CHAPTER 6
The Writing Process

What Did He Say?

This is tax season, the busiest time of the year at Green's Accounting Service. Several changes were made in the tax laws for the previous year. Making sure these changes are taken into account requires extra time in preparing clients' tax returns. The Tax Department is behind schedule on its work during the most critical time of the year for the company.

On Tuesday morning, Collin, the supervisor of the Tax Department, is feeling very stressed. He has been called into his manager's office. Yesterday, he wrote and sent a memo to the employees in the Tax Department. In the memo, Collin made the following statements: "You are behind schedule and must catch up by April 15. If this means that you must work overtime, I expect you to do so. However, do not expect overtime pay. There is no money remaining in the department's budget for overtime."

After the memo was sent, it took about five minutes for upset workers to talk with Collin's manager. They felt Collin blamed them for being behind schedule. Also, they pointed out that a company cannot expect workers on an hourly wage to work overtime without overtime pay. To have these employees work overtime and not pay them for it is illegal.

Questions

1. Is Collin being fair in blaming the employees for the work being behind schedule? Explain.

2. Is the content regarding overtime pay in Collin's message correct? Explain.

3. Does Collin's memo show empathy for the receivers of the message? Justify your answer.

6.1 Planning and Organizing Messages

Planning Messages

OBJECTIVES

After completing Section 6.1, you should be able to:

1. Plan messages by identifying the objective, main idea, and supporting details.
2. Adjust messages for the planned audience.
3. Organize messages in direct, indirect, or direct-indirect order.

Key▶Point

Every business message should promote goodwill for the company.

Have you ever sent a message that you wished you had not sent? Maybe you wished you had stated your ideas differently. Do you feel uneasy about your written communications? If so, the problem may be that you do not take time to plan before you begin to compose. Planning a message involves these four steps: identify the objective, determine the main idea, select supporting details, and adjust the message for the receiver.

Identify the Objective

An **objective** is a goal or an outcome you want to achieve. The objective of a message may be to promote goodwill, inform, request, record, or persuade.

Every business message should promote goodwill. Goodwill is a positive feeling or attitude toward others or the positive reputation or image of a company. It contributes to the success of the company and to the stability of your job because it strengthens business relationships. Goodwill helps attract and keep customers and encourages good working relationships.

You can determine the other objective(s) of a message by asking yourself what you hope to accomplish with the message. Figure 6-1 shows objectives and examples of business messages.

Figure 6-1 Every business document should achieve an objective.

OBJECTIVES OF BUSINESS MESSAGES	
Objectives	**Examples**
Inform	A message tells a customer when a package will be delivered.
Request	A letter asks for the price of a road bike.
Record	A memo confirms the time and place of a meeting that was discussed earlier.
Persuade	A brochure describes the features and quality of a product.

Determine the Main Idea

After determining the objective(s) of a message, the next step is to identify its main idea. The main idea is the central theme or most important thought. For example, in a message informing a customer about the delivery of pet supplies, the main idea is the time the delivery will arrive. In a request for furniture prices, the main idea is the price of the furniture. The main idea of a record of a telephone conversation is the topic discussed. In a message to persuade readers to buy an appliance, the main idea is that readers should buy the appliance from this particular merchant.

Choose Supporting Details

Supporting details include essential facts that explain, reinforce, or justify the main idea. Details should be stated in terms receivers can understand and from which they can benefit. Make sure receivers have all of the information they need to respond to your message. To select supporting details, answer these questions:

- What does the receiver need to know about the main idea to respond completely to my message?
- How will the message benefit the receiver?

Adjust the Message for the Receiver

Consider the audience for the message and adjust the content of the message to meet the needs or gain the interest of the receivers. Practice **empathy**—put yourself in the place of the receiver. Through empathy, you can see a situation from the receiver's point of view and compose a message accordingly. When you adjust the content of your messages, you will write considerate, receiver-oriented messages. Writing in this style is called the *you approach*.

Answer the following questions to help you adjust a message for your receiver.

- What is the age and gender of the receiver?
- How much knowledge, experience, and education does the receiver have about the subject of the message?
- What does the receiver need to know about the subject?
- What opinions or attitudes might the receiver have about the subject?
- How does the receiver feel about me or my department, company, or product?
- How can my message benefit the receiver?

Diversity

When writing to a diverse audience, consider what the receivers may have in common that will help them relate to your message.

Consider the receivers and adjust the message accordingly.

STOCKBYTE/GETTY IMAGES

The following message is written in two ways to reach two different receivers. Message A is written to a small business owner who is not familiar with the subject of the message. Message B is written to an advertising executive who knows a great deal about the subject. The objective of both messages is to persuade. The main idea is to promote television advertising as the most effective and economical way to increase business.

Message A   Television advertising can increase your business substantially. It will allow you to reach more buyers more times and for fewer dollars than any other advertising medium.

Message B   As you know, the cost of television advertising is justified on the basis of reach, frequency, and cost.

Another way to orient messages to your receivers is to address them directly. Use their names and second-person pronouns (you and your) instead of first-person pronouns (I and we). Review Chapter 1 for examples of how to create receiver-oriented messages that display the *you* approach.

Key▶Point

Using the *you* approach in business letters shows your interest and consideration of the receiver.

check point 1

1. List the four steps in planning a message.

2. What is involved in adjusting a message for the receiver?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Providing Complete Information

Businesses that sell products and services often describe them in advertisements and on Internet sites. The information provided is not always accurate or complete. This situation may be because of an honest mistake or because the company intentionally leaves out details about the item. The company's return policy for products may also be vague or intentionally unclear. Consider the following situation.

Lois Ann ordered a sewing machine from a company online. The machine was described as having a hard case. Lois Ann thought the case would be good for carrying the machine to sewing classes. When the machine arrived, the item described as a case did not completely enclose the machine. It only loosely covered the machine and had no bottom.

Lois Ann was not pleased. She contacted the company and asked to be allowed to return the item for a full refund because the item was not, in her opinion, as advertised. The company refused to give a full refund. They agreed to give Lois Ann a store credit for the purchase prices less a 25 percent restocking fee. "But your return policy states that a store credit or refund will be given," Lois Ann said to the customer service associate. "Yes, but the choice of which one to give is up to us," replied the associate.

Has the company acted in an unethical way? Why or why not? Do you think the company is intentionally giving vague or unclear information? Do you think Lois Ann will buy from this company in the future? Why or why not?

