

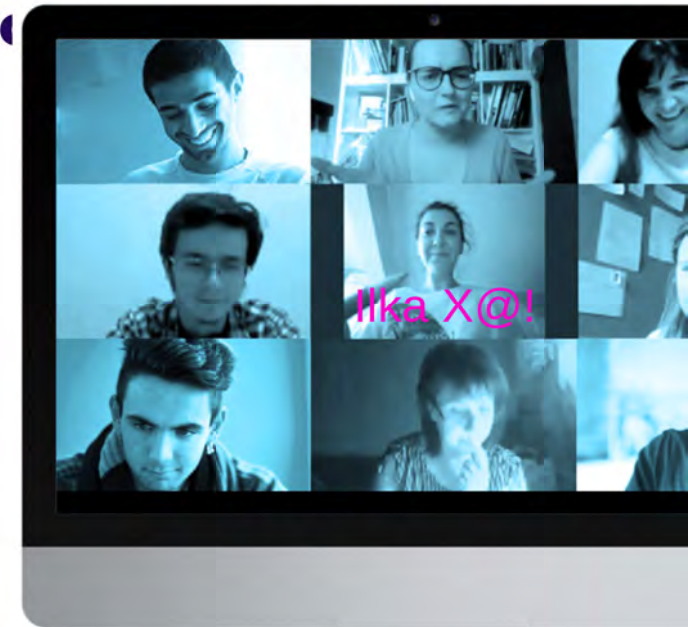
From complex to simple and clear

Professional Skills

Theme:
Masterful Workplace Writing

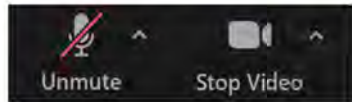
Before we start, please make sure...

- ✓ **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**

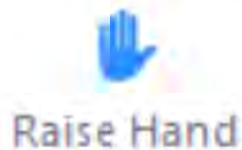


Virtual learning tools

1



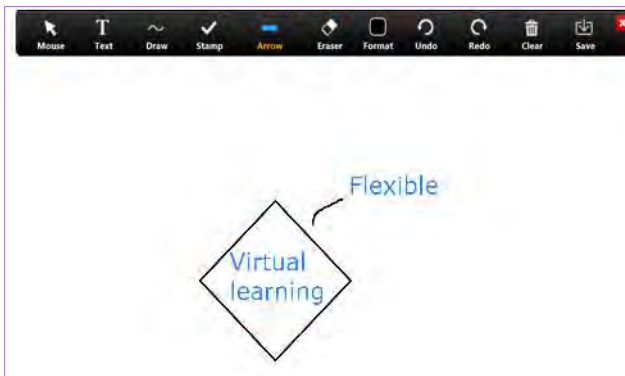
Unmute and share your response if you are instructed to (run the audio setup to check your mic).



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.

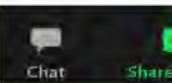
4

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



Performing reader analysis



Identifying appropriate content

Your learning journey

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

- **identify reader needs and select a suitable approach for simplifying complex ideas when writing so that the message is understandable.**

You will find out about...

- **analysing the reader to identify the message**
- **describing a process for communicating core messages**
- **identifying and practise writing approaches to make your messages understandable and memorable.**

You will practise...

- **evaluating and simplifying the executive summary of a business proposal.**



Lead-in

What makes a complex idea difficult for a reader to understand?



Lead-in (optional)

...If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough..

Albert Einstein

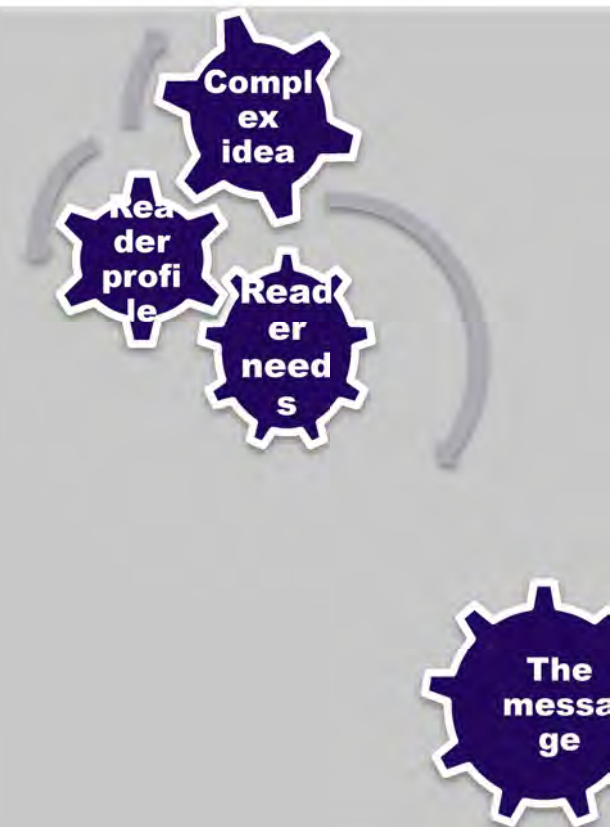


Skills focus 1: analysing your reader to identify the message

Briefly review the tool from the pre-class activities.

