

- Subject matter experts—individuals who know the content completely and who focus on the details
- Technologists—people who manufacture, operate, and maintain products and services and who have a firm practical knowledge
- Management—people who make decisions about whether to produce and market products and services but who have little technical knowledge about the details
- General audience—people who may know about a product or service but who have little technical knowledge about the details

Another way to analyze your audience is to consider its characteristics:

- What are their background, education, and experience?
- Does your writing have to start with the basics, or can you work at a more advanced level?

Example: If you are writing about a Windows-based software product, can you assume the audience already has a basic understanding of Windows, how to use a mouse, and so forth?

- What will the audience expect and need from your document?
- How will your document be used?
- Will users read it cover to cover or just skim the high points?
- Will they use your document as a reference to look up information when it is needed?
- What are the demographics of your audience?
- Consider the age, sex, location, and other characteristics of your audience.

Your writing may have more than one audience or an audience with a wide variety of backgrounds. With an audience of both experts and laypeople, it is best to organize your document into sections with easy-to-understand headings so that the individual users can find the areas that interest them. You may need to off-load the more technical information to an appendix.

Once you have analyzed your audience, you need to adapt your document to conform to its interests and needs.

- You may need to add information.
- You may need to omit information.
- You may need to add examples to help readers understand.
- You may need to write to a lower or higher level.
- You may need to include background information.
- You may need to strengthen transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections.
- You may need to write longer introductions and clearer topic sentences.
- You may need to change your sentence style.
- You may need change the type of graphics used.
- You may need to add cross-references.
- You may need to organize your content into headings with lists.
- You may need to use special fonts, font sizes, font styles, and line spacing for emphasis.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming by jotting down notes is a great way to gather content ideas for a writing project.

- Don't worry about the order of the ideas.
- Let one idea lead you to other related ideas.

- Browse the Web to generate ideas.
- Review magazines, journals, and periodical indexes for ideas.
- Use free association to let your mind roam freely throughout the subject area.
- Use free association while commuting, while riding a bike, while walking, or even while taking a shower.
- Keep a pen and notepad or a digital recorder nearby.

As you think about the subject matter, consider the following angles:

- Are there any problems or needs?
- Is there a cause-and-effect relationship?
- What are the solutions to the problems?
- What is the history of the subject matter?
- What processes are involved?
- What needs to be described to readers?
- How can the subject matter be divided into smaller pieces?
- Are any comparisons involved?
- What needs to be illustrated with a graphic or photograph?
- How is the subject matter applied?
- Can you list any advantages and benefits?
- What are the disadvantages and limitations?
- Are there any warnings, cautions, tips, or guidelines?
- What are the financial implications of the subject matter?
- What is its importance?
- What does the future likely hold?
- What are the social, political, and legal implications of the subject matter?
- Can you draw any conclusions about the subject matter?

- Do you have any recommendations?
- What are the alternatives to the subject matter?
- What tests and methods are used?
- Can you use relevant statistics?
- Are there any legal issues?
- Should you consider applicable business situations?

After brainstorming, the next step is to narrow the list of ideas to the scope of the project.

- How does each brainstorm idea apply to your audience?
- Will your audience care about each brainstorming item?
- Does the idea help your audience understand the topic?
- Could you eliminate one or more ideas without sacrificing anything?
- Is the idea too general, too technical, or not technical enough?

After narrowing the list of topics, decide how to cover each and determine how to obtain the content details.

- Research online.
- Talk to subject matter experts.
- Use reference books.
- Test and evaluate the product or service yourself.
- Get testimonials from customers or users.
- Conduct tests.
- Record demonstrations using software or video.

For the narrowed list of topics, determine the audience level for each:

- Determine which topics apply to all audiences and should be more general.
- Determine which topics apply to individual audiences and should be more specific, include more details, or used to create separate audience-specific documents.