Organizing Messages

After identifying the content of the message, your next step is to determine the order in which to present the information. The order depends on how you expect the receiver to react (favorably or unfavorably) to the message. Business messages are organized using direct, indirect, or direct–indirect order.

Direct Order

To organize a message using direct order, present the main idea first and follow it with supporting details. Favorable, positive, and neutral messages should be organized in direct order. By beginning with a positive statement, the sender establishes a positive tone for the message. Routine messages are

Key ▶ Point

The way you expect the receiver to react to the message should help determine which writing order you use.

often neutral and also should be organized in direct order. It is assumed that the receiver will respond in a positive or neutral manner. The first paragraph of a positive message presented in direct order is shown in the following example. Supporting details would follow in the second paragraph.

> Thank you, Ms. Perez, for agreeing to speak to our class about career goals. Your insights will be valuable to us as we explore various careers.

Indirect Order

A message organized in indirect order presents the supporting details before the main idea. Unfavorable, negative, and persuasive messages should be written using the indirect order. Stating supporting information before presenting the bad news helps prepare the receiver for the negative message. This preparation helps the receiver accept the negative message. The negative message in the following example uses an indirect approach.

> Thank you, Mr. Wong, for applying for a loan with our bank. Your business is important to us.
>
> In reviewing your records, we find that your reported sources of income do not support our granting you another loan at this time. When you have repaid your existing loans, you may qualify for the loan you seek. Please contact us again at that time.

Direct-Indirect Order

Use direct-indirect order when you have both good news and bad news for the receiver. In those situations, present the good news first, using direct order. Then present the bad news using indirect order. Give the reasons for the bad news; then state the bad news itself. Use of the direct-indirect approach increases the chance that the receiver will understand the message and accept its outcome.

✚ Ethics

Do not make promises or statements that may be incorrect or overly optimistic in an effort to soften the impact of bad news.

Key▶Point

If the negative news in a letter is about a very serious or significant matter, limit the message to this one topic.

check point 2

1. When a message has only good news, which order should be used for the message?

2. When a message has both good news and bad news, which order should be used for the message?

3. When a message has only bad news, which order should be used for the message?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Section 6.1 *Applications*

A. *Analyze an Effective Message*

1. Read the paragraphs below, which are in the body of a letter sent to a potential customer. What is the objective of the message?

2. What order is used for the message?

3. What is the main idea of the message? What are the supporting details?

4. Is the message you-oriented? Explain your answer.

   Thank you for ordering a Good Sound telephone. It is a favorite with customers because it is so easy to use.

   Because of high demand, our supply of the Good Sound telephone is depleted. However, a new shipment will arrive on Thursday, May 20, 20--. Your phone will be shipped to you that day by overnight express.

   When you receive your Good Sound telephone on Friday, you can begin to enjoy its clear, static-free sound. Please let me know if you have any questions about the phone after you receive it.

B. *Review a Business Message*

1. Describe one business message you or a family member has received. (Select a message that is not confidential.)

2. What is the objective of the message?

3. What is the main idea of the message?

4. How is the message organized—direct, indirect, or direct-indirect order?

5. Is the message *you* oriented? Justify your answer.

REAL WORLD

C. *Select a Message Order*

You have been asked to write a message to students who applied for a scholarship to summer camp. Three students will receive a scholarship, and six students will not. You must deliver the news to each student.

1. What order should you use for messages to the students who will receive the scholarships?

2. What order should you use for messages to the students who will not receive the scholarships?

6.2 Composing Messages

Effective Messages

Effective business messages are those that build goodwill and achieve their objectives. Effective business messages have several traits in common. They are courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete. Courteous messages help build goodwill—a goal of all business messages. Concise messages show respect for the reader's time. They do not include unrelated details that waste the reader's time and distract from the real message. Being correct, clear, and complete improves the chances that the message will be understood as the sender intends. Composing messages with these traits is discussed in the following pages.

Courteous Messages

Courteous messages are positive, considerate, and bias-free. They use the receivers' proper titles. They capture the receivers' attention and encourage a positive response. Remember, an important step in showing courtesy is saying *please* and *thank you*.

Courteous words show receivers that you appreciate them. This message is important whether the receiver is a customer, a coworker, or some other person. The sentences in the second column are examples of the polite way to express information.

Less than Courteous	Courteous
You inquired about . . .	Thank you for inquiring about . . .
Send me . . .	Please send me . . .
I know you are willing to . . .	Your willingness to . . . is appreciated.

Positive Words

Key ▶ Point

Courteous messages help build goodwill.

As you have already learned, one purpose of every business message is to promote goodwill. Use a courteous and positive tone even when your message contains negative news. State what can be done rather than what cannot be done. Discuss what something is rather than what it is not. The receiver will have a positive response (or at least a less negative one) when the tone of the message is positive. Consider the following examples.

Negative Words	**Positive Words**
You cannot have a refund without a receipt.	You may have a refund as soon as as you submit the receipt.
I cannot answer your question until I receive more details.	Please send the following details so that I can respond to your question.

Proper Titles

Show respect for receivers by using their proper titles. Use the titles *Mr.,
Mrs., Ms.,* or *Miss* before last names if the receivers have no professional title.
If the receiver has a professional title, such as *doctor* or *reverend,* use the title
abbreviation before the last name. For example, use *Dr. Wright.* When keying
a letter address, use the receiver's title and full name. When keying a letter
salutation, the title and last name or the first name may be appropriate.

Generally, use a person's title and last name in the following cases.

- You have not met the receiver.
- You want to show respect.
- The receiver is older than you.
- You are responding to a letter in which the sender used his or her title and last name.

Diversity

Show respect for people by using their names correctly. In some cultures, the family name is shown as the first part of the name. In other cultures, the family name is shown last.

BLEND IMAGES/JUPITER IMAGES

Show respect for others by using their names and titles properly.

Use a person's first name in the following situations.

- You have met the receiver more than once and believe he or she would not be offended by your using the first name.
- The receiver is about the same age as or younger than you.
- The receiver has previously identified himself or herself to you by first name.

Bias-Free Words

Courteous business messages do not offend the receiver by showing biases. A **bias** is a belief or opinion that hinders fair and impartial actions or judgments. Courteous messages do not make the receiver feel singled out in a negative way. Biases to beware of include those related to gender, race, age, and disability.

