

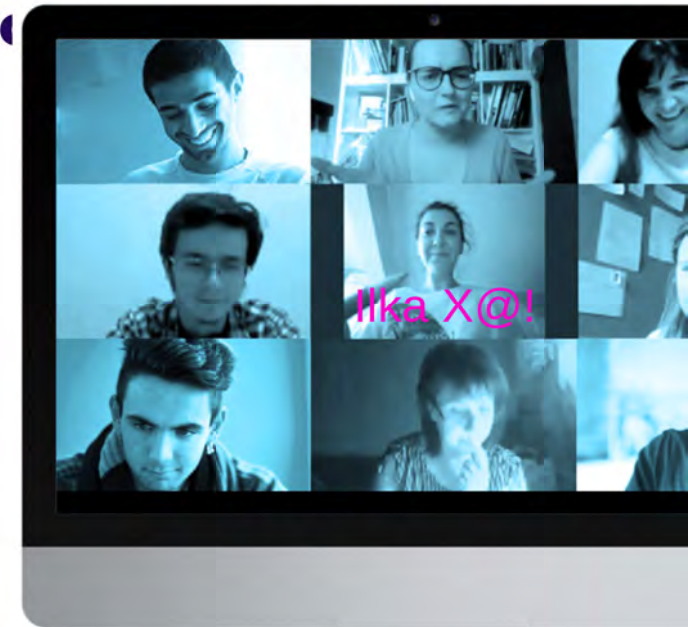
Make your point diplomatically

Professional Skills

Theme:
Masterful Workplace Writing

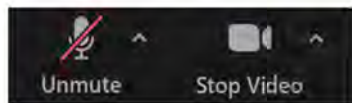
Before we start, please make sure...

- ✓ **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**

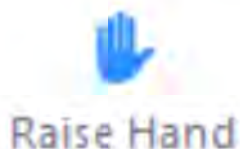


Virtual learning tools

1



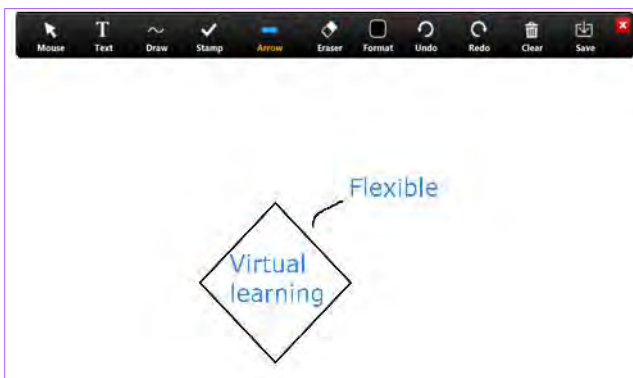
Unmute and share your response if you are instructed to (run the audio setup to check your mic).



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.

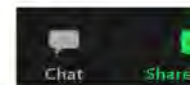
4

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

To: Everyone
That's a great idea! :-)

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



Assertive, aggressive and passive writing



Writer types

Your learning journey

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

- **assert your point in writing using a diplomatic tone and suitable structure that appeals to your reader's reasoning**

You will find out about...

- **identifying how to partner and engage with your reader using an assertive tone**
- **selecting a structure for your reader to get your point across**
- **describing how to influence your reader through reasoning**

You will practise...

- **planning an assertive email and presenting it to others**



Lead-in

Discuss the following with your partner/group. What's the difference?

**Being assertive
vs.
Being passive**

**Being assertive
vs.
Being aggressive**



Skills focus 1: passive and aggressive language

Look at the examples below. They are either passive or aggressive in nature. With a partner, change them to assertive versions.

Passive/aggressive language	Assertive versions
Does that make sense?	
I will try ...	
I just want you to know...	
Your proposal will not work.	
This communication should have taken place face-to-face.	
We are disinclined to proceed until we ascertain the true nature of the predicament .	

Skills focus 1: passive and aggressive language (answers)

Look at the examples below. They are either passive or aggressive in nature. With a partner, change them to assertive versions.

Passive/aggressive language	Assertive versions
Does that make sense?	Let me know what you think.
I will try ...	I will...
I just want you to know...	Delete 'just'
Your proposal will not work.	I have concerns about the costing. Could we have a chat about it?
This communication should have taken place face-to-face.	We need face-to-face communication to...
We are disinclined to proceed until we ascertain the true nature of the predicament .	We need to work out what went wrong before we go on further.