RESEARCH

The research phase of a business writing project consists of:

- Reviewing existing publications, periodicals, Web sites, and company documents
- Evaluating products and services
- Conducting tests of products and services
- Running tests
- Studying users
- Interviewing experts
- Conducting surveys using questionnaires or observations

Traditional print sources used in research include anything published in print form that is available in libraries and bookstores:

- Books
- Textbooks
- Newspapers
- Scholarly journals
- Trade publications
- Magazines

Materials available for research purposes on the Internet include:

- Web pages and blogs
- PDF documents
- eBooks
- Video and audio
- Online versions of print publications
- Press releases
- Message boards
- Discussion lists

- Chat rooms
- Web-based government reports

When searching for information at a library or on the Internet:

- Make a list of keywords related to your subject matter that will likely produce search results.
- Use the Library of Congress subject headings to search for keywords.
- Check *Books in Print* by subjects for any related keywords.
- Check the *Reader's Guide to Periodic Literature* for related articles.
- Use Google Scholar at www.scholar.google.com to search for articles across many disciplines and sources.
- Check the *New York Times Index* for relevant newspaper articles.
- Check a general encyclopedia for information about your topic.

Keep a list of the sources used in your research in order to document them in footnotes, endnotes, and a bibliography.

- Keep your notes organized on note cards or in a word processor.
- For research from *books*, include the title, authors, city of publication, publisher, date of publication, and the pages for specific quotes and other information.
- For research from *magazines*, include the title of the article, the magazine's name, the issue date, and beginning and ending page numbers of the article.
- For *encyclopedia articles*, include the title, edition number, date of publication, and the author's name.
- For *government documents*, include notes about the department, administration, or agency name, along with any cataloging number.
- For *private sources* of research from interviews, make notes about the date of the communication, the source's full name, title, and organization.

When making notes from your research sources, you can record any of the following:

- A few sentences or some statistics
- Direct quotes from a publication
- Paraphrased information in your own words
- Summaries that condense the main ideas in an article

INTERVIEWING

Interviews with subject matter experts, customers, end users, and members of your general audience provide you with insight and testimonials for use in your writing project.

Interviews can be conducted in a number of ways:

- Face-to-face
- In focus groups
- By telephone
- In a computer chat
- Via email
- On a message board
- By means of a discussion list
- By mail

Interviews that are conducted face-to-face or on the telephone can be recorded with the interviewee's permission and later transcribed.

- In informal conversational interviews, interview questions often flow from the context of the discussion.
- Structured interviews follow a checklist to make sure all relevant topics are covered, and the interviewer may ask impromptu questions based on the answers.
- In an open-ended interview, open-ended questions are asked, allowing the subject to share opinions and ideas.

When asking interview questions, consider the following:

- Ask clear questions whose language makes sense to the interviewees.
- Ask one question at a time, rather than multipart questions.
- Ask opened-ended questions with no predetermined answers.
- Ask questions about interviewees' experience with the subject matter before asking for their opinions on it.
- Order the questions from general to specific, from broad to narrow.
- Ask probing and follow-up questions when a different level of response or detail is needed.
- Be able to interpret the answers and clarify the responses to confirm that what you heard is what the interviewee meant.
- Avoid sensitive or deep questions that may irritate the interviewee.
- Allow free-form discussion, but keep the interview session under control by having a checklist of questions you want to ask.
- Establish and maintain a rapport with the interviewee through attentive listening, purposeful voice tone, and responsive expressions and gestures.

OUTLINING

Outlines are useful in the writing process as a strategy for brainstorming and the logical ordering of content. An outline lists the headings and subheadings for various topics and ideas. Several levels of subheadings may be used to group ideas.

To create an outline:

- Determine the purpose of the document.
- Determine the audience.
- Brainstorm ideas to include in the document.
- Organize the ideas by grouping similar ones together.

- Determine a logical order for the ideas.
- Label the groups of ideas for use as headings and subheadings in the outline.

