

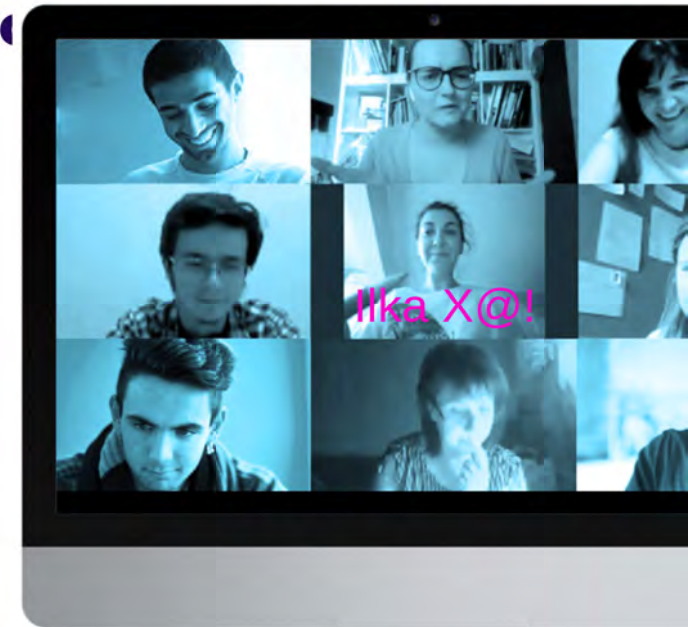
Messages for every occasion

Professional Skills

Theme:
Masterful Workplace Writing

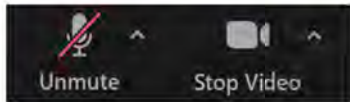
Before we start, please make sure...

- ✓ **your name on Zoom is clear (use Latin letters)**
- ✓ **your camera is on and mic is off (unmute when needed)**
- ✓ **you are in a quiet area that helps you focus**
- ✓ **you have a notebook or a note app ready to take notes**

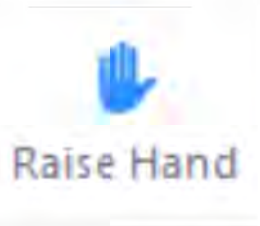


Virtual learning tools

1



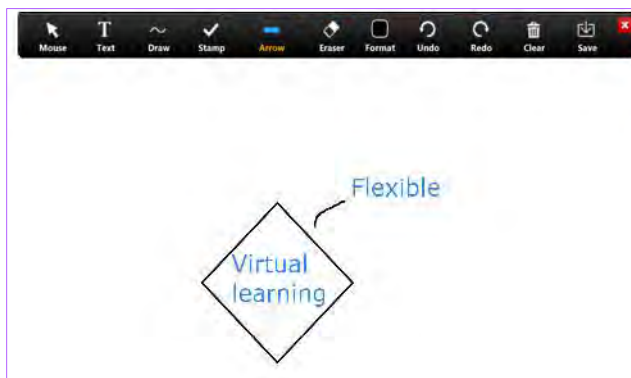
Unmute and share your response if you are instructed to (run the audio setup to check your mic).



Raise your virtual **hand** to participate.

2

Participate in whiteboard and on-screen activities using **annotation tools**.

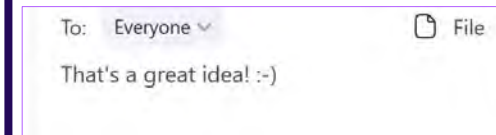


3

Follow instructions and use specific **annotation tools** from the dropdown menus.

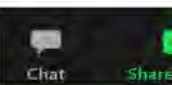
4

Use the **chat** to share ideas and answers.



Send your message to **everyone**.

Use **react** to give feedback signal you



How does it work?



You need to complete all three parts to get the most out of your course.

Prepare before class



Live class
+
After-class speaking session
(optional)



Practise after class

After-class speaking session

Stay back after class for 5 or 10 minutes to talk to your classmates from around the world.

This extra speaking practice will help you...

- improve your conversation skills
- practise using language learnt in class
- support and help your fellow students
- practise using English in a natural context
- become a part of a global learning community



Pre-class activities

Prepare before class



Defining your reader



21st century business writing

Your learning journey

As a result of this lesson, you should be better able to...

- **adapt and present messages appropriately for different forms of written communication to meet expectations and engage readers.**

You will find out about...

- **how today's digital, globalised world has redefined reader expectations from business writing**
- **how practices in design thinking can be used to adapt business writing to the audience and context**
- **how to adapt written documents to make them simpler, clearer and more visually interesting.**

You will practise...