Gender Bias

Men and women can be hired for any jobs for which they are qualified. Women are pilots, police officers, engineers, doctors, and lawyers. Men are nurses, secretaries, elementary school teachers, and the principal caretakers of young children. The words used for workers should be free of gender bias to reflect the reality of the workforce. Use neutral words to identify workers as shown in Figure 6-2.

Diversity

Women make up almost half of the U.S. labor force and work in many different jobs.

Figure 6-2 Use gender-neutral words in business messages.

GENDER-NEUTRAL WORDS	
Gender-Biased Words	**Neutral Words**
actress, female vocalist	actor, vocalist
foreman	supervisor
office girls, businessman	office workers, businessperson
waiter/waitress, stewardess	server, flight attendant
salesman, policeman	salesperson, police officer
mankind	people
manmade	manufactured, synthetic
executives and their wives	executives and their spouses

Neutral pronouns should be used to refer to neutral nouns. If you use a singular neutral noun, the pronoun will need to include both masculine and feminine forms to be neutral, as in the phrase *his* or *her*. You can avoid using two pronouns by using a plural noun. Plural pronouns, such as *them* or *theirs*, are neutral. These sentences eliminate double pronouns by using neutral nouns.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun (neutral)
Each student sat in his or her chair.	The students sat in their chairs.
A doctor uses her or his expertise with every patient.	Doctors use their expertise with every patient.

Race and Age Bias

A simple way to avoid biases of race and age is to avoid mentioning race or age unless it is essential to the message. The following sentences show how to avoid race and age biases.

Biased Words	Unbiased Words
We hired an Asian-American baker.	We hired an experienced baker.
Have you met the little old man?	Have you met the man?

Disability Bias

Avoid disability bias by avoiding reference to a disabling condition. If you must mention the condition, use unbiased words as shown in the following examples.

Biased Words	Unbiased Words
afflicted with, suffering from	has
crippling defect, disease	condition

Ethics

Discrimination in the workplace on the basis of gender, race, age, or disability is unethical. Federal and state laws prohibit such practices.

check point 3

1. What characteristics make a message courteous?

2. Name four types of biases that writers should avoid.

   Check your answers in Appendix C.

Correct Messages

Correct messages are those that do not contain errors or omit needed information. Correct messages create a positive impression of the writer. Messages that contain errors create a negative impression of the writer. When creating messages, make sure the main idea and the supporting details are correct.

The Main Idea

When identifying the main idea of a message, be sure you understand the facts correctly. For example, when you say in a letter that your company will bid on a work project, this is a commitment on the part of your company. If you have misunderstood and the company managers do not want to pursue this job, you may lose goodwill for your company later when you do not submit a bid. Getting the main idea of a message wrong can result in lost goodwill, lost business, or lost money for the company.

Supporting Details

Check all the supporting details included in a business message. Pay special attention to dates and numbers. If you ask Mr. White, a potential business partner, to come to a meeting on March 12 and the meeting is really scheduled for March 21, you will create a problem situation. When Mr. White arrives on March 12, the person he needs to meet with, Ms. Alvarez, might be out of town. If Ms. Alvarez is in the office, she likely will not be prepared for the meeting. Both situations will create confusion and loss of goodwill for your company. If the meeting cannot take place, your company managers may think the least they can do is pay Mr. White's travel expenses. This cost may be small, however, compared to the lost opportunity of working with Mr. White.

Dates and money amounts are particularly important in contracts and project bids. A **project bid** is a document that describes work to be done, completion times, charges, and related details. If you make an error in a date on a project bid, your company's employees may have to work overtime to complete the project on time. If you make an error in a contract related to an amount to be paid or received, your company could lose a substantial amount of money.

Correctness is also important in routine messages to coworkers. Suppose you tell a coworker that you will finish a project by a certain date. Your coworker may plan other work around receiving the project on time from you. If you do not deliver the work as indicated, you may create a problem for other workers and lose their goodwill.

TETRA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Effective messages are easy to understand; they do not confuse the reader.

check point 4

1. What characteristics make a message correct?

2. Give an example of how an incorrect date or amount in a message could create a problem for the writer or reader.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Concise Messages

Good business messages are concise. **Concise messages** are brief and to the point. They do not contain unrelated material that can distract the reader from the important points of the message. *Brief* is a term that means short; however, concise messages are not so short that they omit important details or seem rude.

Unnecessary Elements

Business messages should use concise sentences. When you write, express one clear thought in each sentence. Unnecessary sentence elements, such as redundancies, empty phrases, and unneeded words, weaken business messages. As you adjust your message to be concise, keep in mind the information the receiver already knows and the information she or he needs to know.

Key ▶ Point
Redundancies and empty phrases are not found in concise messages.

Redundancies

Redundancy is needless repetition. Sometimes writers use two or three words whose meanings overlap when one word is all that is needed. For example, say *gift* instead of *free gift*. Say *to* instead of *for the purpose of*.

Empty Phrases

Empty phrases clutter sentences without adding meaning. *I believe, in my opinion,* and *for the purpose of* are examples of empty phrases. The meaning behind those phrases is usually implied, so you do not need to use them when you write. Cut down on sentence clutter by using a word or short phrase rather than a longer clause. The following sentences show how to avoid empty phrases and wordiness.

Empty Phrase	I believe the best plan is to establish guidelines for situations such as this.
Better	We should establish guidelines for such situations.

Active Voice

To cut down on wordiness, use active voice rather than passive voice in your messages. When you write in the active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb. In passive voice, the subject receives the action. Using active voice creates a direct message and keeps sentences from being too wordy.

Passive	The best idea was submitted by Vernon.
Active	Vernon submitted the best idea.

check point 5

1. What characteristics make a message concise?

2. What is a redundant expression? Give an example.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Clear Messages

Clear messages are specific, precise, and complete. They use concrete words and terms rather than vague words and terms. They provide all the information needed for receivers to understand the message. They do not contain contradictory information.

Clear Words and Sentences

Vague words, such as *many, better, bigger, fast, later,* and *soon,* provide some information. However, they are not specific or precise. Rather than saying that something is better, tell what makes it better. Instead of saying a project will be finished soon, give a completion date.

Clear messages state information in a way that will not be easily misunderstood. For example, suppose you get a message on Thursday afternoon that asks you to come to a meeting next Friday. You may wonder whether the sender wants you to attend a meeting tomorrow or a week from now. Instead, the sender should say, "… attend a meeting on Friday, April 12."