In the most common outline format, numbers or letters are assigned to each level of heading or subheading. For example:

- I. Roman numerals
 - A. Capitalized letters
 1. Arabic numerals
 - a. Lowercase letters

Keep the following ideas in mind when creating an outline:

- Use parallel structure for headings and subheadings.
- Heading content at the same level should be equally significant.
- A heading can contain just a few words or an entire sentence.
- Each heading should have at least two or more items of subordinated content or subheadings.
- Headings should be general, and subheadings should be more specific.

Example:

- I. Introducing the transactional Web site
 - A. What is a transactional Web site?
 - B. Who uses this type of Web site?
 - II. Finding a transactional Web hosting service
 - A. Bandwidth pricing
 - B. Shopping cart service
 - C. Credit card merchant service
 - III. Typical Web transactions
 - A. Services
 - B. Research
 - C. Downloadable software
 - D. Products
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WRITING A DRAFT

After completing the prewriting stages of audience analysis, brainstorming, research, interviewing, and outlining, you can begin the writing process by creating a first draft. Start by copying your research notes into the related sections of your outline. Phrase your notes as complete sentences, and fill in the gaps with transitions and other commentary. As you work on your first draft, keep the following tips in mind:

- Add introductions and conclusions to the various sections of the outline.
- Don't worry about choosing the best wording when writing your draft; you'll have an opportunity to read and rewrite later.
- If you get stuck on a section, leave it and move on to the next one.
- If you don't like how a particular section sounds, keep writing and revise it later.
- Write notes to yourself with ideas for additional content or revisions using a different-colored font or highlighting tool.

After completing the first draft, look for ways to improve it by proofreading and revising.

BUSINESS WRITING STYLE

The overall tone of a business document, as seen through the choice of words and commentary, reflects the writer's attitude. Business writers must consider the overall tone of their messages, whether they are writing a letter or a formal report.

To decide on the appropriate tone for your documents, make sure you can answer the following questions:

- Why am I writing this document?
- For whom am I writing it?

- What do I want the readers to understand?

The overall tone of a business document should be confident, courteous, and sincere. It should use nondiscriminatory language and be written at the appropriate level for the audience. In addition, your writing should focus on the benefits to the reader. To write with the appropriate tone:

- Be knowledgeable and prepared so that readers will accept your ideas.
- Be persuasive so that readers will follow your instructions.
- Don't be arrogant or presumptuous.
- Strive for politeness with sincerity to avoid sounding condescending.
- Consider your word choices and think about how the reader will perceive them.
- Use strategies to emphasize key points by using short sentences, placing key points at the beginning of paragraphs, and positioning subordinate information in the middle of paragraphs.
- Use the active voice to describe what a reader should do, and use the passive voice to describe actions being performed.
- Avoid language that is sexist or biased based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Write from your readers' perspective and clearly explain the benefits for them.
- Use language and details that are appropriate to the target audience's level of understanding.

USING VISUALS

Visuals in a business document should support the text and avoid confusing the reader. Visuals are a part of the overall message and should be used to communicate important ideas. When creating and placing visuals, keep the following in mind:

- Readers must be able to understand a figure without having to read any of the surrounding text.
- Introduce all figures by referring to them in the text.
- Place visuals in a logical place close to the reference text.
- Charts with content of interest only to specific audiences should be saved for an appendix.
- Visuals should not repeat the content of the text.
- Never use charts to distort research findings.
- Be aware of what multicolored images and graphs will look like in black and white.

Statistical information can be presented in tables or graphs. Graphs in particular help the reader conceptualize information that is not as easily seen in tabular form. Graphs can display the relationships between sets of data. When creating graphs:

- Don't overly complicate graphs with grid lines and data points.
- Use line graphs to show a relationship between two values.
- Employ pie charts to show a relationship between multiple values that make up a whole.
- Utilize bar charts to show comparisons, distributions, and trends.
- Use pictographs like bar charts but with symbols to make up each bar.
- Use organizational charts to show the hierarchy of an organization.
- Employ flowcharts to show the steps in a process.

