

Business and Technical Writing Activities Grade 7



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Business and Technical Writing Activities

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Conventions of Business Writing

The term *business writing* covers such materials as formal letters, office memos, application forms, and incident reports. Although each type of business writing has specific features and purposes, all business writing follows these basic conventions, or standards:

- a polite, formal tone showing respect for the reader
- a straightforward style that makes the purpose for writing clear
- a first sentence or paragraph that states the topic and purpose
- strong supportive sentences that include sound reasoning, vivid details, and accurate facts and statistics
- block or modified block format, with typed or neatly printed text
- lack of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

The writer notes the date of the business message.

194 Western Boulevard
Natick, Massachusetts 01880
May 27, 2002

The writer addresses the reader in a formal, respectful way.

Ms. Eloise Brinkman
Overbrook Records
2 Blaine Parkway
Natick, Massachusetts 01880

Dear Ms. Brinkman:

In her first sentence, the writer uses a straightforward style to state her purpose for writing.

I am writing to request a publicity photograph of Jenny Brava from the Sidestreet Girls.

I'm a huge fan of Jenny Brava because she does so much for the environment with her Eco-girls organization. I am getting ready to start a chapter of Eco-girls in my hometown, and the photograph will be a great addition to our posters and ads.

Sincerely,

Marcia Strohl

The writer types the letter neatly and signs her name at the end.

Marcia Strohl

Activity: Write a letter to your teacher describing the differences between business writing and personal writing. Follow the conventions of business writing throughout your letter.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

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Business Ethics and Writing

The term *ethics* means “a code of behavior.” Someone’s personal ethics are guidelines about how to act. The guidelines are based on such values as honesty, loyalty, and courage. For example, if you value honesty, your personal ethics will lead you to tell the truth.

Each piece of business writing that a person creates should reflect strong, positive business ethics. It should be honest, fair, and polite in tone.

Most of the time, it’s easy for writers to follow the code of business ethics. However, sometimes it’s less easy—particularly when the purpose for writing involves winning an argument. Some writers may not “play fair.” They may stretch the truth, they may support their arguments with opinions instead of facts, or they may write in an angry, disrespectful tone.

Keep your business writing free of such mistakes by following these guidelines.

Purpose for Writing	Guidelines
to persuade	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use straightforward, positive language. <i>Don't:</i> People who don't recycle are stupid. <i>Do:</i> People need to be educated about why they should recycle. Support your point of view with accurate facts and examples. Don't exaggerate or include negative opinions. <i>Don't:</i> If everyone doesn't help, we'll all be buried in ugly trash within a month! <i>Do:</i> The average person creates about 1.5 pounds of trash each day. Therefore, we need everyone's help.
to complain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Focus your disappointment on the <i>issue</i>, not on the reader. <i>Don't:</i> I saved my money to buy a CD player, and you cheated me. The thing stinks! <i>Do:</i> I'm disappointed with the quality of the CD player I bought at your store. Politely ask for a reasonable and fair solution. <i>Don't:</i> Give back my money, and give me a better CD player. <i>Do:</i> Please refund my money, or provide a new CD player.
to disagree	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> State the issue and briefly state your position. Be polite and fair. <i>Don't:</i> Don said girls shouldn't be allowed in the chess club. What an idiot! <i>Do:</i> Don said girls shouldn't be allowed in the chess club. I strongly disagree. Support your position with accurate facts. Don't include negative opinions. <i>Don't:</i> Don's always got some lame idea he tries to ram down our throats. Throw him out of the chess club! <i>Do:</i> Our country enacted civil rights laws to put an end to discrimination. By law, the school chess club must be open to anyone, regardless of such issues as gender or race.

Activity: Write an essay to answer this question: *Why might a polite and fair argument be more successful than an angry, disrespectful one?* Support your point of view with accurate facts, reasons, and/or examples.

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Writing a Letter to the Editor

Most newspapers and magazines encourage readers to write letters to the editor. In these letters, readers can respond to a recent article or sound off on a topic of interest to other readers.

Like all business letters, a letter to the editor should have a polite, respectful tone and follow the basic conventions of business writing. It should be typed or neatly printed and should end with a hand-written signature. It should contain a heading, salutation, body, and closing.