Contradictory Information

Clear messages do not contain contradictory information that will be confusing to readers. **Contradictory** means inconsistent or opposing. Suppose the first paragraph of a letter you receive says, "Thank you for agreeing to speak to our group on December 10." Other details about the meeting are given. In the last paragraph, the letter says, "Please let me know if you need directions to our location. We look forward to seeing you on December 8." The dates are inconsistent, and you would likely be confused about when the meeting will take place.

check point 6

1. What characteristics make a message clear?

2. Give one example of a vague word and a more precise word or phrase that you could use in its place.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Complete Messages

Complete messages contain all the information needed to achieve the objectives of the sender. To compose complete messages, consider what your readers need to know. Dates, times, locations, addresses, quantities, amounts, and other details may be needed. Leaving out even one detail from a letter or memo can make it useless to the recipients.

The Five Ws

Complete business messages often include the five Ws: who, what, where, when, and why. A message that contains the five Ws can be as concise as the following sentence.

Marsha, please attend a meeting in Room 421 at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, August 28, to discuss sales goals.

Many business messages require several paragraphs to cover the five Ws. Adjust the message for your receiver. In some cases, the receiver may not need all five pieces of information because some details are already known.

Complete Paragraphs

In business writing, the beginning sentence of a paragraph is usually a topic sentence. It gets right to the point by stating the paragraph's main idea. Middle sentences develop the topic sentence or main idea of the paragraph. These sentences give the receiver a description, an example, or other information to support the main idea. The ending sentence brings the paragraph to a close. It may be a short summary of the other sentences or restate the beginning sentence in a different way.

Message Structure

A message can consist of only one paragraph. However, most complete business messages have opening, developmental, and closing paragraphs. The opening paragraph identifies the subject of the letter or memo. An opening paragraph should be short—only two to five keyed lines.

One or more developmental paragraphs follow the opening paragraph. A developmental paragraph contains important information or details about the main idea of the message. These paragraphs are usually longer than the opening paragraph.

The closing paragraph ends a message. It may summarize the message or refer to the main idea stated in the opening paragraph. The writer may thank the reader or ask the reader to take some action in this paragraph. The closing paragraph also can build goodwill.

NETBookmark

Purdue University provides an Online Writing Lab called OWL. A link to OWL is given on the Web site for this book that is shown below. Use the link to go to the OWL site. Select the link for **Professional, Technical, and Job Search Writing**. Then select **Business Letters, Accentuating the Positives**. Review the information on this page.

1. Why does this resource suggest that you use positive wording in business letters?

2. What steps are suggested for softening the effects of negative news?

www.cengage.com/school/bcomm/buscomm

check point 7

1. What characteristics make a message complete?

2. What are the five Ws a message should contain to be complete?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Section 6.2 *Applications*

A. *Courteous Messages*

The paragraphs below are not written in a courteous tone. Rewrite the paragraphs using a courteous tone and the *you* approach.

> I did not receive all the information related to the item you want to return. I cannot authorize a return without the product number and the exact reason for the return. These facts are clearly stated in our return policy. Didn't you read the return policy?
>
> I will wait to hear from you regarding the missing information. If you will be more careful about providing complete information in the future, your returns can be processed more quickly.

B. *Bias-Free Messages*

Rewrite each sentence, using positive, bias-free words.

1. Alberto is afflicted with smallpox.
2. The Asian-American teacher was recognized for excellence in teaching.
3. The old lady purchased a bag of oranges.
4. The policeman studied the site of the robbery.
5. The male nurse cared for the infant.

C. *Concise and Clear Messages*

Rewrite each sentence, making the information concise and clear. Use a positive tone. Add any necessary details.

1. It is my belief that most homes in this area cost about $250,000.
2. Chenda is tired because she is very weary.
3. Ms. Curie suggested several alternatives that could be applied.
4. Past history teaches us that the people of certain societies are generally and usually trustworthy.
5. Tony interrogated Suzanne by asking how long it would take her to complete the electrical work.
6. A pound of chocolates costs a lot of money.
7. Stock in that company is very expensive.
8. We regret to inform you that we won't be able to complete your cabinets until next month.

6.3 Editing and Publishing Messages

Key▶Point

Each stage in the writing process is important for creating effective business messages.

Stages in the Writing Process

Writing is a process that involves planning, composing, editing, proofreading, and publishing messages. Each stage of the process is important for creating effective business messages. Earlier in this chapter, you learned how to plan messages and select an appropriate order for presenting information. You also learned how to compose messages that are courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete. In this section, you will learn how to edit and proofread messages. You will also learn about publishing messages.

Editing Messages

Editing is reviewing and revising (changing) a message to improve it. Editing is so important that you should plan to spend as much time editing as you do composing. When you edit, focus on the main ideas and the content of your message. Consider the following questions as you edit a message.

■ Have you considered the reader? Have you included what the reader needs or wants to know?

■ Is the message courteous? Are the words and tone of the message positive and bias-free?

■ Is the message correct and complete? Have you checked all the facts included in the message? Have you included all the needed information?

■ Is the message concise and clear?

■ Is the message written in an interesting style? You will hold your readers' attention if you use variety in the length and structure of sentences and paragraphs.

■ Have you used appropriate transitions? A **transition** is a word or phrase that connects sentences in paragraphs and, in turn, connects paragraphs in a message. Transitions help the reader move easily from one thought to the next. Figure 6-3 contains a list of common transition words and phrases.

Figure 6-3 Transition words and phrases increase the clarity of a message.

TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES		
Relationship	**Words and Phrases**	
Contrast	but however in spite of	on the contrary on the other hand nevertheless
Cause and Result	because of consequently for this reason	hence therefore thus
Explanation	also for example for instance	to illustrate too
Listing	besides first, second, etc.	in addition moreover
Time	since finally	first, second, …, last
Similarity	likewise	similarly