A variety of other types of illustrations can be used effectively in business documents:

- Diagrams show the structures, mechanisms, or organisms that make up an object.
- Drawings depict an object or organism.
- Maps show geographic, demographic, agricultural, or weather data.
- Photographs present realistic views of a subject.

PAGE DESIGN

Page design involves the use of typographical elements and formatting techniques to lay out content in a pleasing way that helps communicate the message. Page design involves the use of the following:

- Headings
- Lists
- Tables
- Fonts and color
- Font styles
- Margins
- Indention
- Alignment
- Footers
- Graphical elements
- Visuals

The first step in creating a page design for a document using a word processor is the document setup:

- Setting the page size
- Setting the margins
- Creating paragraph styles
- Customizing the color pallet
- Selecting a document template

The text used in a document can take on many different forms. You can apply different fonts, font colors, styles (bold, italic, underlined), and paragraph styles (block, paragraph, hanging). Text can be organized visually on the page by using headings and lists. When formatting text on a page:

- Make headings descriptive of the content that follows.
- Use different font styles and margins for headings to make them stand out.

- Use parallel wording for all headings on the same level.
- Use numbered lists for things that must be done in a specified order.
- Use bulleted lists for items when no particular order is required.
- Introduce all lists with a lead-in sentence.
- Punctuate list items with a period only if they are complete sentences.
- Use font styles, such as bold or italic, for emphasis.
- Indent paragraph margins for emphasis.
- Use different font colors for headings for artistic design purposes.
- Use fonts for headings that are different from the text font.
- Use background shading and light-colored text for table column headings.

PUBLICATION DESIGN

Publication design involves creating and organizing the components of a business document. The components vary depending on whether the document is a letter, brochure, or report. No single publication uses all the possible publication components. Nor is there a single style guide for how these components should be used and organized, because style varies depending on the needs and requirements of the individual business.

The following publication design components are commonly used in business documents:

- Front and back covers—the organization’s name, publication title, logo or artwork, and date
- Title page—information on the front cover that is often duplicated on the title page
- Edition notices—publication edition, publication date, and copyright notice, included on the backside of the title page
- Disclaimers—legal wording included as part of the edition notices on the backside of the title page, stating the document may not be free from errors

- Trademark lists—a list of trademarks used in the document, a separate element or part of the edition notices
- Warranties—additional legal wording regarding the company’s products or services, sometimes on a separate page
- Safety notices—publications about products, possibly including a summary of all safety warnings found elsewhere in the publication
- Communication statements—statements required by government regulation
- Preface—a brief passage that describes the content and purpose of the publication as well as the target audience, included just before the table of contents
- Table of contents—a list of chapters and of at least a second level of heading detail, included so that readers can find information they need when using the publication as a reference
- List of figures—a list of all the figures used in the publication, along with their caption titles
- Content chapters—the actual text of the publication, possibly organized as chapters, topics, and sections
- Appendixes—details and content that is only suitable for subsections of your audience and that is included at the end of the publication
- Glossary—a list of specialized terms, along with their definitions, positioned at the end of the publication
- Index—references to specific topics and terms, along with page numbers
- Reader response form—a document that readers can fill out to provide feedback and to ask questions

EDITING

Editing consists of reading a draft document, checking for errors, rewriting sentences, adding missing content, and deleting unnecessary content. You can use word processing grammar and spelling checkers to point out poten-

tial problems, but don't rely on these tools in place of a thorough editing and proofreading. During the editing process, keep the following principles in mind:

- *To be* verbs (*is, was, were, etc.*) should be replaced with strong active verbs.

Example: The form was filed by Allan.

Revision: Allan filed the report.

- Rewrite the excessive use of prepositions.

Example: The company's annual report is overshadowed by the company's feeling of dread over the upcoming legislation pending in their state government.

Revision: A feeling of dread over the upcoming state government legislation pervaded the company's annual report.

- Eliminate words that add no meaning or are redundant.

Example: He carelessly and nonchalantly tossed the confidential report into the nonsecure trash bin.

Revision: He carelessly tossed the confidential report into the nonsecure trash bin.