- **presenting a plan of a message where you have applied the principles of design thinking.**

Lead-in

Think of all the business writing you receive: emails, reports, memos, proposals, newsletters...

What are the ways to make them **difficult** to read and **not** engaging?

Skills focus 1: define your reader

Think back to the pre-lesson activities on defining your reader. Look at the diagram below.

Personal characteristics

- Choose your reader's age / generation, educational level, language proficiency, technical knowledge

Communication preferences

- Are they task or relationship oriented? Are they big-picture or detail oriented?

Organisational factors

- What is their role? What is your relationship with them? (Customers / Peers / Superiors / People who report to you?)

Skills focus 1: define your reader

You have 2 minutes to go through each category and define yourself as a reader of business texts. Make notes.

Now, share your view of yourself in pairs/threes.



Personal
Characteristics

Organisational
factors

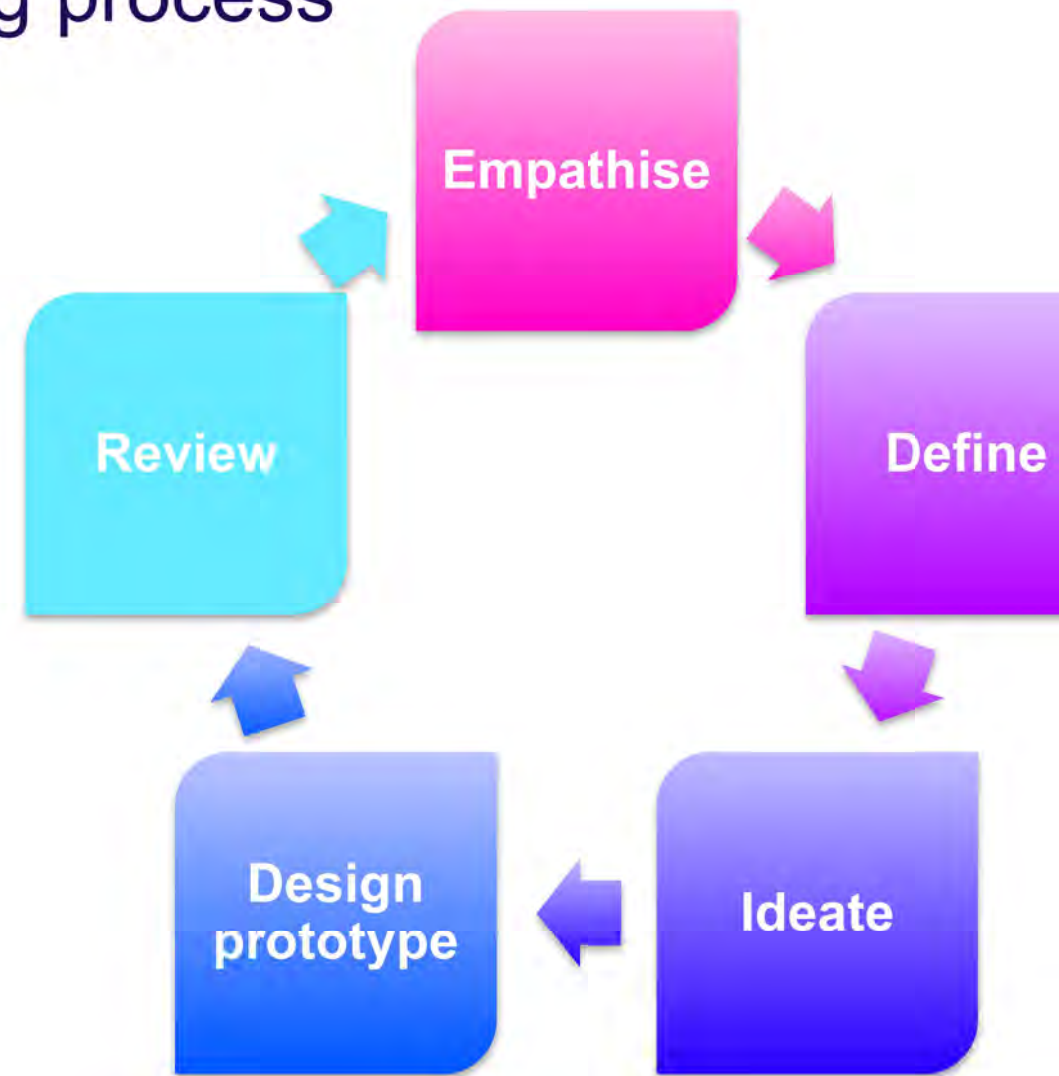
Communication
preferences

Skills focus 2: Design Thinking process

On the right is a process called Design Thinking.