Skills focus 2: influencing your readers

Your teacher will give your partner/group one of the following:

1: To motivate a receptive reader	2: To convince an unaware reader	3: To enable a hostile reader understanding
Attention An initial benefit statement to catch interest and then introduce your idea	Problem Define the problem from your reader's perspective	Your reader's reasoning Present your reader's side to show understanding Highlight credible facts and opinion
Interest Tell your reader how your idea will benefit them	Cause Identify the cause of the problem	Your reasoning Present evidence to respectfully deb reader's argument Provide new evidence showing another perspective
Desire Help readers visualise your idea if they put it into action	Solution Explain how your idea gives a solution to the problem	Way forward Suggest a possible way forward
Action Tell your reader the action they need to take	Benefit Explain the benefits of your idea	

Skills focus 2: influencing your readers

With your partner/group, discuss the following:

1. Think of the people you need to write emails to. Which ones match your allocated advice?
 - *I work in sales so I write emails to describe how my services/products benefit them.*
2. How easy/difficult do you find this usually?
3. Look at the tips again. How will these help you be more assertive in the future?

Task



Task: putting it all together

Your teacher will give you one the following business scenarios below:

- **Your online customer reviews have dropped significantly during the last quarter. This has now attracted media attention. Your CEO has asked for an explanation.**
- **Your company is trying to reduce its carbon footprint. However, this year is the first year where no reduction was seen. You need to respond to the media on this.**
- **You work for a small bookshop that sells its books online and in a small outlet in the city centre. You primarily use social media to promote yourself. Amazon has a much bigger presence. Tell the owner how the shop should improve its brand recognition.**



Task: putting it all together

1. Think of your situation and how this can be communicated via email
2. Choose a structure
3. Work together to plan the email in each of the 4 areas of your chosen structure
4. Think of assertive language you could use

Task: presenting your ideas

Briefly, explain your plan for the email.



Task: feedback

Your learning journey: assess your progress

Now you are better able to...

- **assert your point in writing using a diplomatic tone and suitable structure appeals to your reader's reasoning**

You have found out about...

- **identifying how to partner and engage with your reader using an assertive**
- **selecting a structure for your reader to get your point across**
- **describing how to influence your reader through reasoning**

You have practised...

- **planning an assertive email and presenting it to others**



What's next?

Complete your *Practise after class* activities.

Read these articles on influencing people through your writing (2 links):

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/jun/30/the-science-of-influencing-people-six-ways-to-win-an-argument>
2. <https://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Write-Articles-With-Oomph&id=7295723>

Practice after class



Evidence values

How can you get feedback on your writing?

1

**Draft your
email/report etc**

2

**Type it up (in
Microsoft Word or
Google Docs)**

3

Book a private class

4

**Get feedback and
correction from
one of our expert
teachers**

Action planning

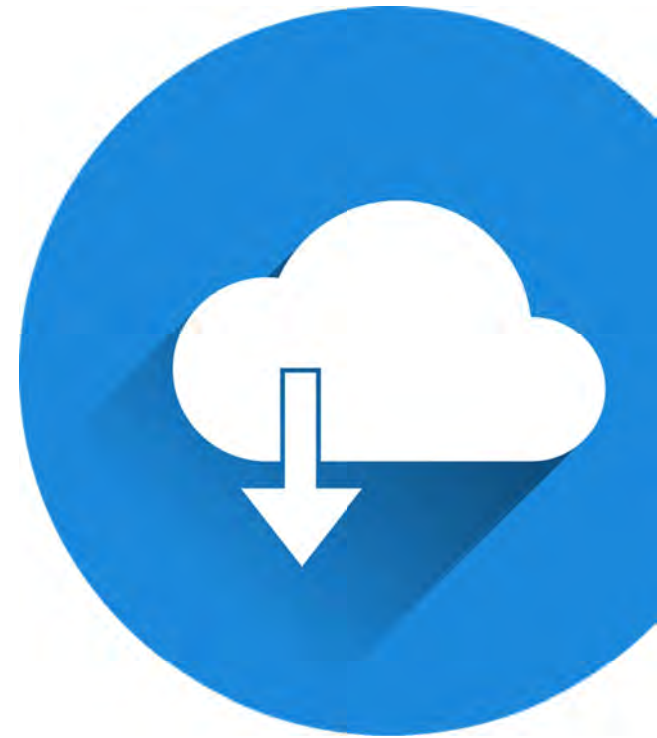
What are you going to start doing to be more assertive yet diplomatic in your writing?



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.

- Do you tend to write in a passive or aggressive way?
- Will you use the structures to influence your readers (motivate, convince, enable)?
- Will you use these techniques at work?
- Would you recommend these techniques to your boss for staff training?
- Are there situations where being passive or aggressive might be useful in business?

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 back

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