- Vary sentence structure and sentence length.
- Don't start every sentence with the main subject followed by a verb.
- If there are too many sentences of the same length, rewrite them into compound sentences.

Example: I stopped checking my email when I went on vacation. There were over 300 messages waiting for me when I returned.

Revision: Because I did not check email while on vacation, over 300 messages were waiting when I returned.

- Add transitional words and phrases to connect sentences and show a relationship between sentences and paragraphs.

Example: The copier on our floor broke. I went down to the copy center in the basement to copy the report.

Revision: The copier on our floor broke. So I went down to the copy center in the basement to copy the report.

Use the following checklist when editing a document:

- Are the headings and subheadings consistently used?
- Is the spelling correct?
- Are all proper names accurate?
- Are all lists parallel in structure?
- Do all nouns and verbs agree?
- Are numbered lists correctly numbered?
- Are all dates correct?
- Are all alphabetical lists in alphabetical order?
- Is all punctuation correct and consistent?
- Is all capitalization correct and consistent?
- Are all bibliographical references accurate and consistent?

PROOFREADING

Proofreading is the checking of your documents for grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as well as for accuracy with respect to the edited version and adherence to style. If someone else proofreads your documents, the reader notes any needed corrections using proofreading marks and abbreviations. Figure 1.1 lists the standard proofreading symbols and abbreviations.

Figure 1.1 Proofreading Symbols

Notation	Meaning	Example	Becomes
<i>wf</i>	Wrong font	The last word is in wrong font .	The last word is in wrong font.
<i>lc</i>	Make lower case.	Decision-Making Mode	Decision-making mode
<i>lc</i>	Make all lower case.	CAPITAL LETTERS	Capital letters
<i>C</i>	Set in capitals.	capital letters	CAPITAL LETTERS
<i>Caps/lc</i>	Set in caps and lower case.	CAPS AND LOWER CASE	Caps and Lower Case
<i>sc</i>	Set small caps.	Set in small caps.	SET IN SMALL CAPS.
<i>c & sc (c/sc)</i>	Set in caps and small caps.	Set in caps and small caps.	SET IN CAPS AND SMALL CAPS.
<i>roman</i>	Set roman.	Set <i>roman</i> .	Set roman.
<i>italic</i>	Set italic.	Set <i>italic</i> .	Set <i>italic</i> .
<i>lf</i>	Set lightface.	Set lightface	Set lightface.
<i>bf</i>	Set boldface.	Set boldface .	Set boldface .
² / ₂	Set as superior ("super").	Set super ² .	Set super ² .
₂ / ₂	Set as inferior ("sub").	Set sub ₂ .	Set sub ₂ .
□	Move to right.	Move to right □	Move to right.
□	Move to left.	□ Move to left.	Move to left.
□ ctr □	Center.	□ Center. □	Center.
└	Lower.	Lower type.	Lower type.
┐	Raise.	Raise type.	Raise type.
▬	Straighten (horizontally).	Straighten type.	Straighten type.
	Align (vertically).	Align type.	Align type.
<i>tr</i>	Transpose.	Transpose.	Transpose.
()	Close space (completely).	Close space.	Close space.
#	Close space (partially).	Close # space.	Close space.
<i>Eq #</i>	Equal space.	Equal # spaces between words.	Equal spaces between words.
#	Insert space.	Insert space.	Insert space.
<i>Space out</i>	More space.	More space between words.	More space between words.
^	Insert ("caret").	Insert word "the."	Insert the word "the."
↘	Delete.	Take the word out.	Take the word out.
↘	Delete and close space.	It is spelled "judgment."	It is spelled "judgment."
<i>h</i>	Correct this letter.	Correct this letter. /o	Correct this letter.
<i>Stet</i>	Leave it the way it was ("stet").	Leave it the way it was.	Leave it the way it was.
┌	Start new line.	Hopscotch In the Headlines	Hopscotch in the Headlines
¶	Start a new paragraph.	Start a new paragraph. It's ...	Start a new paragraph. It's ...
<i>Run in</i>	Run in to previous paragraph.	Start a new paragraph. It's ...	Start a new paragraph. It's ...
<i>Flush</i>	Make this flush.	□ Make this flush.	Make this flush.
○	Insert period.	Insert period.	Insert period.
^	Insert comma.	Insert comma now.	Insert comma, now.
;	Insert semicolon.	Insert semicolon here's how.	Insert semicolon; here's how.