When editing you can key changes directly in the word processing file. This option is fine when you are working alone and other people do not need to see the changes that are made. When others need to see the edits or you want to have a record of the edits, you can mark changes in the electronic file. For example, *Word's* Track Changes feature allows users to indicate words to be deleted or inserted in the file. The insertions and deletions appear in a different font color to make them easy to follow. You or another user can look at each suggested change and accept or reject the change. Figure 6-4 on page 194 show edits marked using *Word's* Track Changes feature. Insertions are shown in red, and deletions are shown in blue.
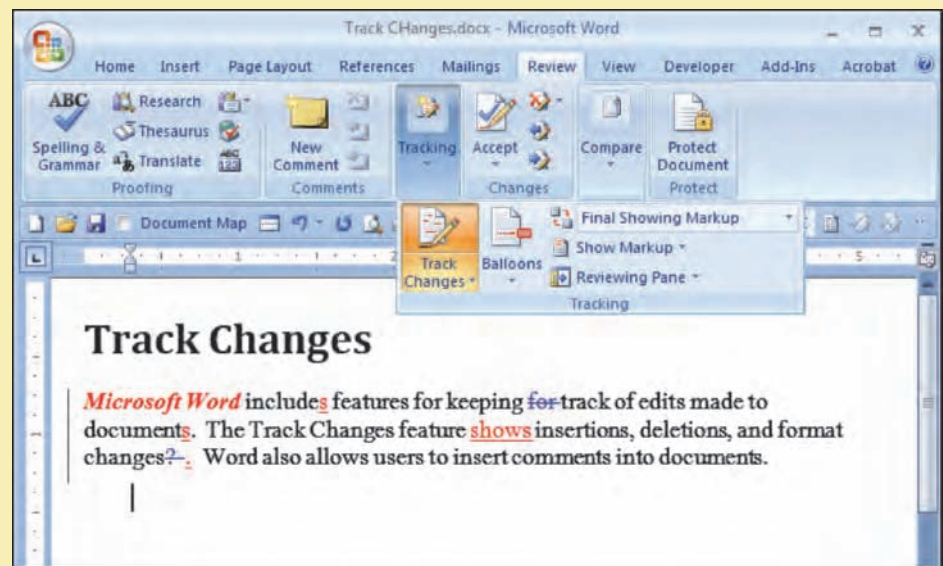
K e y ▶ P o i n t

Some word processing programs allow users to track changes made to a file.

check point 8

1. What are the five stages in the writing process?

2. What is the purpose of editing a message?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Proofreading Messages

Proofreading is reviewing and correcting the final draft of a message. Proofreading differs from editing in that it mainly involves looking for errors or omissions rather than improving writing style or tone. Proofreading is usually the last step in preparing a message. Allow time for proofreading so you can produce error-free messages. Errors reflect badly on you and may cause confusion for your receivers.

A message may contain many kinds of errors. When you proofread, look for one kind of error at a time. You may want to begin by looking for general content errors. Content errors include missing, repeated, or substituted words; transposed words; incorrect proper names; incorrect numbers; and incorrect use of words.

Next, look for mechanical errors. Common mechanical errors are incorrect spacing, missing parts of a business letter, misspelled words, incorrect or missing punctuation, and incorrect capitalization. Mechanical errors may be difficult to catch. It takes a careful proofreader to find all errors in a message.

Proofreading Methods

The following list describes effective proofreading methods.

- Scroll the screen. Move the cursor down the screen of your computer monitor as you proofread each line. Moving the cursor down one line

at a time helps you slow down and focus on each line without getting distracted by other things on the page.

- Read aloud. Reading aloud forces you to slow down and examine words more carefully. Hearing the words can help you catch awkward sentences as well as omitted or repeated words.

- Compare drafts. Check the current draft against the previously edited copy. This method also helps ensure that you made all edits when you revised.

- Proofread the hard copy. It is a good idea to proofread the printed document, even if you have proofread on the screen. In particular, you may detect format errors that were not apparent on the screen.

- Read from right to left. Proofread each line from right to left. Instead of seeing the words that you remember writing, you will see each word separately. This method is effective when you are checking for spelling and keying errors.

- Use two proofreaders. One proofreader reads aloud from the previously edited copy while the other checks the final copy. The reader indicates punctuation, format changes, and special type treatment (such as bold or italics). The reader also spells out proper names and unfamiliar words.

Ethics

Be careful to protect confidential information. Make sure that a person you ask to help you proofread is authorized to know the information in the document.

READING SKILLS

Reading Goals

Before you read a message, ask yourself, "What is my goal? Why am I reading this material?" Effective reading can be done at different speeds and with different methods depending upon the goal you are trying to achieve. When your goal is to read for understanding of new material, viewing words in groups is more effective than looking at each word individually. Avoiding subvocalization (saying each word silently) also speeds reading. When your goal is to proofread a final draft of a message, looking at each word individually is an effective reading method. Reading aloud or saying each word silently also helps you identify errors.

Open the *Word* file *CH06 Reading* from the student data files. Follow the directions given in the file to practice effective proofreading.

Spelling and Grammar Checkers

Almost all word processing programs include a spelling checker, and many include a grammar checker as well. These programs or functions are useful; therefore, you should make a habit of using them. Do not assume, however, that they can replace your own editing or proofreading. Spelling checkers catch obvious spelling or keying errors. They do not find errors for most proper nouns, nor do they help with word substitutions. For example, you might key *estate* instead of *state* or *stripes* instead of *striped.* As shown in Figure 6-5, these errors are not found by the *Microsoft Word's* spelling checker. Only the writer can detect such errors by proofreading carefully.

The same is true of grammar checkers. Most of these programs detect repeated words, and they may point out an especially long sentence. Some programs point out the use of passive voice and offer an alternative in active voice. You must decide whether to revise sentences as suggested. Grammar checkers cannot evaluate your choice of words or the logic of your sentences. A writer must edit and proofread carefully to make sure that a message is error-free.

Figure 6-5 A spelling checker may not find substituted words.
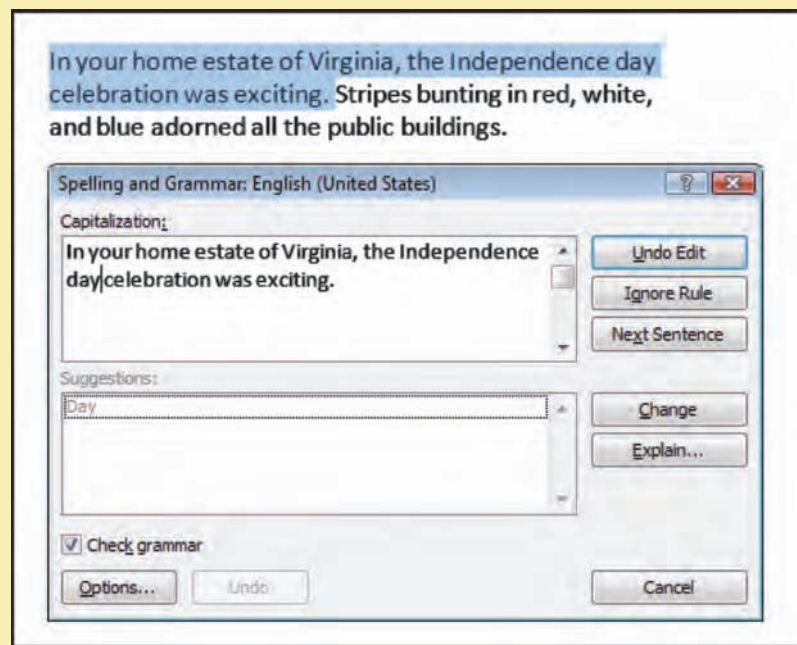
Proofreaders' Marks

Proofreaders' marks are words and symbols used to mark edits on hard copy documents. Common proofreaders' marks are shown in Figure 6-6.

figure 6-6 Proofreaders' marks are used to edit printed documents.