Discuss with your partner/group:

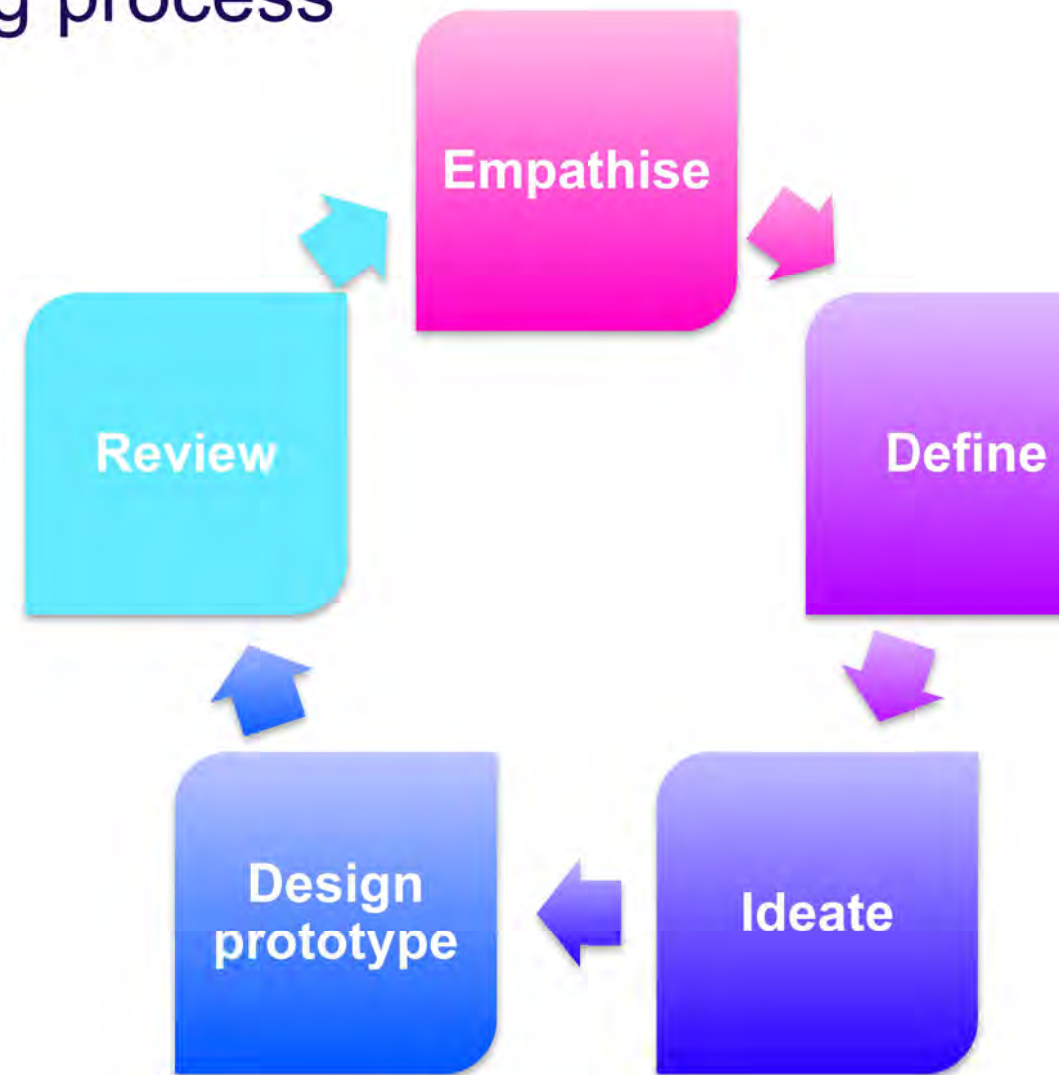
- What do you know about this?
- If you haven't heard of it, try summarising it in 1 or 2 sentences.



Skills focus 3: Design Thinking process

Think of the *Empathise* part of the process and your definition of yourself as a reader from earlier in the class.

1. Explain to your partner/group how you feel when you read something with an unclear purpose and unclear actions.
2. What typically delights or excites you as a reader of business communications?



Task



Task: putting it all together

With a partner, choose one of the options below.