Notation	Meaning	Example	Becomes
:	Insert colon.	Insert colon, cows, pigs, horses ...	Insert colon: cows, pigs, horses ...
“ ”	Insert quotation marks.	He said, “What?”	He said, “What?”
’	Insert apostrophe.	It’s about time.	It’s about time.
Set ?	Insert question mark.	Insert a question mark?	Insert a question mark?
Set !	Insert exclamation point.	Insert an exclamation point!	Insert an exclamation point!
=	Insert hyphen.	Decision = making	Decision-making
$\frac{1}{m}$	Insert an em dash.	Like $\frac{1}{m}$ wow!	Like—wow!
$\frac{1}{n}$	Insert an en dash.	Pages 156 $\frac{1}{n}$ 175	Pages 156–175
{ }	Insert parentheses.	{These are parentheses}	(These are parentheses.)
[]	Insert brackets.	{These are brackets}	[These are brackets.]
X	Broken type.	Brok@n type.	Broken type.
⊖	Reverse upside down type.	Reverse upsi⊖down type.	Reverse upside down type.
Sp	Spell.	Spell the number 4	Spell the number four.
○	Set as numeral.	Don’t spell twenty-six	Don’t spell 26.
Author?	Query to author.		
Editor?	Query to editor.		

Use the following checklist when proofreading a document:

- Are all headings and other text elements consistent in style and layout?
- For letters, are the dateline, reference line, initials, enclosure, and carbon-copy notation accurate?
- Are all cross-references accurate?
- Are all margins consistent and proper?
- Are all tables aligned consistently?
- Have any footnotes been omitted?
- Are all end-of-line word divisions accurate?
- Are any words accidentally repeated in the same sentence or paragraph?
- Are the page numbers correct?
- Are all headings and captions separate elements, that is, on lines by themselves?

Rather than make edits on paper, you can make edits electronically in a word processing document using the Track Changes feature (in Microsoft Word). The revisions show up in a different color. When you proofread the document, you can review each revision and either accept or reject it.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Prior to its release or publication, a document should be reviewed by subject matter experts, management, or your peers. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the document, criticize it, and suggest improvements. Writers are often uneasy about having their documents reviewed out of fear their egos will be bruised. People who are asked to review a document are also often uneasy about offering criticism. Prior to the review, the writer should meet with the reviewers and discuss the following points:

- The writer's goals and concerns for the document including its topic, audience, and purpose
- Potential problems and concerns uncovered during the writing process
- Questions about accuracy that subject matter experts need to answer

When asked to review another writer's document, review the document several times and look for:

- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues
- Appropriate tone and level for the target audience
- Organization of the content
- Clarity of the writing
- Sentence style
- Use of graphics

When offering feedback, avoid making criticisms based on your own writing style. Instead, do the following:

- Base your comments on guidelines, concepts, and rules.
- Document your comments in the margins of the review copy or on a separate document.
- Provide specific details to explain your comments.
- Offer suggestions for correcting any problems you see.
- Avoid going overboard and rewriting the draft completely.