PROOFREADERS' MARKS

SYMBOL		MARKED COPY	CORRECTED COPY
‖	Align	$298,000 $117,000	$298,000 $117,000
∼	Bold	The meaning is important.	The **meaning** is important.
≡	Capitalize	bobbie caine	Bobbie Caine
◯	Close up space	Use con cise words.	Use concise words.
⟋	Delete	They are happy.	They are happy.
∧	Insert	Please make copy.	Please make a copy.
#	Space	Show alot of examples.	Show a lot of examples.
___	Italicize	The Sacramento Bee	The *Sacramento Bee*
stet	Ignore correction	He is an effective writer.	He is an effective writer.
⁄	Lowercase	Sincerely Yours	Sincerely yours
◯	Move as shown	I am only going tomorrow.	I am going only tomorrow.
⌐ ¬ ⊓ ⊔	Move left, right, up, or down	Mr. Herschel King 742 Wabash Avenue Skokie, IL 60077	Mr. Herschel King 742 Wabash Avenue Skokie, IL 60077
⌗	Paragraph	The file is attached.	The file is attached.
sp	Spell out	7209 E. Darrow Avenue	7209 East Darrow Avenue
∽	Transpose	The down up and motion	The down and up motion
⌐	Use initial cap only	FORMATTING A MEMO	Formatting a Memo

Publishing Messages

Up until now, you have been paying attention to composing your message and making sure it is logical and mechanically correct. Now you are ready to publish your work. To **publish** a message is to send it to the receiver or make the message available to the receiver. Sending an e-mail message, mailing a letter, and posting a page on a Web site are examples of ways to publish a message.

Appropriate Methods

Selecting an appropriate method for publishing a message is important. For example, a message to a coworker that contains sensitive or confidential data should not be sent in an e-mail message. A printed memo should be used instead. Letters are considered to be more formal than e-mail messages or memos. Letters are typically used to send messages to people outside the organization. Web sites are used by many companies to provide information about products or services to customers.

Many companies publish messages for employees on an intranet. An **intranet** is a communications network within an organization. It is

Sending a letter is a typical way to publish a formal business message.

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meant for the use of its employees or members. For example, a manual that describes company policies may be posted on the company intranet. The pages of the intranet may look like pages on a typical Web site. However, they are available only to company employees. Team members may be able to post messages for coworkers on the intranet. Progress reports, product updates, and new procedures are examples of these messages. An example of an intranet page is shown in Figure 6-7.

Appearance Counts

To make sure you are ready to publish, you must evaluate your message from a physical or visual viewpoint. Your finished product should not only sound good; it should also look good.
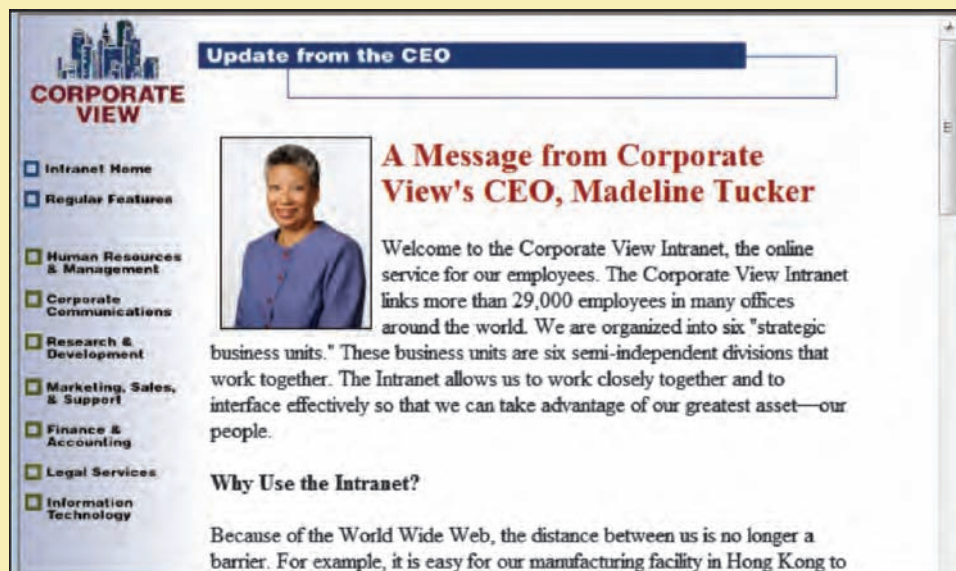
Paper

For printed documents, the paper should not be thin, nor should it be wrinkled or stained. The ink on the paper, whether from a pen or a printer, should be dark, not faded. There should be no stray ink marks or smudges on the page.

  The quality of paper you use varies with the type of business message you are sending. Resumes and formal business letters should be printed on the highest quality paper. The company you work for will likely have letterhead on high-quality paper that is preprinted with the company's logo, name, address, and so on. Internal memos and routine reports are usually printed on a lower quality paper. Nonetheless, they must be neat and attractive.

Key▶Point

Select paper of an appropriate quality for printed business messages. Use inexpensive paper for routing memos to coworkers. Use quality letterhead for messages to clients.

figure 6-7 Business messages may be published on a company intranet.

Virgin or recycled paper that is high in cotton content is suitable for formal business letters and for letterhead. The speckled or marbled varieties can be attractive, but they may detract from your message.