- a) An email to let your customer or team know about a new technology / product / service they can benefit from.
- b) The findings section of a report on a recently completed project.
- c) The background / context / problem statement of a proposal you're submitting to a prospective client.
- d) A memo to your team regarding the usage of the coffee machine and refrigerator in the cafeteria.

Now think of a recipient for your message. Plan your message using the principles of design thinking: *empathise > define > ideate > design prototype > review*

Task: presenting your ideas

Present the plan of your message to the class.



Task: feedback

**Good task production; lots of enthusiasm.
As always, try to use articles appropriately.**

Design thinking checklist



TOOL:

The checklist below uses principles of design thinking. Use it to present your written communication in a creative and reader-friendly way.

EMPATHISING WITH YOUR READER

- Have you thought about who the reader is?
- Do you know what delights them?
- Have you identified challenges you might face in communicating with them?

DEFINING YOUR CORE MESSAGE

- Have you defined your core message based on your needs and the reader's perspective?

IDEATING AND CREATING AN INNOVATIVE DESIGN FOR YOUR MESSAGE

- Have you thought about how to challenge existing expectations about the communication form you are using. (E.g. how a report or a proposal must be structured.)
- Have you selected the simplest way to present your core message?
- Have you used short sentences and active verbs?
- Have you chosen only vocabulary that the reader will be familiar with?
- Have you presented data in a colourful, visually appealing way?
- Have you used a narrative structure that will surprise and engage the reader?

REVIEWING YOUR DESIGN

- Have you asked a peer group to review your design?
-

Your learning journey: assess your progress

Now you are better able to...

- adapt and present messages appropriately for different forms of written communication to meet expectations and engage readers.

You have found out about...

- how today's digital, globalised world has redefined reader expectations from business writing
- how practices in design thinking can be used to adapt business writing to the audience and context
- how to adapt written documents to make them simpler, clearer and more visually interesting.

You have practised...

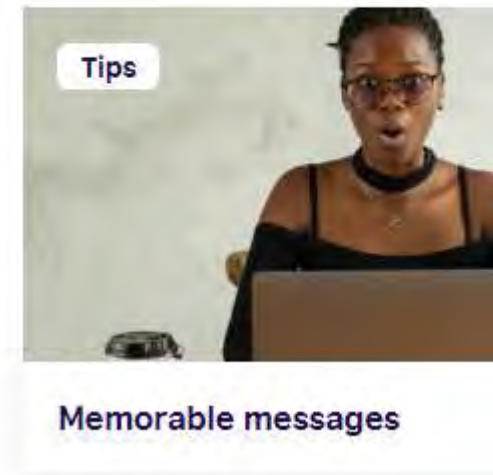
- presenting a plan of a message where you have applied the principles of design thinking.



What's next?

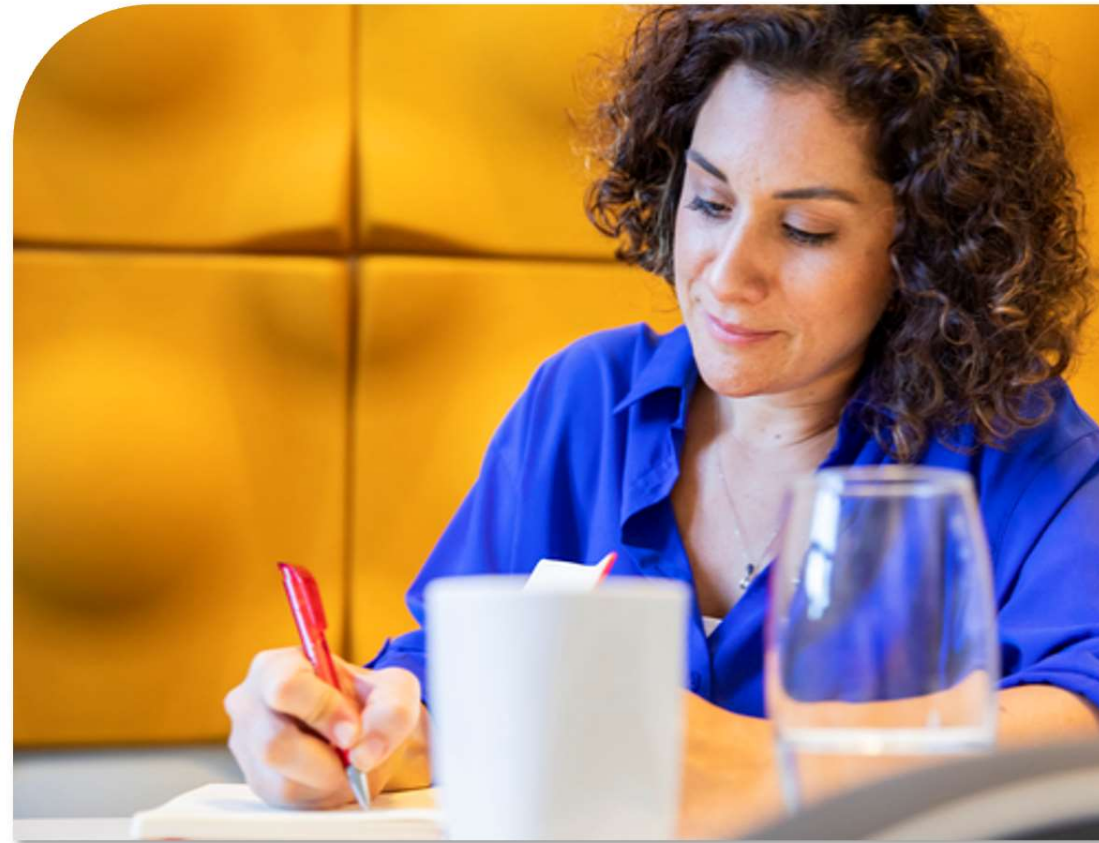
1. Complete your *Practise after class* activities.
2. Read the following links for more details on design thinking and writing clear, memorable messages.
 - https://medium.com/@anoopbharadwaj_87448/the-need-for-design-thinking-in-corporate-communications-3ca247c599cd
 - <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/what-is-design-thinking-and-why-is-it-so-popular>
 - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/how-to-write-in-plain-english.html>