REVISIONS

In the revision process, you rewrite content to make improvements to the language, level of clarity, content organization, and tone that may be the result of a reviewer's comments or your own review. As you revise your document, consider the following questions:

- Have you adequately defined all the key terms used in the document?
- Do some things in the document, such as products, services, or people, need to be described in more detail?
- Do some processes in the document need more description?
- Do you need to add analogies or comparisons to make a particular concept easier to understand?
- Does the document have subcategories of information that need their own subheadings and introductory sentences?
- Is the content in the correct order?
- Have you provided sufficient examples?
- Do you need to provide more historical background to help readers better understand the content?
- Have you provided any necessary instructions in the correct step-by-step format?
- Do you need to insert overviews at key points to summarize topics?
- Do you need to add topic sentences that introduce new topics?
- Do the transitions between paragraphs and topics allow the ideas to logically flow from one to another?
- Do you need to break long paragraphs into shorter ones?
- Do you need to rewrite redundant or wordy phrases?
- Do you need to rewrite passive sentences in the active voice?
- Are there any subject-verb mismatches in your sentences?
- Are there series of sentences that are either all the same length, all too long, or all too short?

DOCUMENTING SOURCES

Always acknowledge the work of other writers to allow readers not only to judge the quality of the information based on its source but also to verify the information.

Some writers document sources in parenthetical references. Others use footnotes or endnotes.

You should document your sources when:

- The information is not already common knowledge.
- You use a direct quotation.
- The concepts are unique to the source.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes are short notes set at the bottom of the page. Endnotes are placed at the end of a document. Usually, both footnotes and endnotes are numbered. A small (so-called superior) number is inserted at the end of the text in question. Then, either a correspondingly numbered footnote is placed at the bottom of the page or a numbered endnote is listed at the end of the document.

Book information in footnotes and endnotes should include the authors' names, the book title, the city of publication, the publisher, the year of publication, and the page reference.

Example: Kevin Wilson and Jennifer Wauson, *The AMA Handbook of Business Writing* (New York, AMACOM Books, 2010), page 24.

Parenthetical references are inserted within a document in parentheses.

Example: ... (Wilson and Wauson, 2010)

Sometimes a footnote is used for the first usage of a reference source, and in subsequent references just the author names and page number are listed.

Example: ¹Kevin Wilson and Jennifer Wauson, *The AMA Handbook of Business Writing* (New York, AMACOM Books, 2010), page 24.

²Wilson and Wauson, page 43.

Magazine information should include the authors' names, followed by a period, the title of the article in quotes and ending with a period, followed by the name of the magazine in italics, followed by a period, then the date of the issue, followed by the beginning and ending page numbers.

Example: Jennifer Wauson. "Positively Pranic Cooking." *Yogic Cooking Journal* (March 1, 2011), 32–42.

Government report information does not need to include the author's name but should include the group or agency name with a comma, the title of the report in italics with a period, then the report number with a period, the city of publication with a colon, the name of the publisher with a comma, and the publication date ended with a period.

Example: Security and Exchange Commission, *SEC 2010 Annual Report*. NAA 6463:3. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012.

Personal interview information should include the name of the source, followed by a comma, the person's title with a period, the person's organization with a period, the interview location with a period, the type of information with a period, followed by the interview date ended with a period.

Example: James H. Stroman. Administrative Assistant to the Governor of Oklahoma. Governor Raymond Gary's Office. Oklahoma City, OK. Email interview. July 1, 2012.

Product brochure information should include the company name as author, followed by a period, the product name or model number with a period, the title of the brochure in italics with a period, the type of information with a period, and a date ended with a period.

Example: Greenway Manufacturing. Green Harvester. *Farm Products Catalog*. Acres in cultivation. 2012.

Online source information should include the author's name with a period, the title of the work in italic with a period, the date of the publication with a period, the date of access followed by a period, and the URL in angle brackets.

Example: Videologies, Inc. *Grammar Gotchas*. 2012. Retrieved March 20, 2012. <<http://www.videologies.com/amahandbook>>

Example: Wilwau, M. B. *Famous Banana Recipes for Fun and Profit*. April 21, 2012. Retrieved July 1, 2012. <<http://www.bananafun.com/recipes.htm>>

Email message source information should include the author's name with a period, the subject of the email in quotes with a period, the words "Email to the author" with a period, and then the date with a period.

Example: Wilson, Brian. "Editing Techniques on the Mac." Email to the author. August 22, 2012.