Format

Take a look at any book or magazine around you. Notice that each page contains a certain amount of white space. A reader's eye needs this white space to help focus on the printed words. Notice, too, that the printed lines of text are not usually more than about 4.5 inches wide—and they are often much shorter. You need to set up your business documents with these same ideas in mind. You want your document to be easy for the receiver to read. In addition, you want it to be attractive.

Having some white space in a document makes it more attractive than if the page is crowded with text and figures. Most of the white space will be in the top, bottom, and side margins of the pages. Software programs usually have default margins. Common defaults are one inch on all four sides of the page. These margins are appropriate for most business correspondence. Using default margins and other settings saves time in formatting a document.

You will learn specific formatting guidelines for memos, letters, reports, and other documents in later chapters. Check to make sure the document follows the formatting guidelines. Editing, proofreading, and checking the format may seem like a lot of trouble for a simple memo. However, appearance and correctness is just as important for that document as it is for an annual report or a job application letter.

Many companies request that job applicants submit applications and resumes in electronic format. For these documents, ease of scanning information is more important than an attractive printed format. You may need to use a simple design and save the resume in a plain text format. If you plan to submit a resume in electronic format, follow any guidelines given on the site. You may also want to read articles available online that provide tips for electronic resumes. More information about resumes is presented in Chapter 15.

Key▶Point

Default margins for word processing programs are appropriate for most business messages. Using default settings saves time in formatting a document.

check point 10

1. Give two examples of ways to publish a business message.

2. Should paper of the same quality be used for all printed business messages? Why or why not?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Section 6.3 *Applications*

A. *Editing a Message*

1. Key the paragraphs below or open the *Word* file *CH06 Camp* from the data files.

2. Edit the paragraphs to make them correct, clear, and concise. Add any needed details. Use proofreaders' marks on a printed copy of the text, or use *Word's* Track Changes feature to indicate changes to be made.

3. Make the edits (if using a printed copy and proofreaders' marks) or accept the changes if using Track Changes, and save the file using a new name. Submit both the edits and the final copy to your instructor.

   Thank you for submitting a request for an application to attend our summer camp for students'. The deadline for the application is next week, so you have written just in time.

   The summer camp will be conducted for two weeks in mid-May. Students should plan to arrive on a sunday and leave two weeks later. Most, but not all, camping gear will be provided. Some items should be brought to the camp by the students. The charge for the camp is $10 per day for a total of $150.

   Please let me know if you have any questions about the enclo-seed application. I can be reached at 606-555-0124 during regular business hours.

CRITICAL THINKING

B. Publishing Messages

What is an appropriate way to publish each message? List more than one method when appropriate.

1. A message about routine work to your supervisor

2. An answer to a request from an important client

3. An announcement about a change in vacation days from the company managers to all employees

4. A message to a coworker that contains confidential information

5. A reply to a question about a product that you received from a customer by e-mail

Chapter *Summary*

6.1 Planning and Organizing Messages

- To plan a message, identify the objective, determine the main idea, select supporting details, and adjust the message for the receiver.

- The objective of a message may be to promote goodwill, inform, request, record, or persuade.

- Writers should consider the audience for the message and adjust the content of the message to meet the needs or gain the interest of the receivers.

- Business messages are organized using direct, indirect, or direct-indirect order.

6.2 Composing Messages

- Effective business messages are those that build goodwill and achieve their objectives.

- Effective business messages are courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete.

- Business messages should use a courteous and positive tone even when they contain negative news.

- Courteous business messages do not offend the receiver by showing biases.

6.3 Editing and Publishing Messages

- Writing is a process that involves planning, composing, editing, proof-reading, and publishing messages.

- Editing is reviewing and revising a message to improve it.

- Transition words and phrases help the reader move easily from one thought in a message to the next thought.

- Proofreading is reviewing and correcting the final draft of a message.

- Publishing a message is sending it to the receiver or making the message available to the receiver.

Vocabulary

Open the *Word* file *CH06 Vocabulary* from the student data files. Complete the exercise to review the vocabulary terms from this chapter.

bias

clear message

complete message

concise message

contradictory

correct message

courteous message

editing

empathy

intranet

objective

project bid

proofreaders' marks

proofreading

publish

redundancy

transition

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might the receiver react to a good-news message in which you used the indirect order? How might he or she react to a bad-news message in which you used the direct order?

2. Why should every business message promote goodwill?

3. What may result when a message is not properly planned or organized?

4. Do you think that incomplete messages can be expensive? Explain your answer.

5. Explain the importance of each step in the writing process—planning, composing, editing, proofreading, and publishing.

CRITICAL
THINKING

Chapter *Applications*

A. Revise and Publish a Message

For years, Evan has dabbled in carpentry—just simple projects. He has found the activity relaxing and rewarding. Recently, he agreed to build a playhouse for his neighbor's children. He enjoyed the work so much that he spent more time than he had intended and added special details. The children were delighted. In fact, everyone in the neighborhood thought the playhouse was wonderful. Several people have encouraged Evan to market his design or offer his services to others. He dismissed the idea at first. However, he kept thinking about it and imagining how great it would be to get paid for designing playhouses.

Evan conducted a search for playhouse designs on the Web. Several companies offer playhouses in different designs, but no one seems to offer custom-designed playhouses. Evan decided to post his own site on the Internet to market his services as a playhouse designer.

Because Evan's playhouse design service seems to be a new concept, he was not sure what information to include on his site. He decided to keep the information simple as shown below.

> Playhouses by Evan
>
> I can design any playhouse you want. I have done carpentry as a hobby for years. Recently, I built a playhouse for a neighbor. Everyone in the neighborhood said it was great. Send an e-mail if you want me to design a playhouse for you.

1. Has Evan left anything out of the message?

2. Describe the audience you think Evan is trying to reach with his message.

3. What is the objective of Evan's message? What is the main idea?

4. Edit and correct Evan's message to improve it. The finished message should be courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete. Add any missing details.

5. Save the message as a single file Web page that could be published on the Internet. Preview the message in a Web browser to see how it will look when viewed on the Internet. Make changes to the fonts, colors, or other design elements to create an attractive and interesting Web page. For example, you could add a photo or clip art of a playhouse.

CRITICAL THINKING

B. Use Proofreaders' Marks

1. Work with a classmate to complete this project. Open and print the *Word* file *CH06 Mortgage* from the data files.

TEAMWORK

2. Working together, proofread the message to correct errors and make the message concise, courteous, and complete. Use proofreaders' marks (on each person's copy) to indicate changes.