Use the gathered information to determine content:

- Select only relevant information and omit unnecessary details
- Prioritise the core messages and select 'one-thing' if possible
- Adjust amount of contextual information
- Include examples and comparisons that the reader can relate to
- Edit amount or inclusion of jargon



Skills focus 1: analysing your reader

Think of a complex idea that needs to be communicated to your reader. The work with a partner/group, use and complete the following:

- 1. Identify 2 different possible readers**
- 2. Analyse the readers' profiles and needs**

Share key points of your discussion with the class.



Skills focus 2: communicating core messages

Read the advice for communicating core message. Discuss the following:

- Should you follow the order below?
- Should you present these in any order?
- Why? Why not?

What?	When?	Who?	Why?	How?
Start with the key message, recommendation or action.	Situate your message within a timeline or indicate a time horizon.	Describe who is accountable or will take ownership for the idea or recommendation.	Support your point with relevant data or facts.	Present overview/implement process.

Task



Task: putting it all together

Read the Executive summary of a business proposal below. Your reader is a busy executive but this summary is extremely complicated and finding the core message is difficult. With a partner, use the 5 questions to simplify this message.

Executive summary

As you are aware, we have been offering the same product suite for close to a decade. Over the last two years, we have seen a sharp reduction in sales of our signature products due to a number of reasons but primarily due to wider changes in the consumer ecosystem. Our customers are turning to our competitors who are in a better position to service their needs through innovative products that take into account these changing needs based on digitally enabled customer experience systems. As an organisation, we need to start thinking about moving in this direction by planning an initiative that is designed along parallel lines. These new products will be incubated fairly quickly and launched in a more responsive way than legacy products and driven by a range of key stakeholders at the head-office level and through regional teams, by leveraging third party expertise.



Task: presenting your ideas

Tell the class how you simplified the message.



Task: feedback

Answers:

What?	When?	Who?	Why?	How?
Start with the key message, recommendation or action.	Situate your message within a timeline or indicate a time horizon.	Describe who is accountable or will take ownership for the idea or recommendation.	Support your point with relevant data or facts.	Present a clear plan of the implementation process.
<i>We need to invest in a new product line that leverages emerging digital affordances.</i>	<i>... by launching the product development cycle in Q2 and have at least two new products ready by Q4 of the current financial year.</i>	<i>This initiative will be driven by the CEO's office through regional representatives.</i>	<i>We need to prioritise this initiative because sales of non-digital products have fallen by 65% due to attrition to digital alternatives.</i>	<i>The product development process will be integrated with our regular digital marketing efforts.</i>

Your learning journey: assess your progress

Now you are better able to...

- identify reader needs and select a suitable approach for simplifying complex ideas when writing so that the message is understandable.

You have found out about...

- analysing the reader to identify the message
- describing a process for communicating core messages
- identifying and practise writing approaches to make your messages understandable and memorable.

You have practised...

- evaluating and simplifying the executive summary of a business proposal.



What's next?

Remember to complete your *Practise after class* activities.

For more information on breaking down complex ideas in written communication, read the following:

1. <https://www.themuse.com/advice/break-down-complex-ideas-at-work>
2. <https://www.cleverism.com/how-to-turn-complicated-ideas-into-simple-concepts/>

Practice after class



FOCUS writing

Action planning

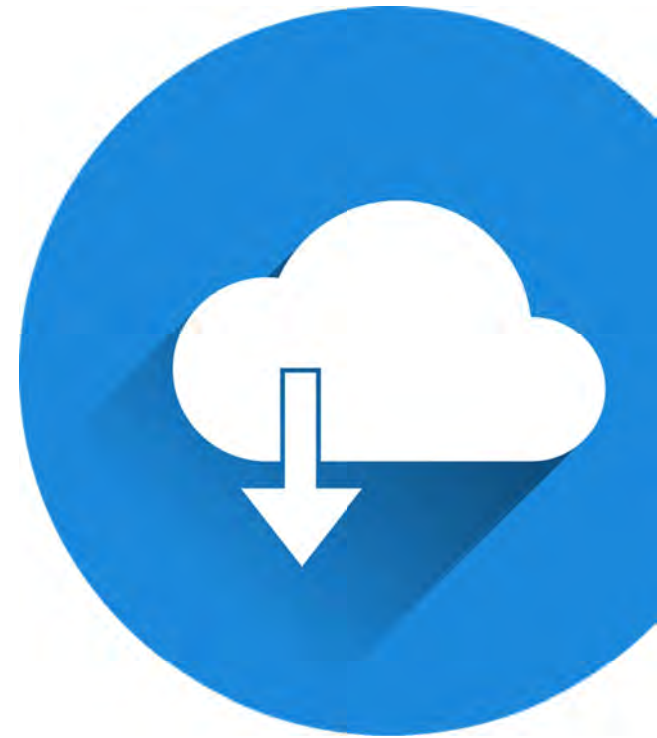
Which approaches to simplifying complex ideas seen in this lesson will be most useful for your current and/or future business writing?



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.

- Do you have trouble being concise in your work emails etc.
- Have you ever had to explain a complex situation to a colleague or customer and found it difficult?
- What did you do?
- Will you use the W questions to help reduce complexity?
- Does being concise make you seem more professional? why or why not?
- What other strategies, such as lists or bullet points, can you use to be concise?

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