Bibliographies

Bibliographies list all the works cited in report footnotes or parenthetical references. Research sources that were not cited in a foot- or endnote but that were used to create the report may also be listed.

The bibliography listings are ordered alphabetically by author's last name. If there's no main author, then use the book title. The author's surname comes first. Additional authors are listed in the normal order: first name, last name.

Example: Wilson, Kevin, and Jennifer Wauson, *The AMA Handbook of Business Writing* (New York, AMACOM Books, 2010), page 26.

GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

When writing for an international audience, you can easily create problems with clarity and miscommunication. To overcome this problem, you need to avoid using slang or words with double meanings that can be misunderstood by non-native English speakers. To adjust your writing for an international audience:

- Use both the active and passive voice (some cultures—for example, in Japan and China—consider the active voice to be condescending and prefer the passive voice).
- Use a direct rather than indirect style; the indirect style can be confusing.
- Avoid using abbreviations (e.g., “to be done asap”) and brand names (e.g., “Xerox two copies”), unless you are writing about a specific brand (e.g., “Xerox’s Color Cube™ 9200 Series”).
- Use short sentences and simple sentence constructions.
- Avoid phrasal verbs like *call up*, *put up*, *drop down*, and the like; such phrases can easily be used as a single word (*call*, *put*, *drop*) and mean the same thing.
- Make antecedents extremely clear when using pronouns.
- Avoid clichés and slang.
- Be careful with humor; a non-English-speaking person may not understand it.
- Don’t use contractions; they make translation more difficult.
- Avoid cultural metaphors that are recognized in the United States but are meaningless to an international audience.

Examples: Big Apple, pigskin, brown-bagging

- When using graphics in your document, avoid using human hands, animals, or religious symbols.
- Use androgynous figures for humans.
- Make sure you use *which* and *that* correctly.
- Write out dates by spelling the month (September 23, 2012, not 09/23/2012).
- If you must refer to gender, use the terms *man* and *woman* rather than *male* and *female*.
- Do not use the word *domestic* to refer to the United States.
- Avoid using symbols and special characters.

Examples: Use *pound*, not #; write *dollars*, not \$; avoid the ditto mark (""); spell *inches*, not "; spell *feet*, not ' ; ask for *help*, don't type ?.

- When your document will be translated, keep in mind that the same content may expand by 15% or more in the new language.

COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Large projects often involve teams of writers all working together on the same document. During the planning phase of the project, the team leader should work together with the team to:

- Define the audience and purpose of the document.
- Create content outline.
- Plan the research effort.
- Create a standard system for taking notes and gathering content.
- Plan graphics for use in the document.
- Agree on style and document formatting standards.
- Create a style guide for the document.
- Develop a work schedule for the team members.
- Assign team members to various sections of the document.
- Assign team members to research activities.
- Create a formal progress reporting process.
- Schedule team meetings to discuss issues.
- Set up a peer-review process where team members review each other's work.

PROMOTIONAL WRITING

Promotional writing is used for sales letters, brochures, and newsletters. This style of writing not only explains a product or service but compels the reader to take action. A well written promotional piece doesn't provide every detail; instead, it is a creative introduction that causes the reader to seek more information.

When writing a promotional piece:

- Make the document readable by using neutral-colored paper and a simple font such as 12-point Times New Roman or Arial.
- Don't pack too much information into the document.
- Use an attractive page layout that leaves some white space.
- Write compelling headlines, titles, or headings that convey important information to the reader.
- Avoid too much hype and sensationalism that can't be supported.
- Avoid making claims or comparisons that you can't support in the content of the piece.
- Use descriptive language so that the readers can imagine what you are describing using all five senses.
- List the benefits and reasons why a reader should respond to your call for action.
- Address any serious obstacles or misconceptions that may be in the reader's mind.
- Include a compelling call to action that gives the reader specific instructions on what to do.
- Provide multiple forms of contact information so that readers can reach you using email, on the Web, by telephone, or through the mail.