3. Using the marked copy, make the changes indicated and print the corrected message.

4. Exchange corrected messages with your teammate. Proofread the final copy and mark other changes, if necessary. Teammates should exchange messages and revise until they agree that both copies are correct.

C. Research Data for a Complete Message

1. Read the e-mail to Anna Sanchez shown below.

2. Do research on the Internet to find the information Anna needs to reply to the message. Use search terms such as *letterhead paper* and *business stationery* to find appropriate sites.

3. Using the data from your research, compose an answer to the message as if you were Anna.

From: Jim Hari

Date: May 5, 20--

To: Anna Sanchez

Subject: Letterhead Supplies

Thank you for your suggestions regarding ways to save money on office supplies. Your suggestions were discussed at our team meeting, along with those from other employees.

Printing our own letterhead stationery instead of buying it preprinted sounds like a promising idea. Our star logo and company name and address can easily be inserted into document files. We may also be able to save money by buying inexpensive paper to use for drafts of documents and memos that go to people within the company.

Please search the Web and find prices for quality paper appropriate for letterheads and second sheets. The paper should be at least 24 lb. weight. Also, look for prices for marbled or other "designer" paper that would be appropriate for letterheads. Matching envelopes will also be needed. Select three different papers that you recommend. Give the name, a description, and the price per ream (500 sheets) for each. Include prices for matching envelopes. Also, indicate the source from which the paper can be ordered.

Editing Activity

Open and edit the *Word* file *CH06 Editing* from the student data files. Correct all spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.

Letter to Temporary Employees

Dresden Press is a company that offers desktop publishing services to clients. The staff produces items such as newsletters, brochures, programs, and catalogs. A staff of ten full-time employees stays busy planning projects with customers. They oversee projects and supervise the desktop publishers who use computers to create the documents. Cher Markham, the president, hires desktop publishers on a temporary basis. These employees have special skills and are paid well. Cher finds it is too expensive to keep them on staff as regular employees.

Each employee signs a contract stating that she or he will be paid a certain rate for working on a specific project for a certain length of time. The contract also states that the employee will be given notice two weeks prior to his or her job termination. As project end dates approach, the desktop publishers begin to worry and become anxious. They wonder whether the project they are working on will be completed on schedule. They also hope the company will have another project they can work on. Finally, when Cher decides it is time, a letter is sent to the desktop publishers whose projects are ending and whose services will no longer be needed. She knows she is likely to need these people again, but right now, she does not have any big projects they can work on.

1. What order should Cher use for the letter to the desktop publishers? Is the letter a good news or bad news message?

2. How can Cher promote goodwill and keep the person interested in working for her company in the future?

Communication for Marketing, Sales, and Service

Claudia Simpson is the manager of the women's clothing section in a large department store. Some of her responsibilities include placing orders for clothing and accessories, overseeing placement and creation of store displays, and supervising sales associates.

Sales associates work on the store floor. They answer customers' questions and run the cash register to complete customer sales. They also process refunds for returned items and help keep the displays of clothing neat and orderly.

Three months ago, the store began offering a new line of clothing designed for young women of high school and college age. At about the same time, one of the sales associates retired. Claudia hired Juanita, who had just finished high school, as a new sales associate. She thought that Juanita would be good at working with the new, young customers the store hopes to attract.

Juanita seems to get along well with the young women who come into the store. They identify with her casual style of dress and "chatty" behavior. However, the customers who are older do not seem to care for Juanita. They go out of their way to have a different sales associate help them even when shopping for their daughters. Juanita does not seem to be able to alter her behavior or communication style when talking with customers. She uses the same approach for everyone.

Juanita was hired for a six-month trial period. Claudia plans to let Juanita go at the end of the six months if her communication skills do not improve.

1. While working on the sales floor, does Juanita consider the receivers of her comments and adjust her messages accordingly? Explain.

2. Why might older customers prefer not to have Juanita help them with their purchases?

3. Where can Juanita go to find help or training in improving her sales skills?

Checkpoint 1

1. The four steps in planning a message are: identify the objective, determine the message's main idea, choose supporting details, and adjust the message for the receiver.

2. Adjusting the message for the receiver involves putting yourself in the place of the receiver. For example, you should consider the knowledge, experience, and education the receiver has about the subject of the message.

Checkpoint 2

1. When a message has only good news, direct order should be used for the message.

2. When a message has both good news and bad news, direct-indirect order should be used for the message.

3. When a message has only bad news, indirect order should be used for the message.

Checkpoint 3

1. Courteous messages are positive, considerate, and bias-free.

2. Writers should avoid biases related to gender, race, age, and disability.

Checkpoint 4

1. Correct messages are those that do not contain errors or omit important information.

2. Answers will vary. A sample answer is given here.

   If you make an error in a date on a project bid, your company's employees may have to work overtime to complete the project on time.

Checkpoint 5

1. Concise messages are brief and to the point. They do not contain unrelated material that can distract the reader from the important points of the message.

2. A redundant expression is an unnecessary repetition of words. For example, the expression *past history* is redundant because all history is in the past.

Checkpoint 6

1. Clear messages are specific, precise, and complete. They provide all the information needed for receivers to understand the message. They do not contain contradictory information.

2. Answers will vary. A sample answer is given here.

   The copier is fast.

   The copier prints 15 pages per minute for color copies.

Checkpoint 7

1. Complete messages contain all the information needed to achieve the objectives of the sender.

2. Complete business messages should include the five Ws: who, what, where, when, and why.

This page contains answers for this chapter only.

Checkpoint 8

1. The five stages in the writing process are planning, composing, editing, proofreading, and publishing messages.

2. The purpose of editing a message is to improve it. The writer may check to make sure the message is courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete.

Checkpoint 9

1. Proofreading differs from editing in that it mainly involves looking for errors or omissions rather than improving writing style or tone.

2. Proofreaders' marks are words and symbols used to mark edits on hard copy documents. The symbols can be written quickly, and they take up very little space.
The symbols are standard, so you can understand proofreaders' marks made by other people and they can understand yours.

Checkpoint 10

1. Sending an e-mail message, mailing a letter, and posting a page on a Web site are examples of ways to publish a message.

2. Paper of the same quality should not be used for all printed business messages. Letters and other important documents should be printed on high-quality paper to make a good impression on the receiver. Less expensive paper should be used for routine documents, such as memos to coworkers.

This page contains answers for this chapter only.

This page contains answers for this chapter only.