Practice after class



Action planning

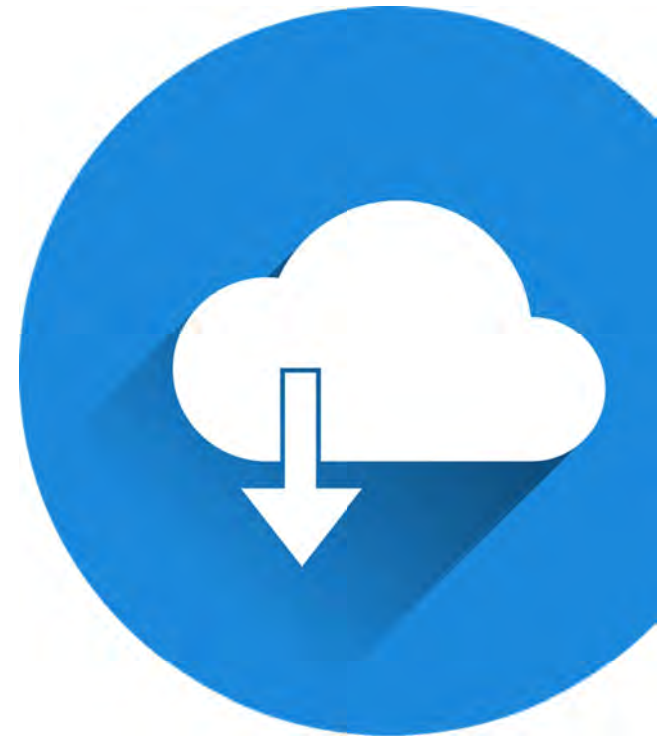
**How will you implement
design thinking in your
business writing?**



Materials

Make sure you have

- downloaded the materials shared by the teacher
- saved the Zoom Chat



After-class speaking session

You can talk about any topic that interests you!

Use these questions as a guide, if needed.

- Which of the ideas from this lesson will you use at work?
- Do any of your colleagues communicate very well? Or very badly?
- Do you like to bring ideas from other areas of business into your work (for example design thinking)?
- Can you apply design thinking to other parts of your work?
- Would you like to share the ideas from this lesson with your colleagues?

Dos

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect
- ✓ Keep your camera on to participate
- ✓ Let others share ideas
- ✓ Listen to everyone
- ✓ Click 'Leave' if you can't stay

Don'ts

- ✗ Don't take pictures or record
- ✗ Don't share personal information
- ✗ Don't let your children be onscreen

What do you think?

Do you like our new Professional Skills themes?

What did you think of the online activities?

What further information do you need?

For more information, write to

support.englishonline@britishcouncil.org



Teacher's Notes

This slide deck was adapted by Jane Warren.

Notes

Share your thoughts about the lesson with the next teacher