Check the editorial page or masthead to find the name of the editor. Then begin the body of your letter by briefly stating the issue. Follow up with your opinion—stated as briefly and clearly as possible. Support your opinion with sound reasons, accurate facts, and examples. End by summarizing your main points and, if possible, offering a solution or an alternative.

The writer directs her letter to the editor of the magazine.

The writer identifies her purpose for writing in the first sentence.

The writer states her opinion clearly.

The writer supports her opinion with accurate facts.

The writer sums up her main point.

5 Garibaldi Place
Houston, Texas 77098
May 22, 2002

Ms. Helen Reynolds, Editor
• *Be a Better You Magazine*
22 Sherborn Boulevard
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

• I am writing to respond to Juanita Hamblett's article, "Lose Weight Without Trying!" which appeared in your April issue. I disagree *strongly* with Ms. Hamblett's statement that a diet containing large quantities of red meat and whole milk is a good choice for teens eager to become or remain trim. Several respected medical studies, including one by the Health and Fitness Bureau (2000), have proven that such high-fat foods should be avoided. These medical experts, and many others, suggest substituting such leaner foods as chicken, fish, and low-fat milk.

• I feel that Ms. Hamblett's suggested diet is unhealthy, and I urge your readers to talk to a doctor before beginning any diet.

Sincerely,
Brenda deSantis

Brenda deSantis

Activity: Think about a recent article or editorial that inspired you to react strongly. You might have agreed and wanted to share your ideas, or you might have disagreed and wanted to sound off. Here's your chance. Write a letter to the editor to describe and support your point of view.

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Writing a Letter of Complaint

Every business letter should have a formal, respectful tone. Being polite is especially important when you are writing to express dissatisfaction. As you write, explain exactly why you are displeased and what you want the reader to do about it. Remember that you are displeased with a product or service, not with the person who is reading your letter. A polite letter that describes a problem accurately will be more successful than an angry, disorganized letter.

Begin your letter by identifying the product or service. Then describe the problem accurately. Be brief and to the point. If possible, enclose copies of related paperwork. Finally, request a specific, reasonable solution. Keep copies of all letters sent and received until the complaint has been resolved.

78 Spring Street
Thornbury, Connecticut 06543
September 7, 2002

Mr. Robert Cleaves, President
High Sports Watches
2 Curtis Plaza
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Cleaves:

- On August 3, I ordered a High Sports watch, model #A76, through your catalog. On September 4, I received a package from your company containing the wrong watch, model #A32. In the box I am sending you, along with this letter, is the watch I received, as well as a copy of my original order form.
- Please send me the watch I ordered, model #A76, or refund my money.

Sincerely,

Doris Mandavilla

Doris Mandavilla

In the first sentence, the writer identifies the product.

The writer briefly and accurately describes the problem.

The writer identifies all enclosures.

The writer requests a specific solution.

Activity: You bought a book from a mail-order or Internet book dealer. When you opened the package, you found that the cover of the book was torn. Write a letter of complaint to the book dealer. State the problem and request a specific solution.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter to Request

Use a polite, conversational tone and follow the basic conventions of business writing when writing a letter to make a request. Like all business letters, your request letter should be typed or neatly printed in block or modified block format, and should end with a handwritten signature. It should contain a heading, salutation, body, and closing.

Begin your letter by stating your request briefly and clearly. Be sure that the request is both specific and reasonable. Provide all necessary information, and include your phone number or a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

24 Bryant Place
Minneapolis, Minnesota 45773
June 3, 2002

Dr. Roberto Manello, President
Manello Hobby Guides
4 Transworld Plaza
New York, New York 10098

Dear Dr. Manello:

- I am writing to request information regarding your Manello Hobby Guide on the topic of saltwater aquariums. I read a positive review of it in the May issue of *Saltwater Fish* magazine, but I have been unable to find it in local bookstores. Please let me know if I can order it directly from you. If so, please also let me know the price, including shipping and handling.
- I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply.

Sincerely,

Brian May

Brian May

The writer begins by stating his request briefly and clearly.

The writer makes his request very specific.

The writer encloses a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the reader's reply.

Activity: What individual, company, or research facility might have information that is of interest to you? Write a letter to make a specific request. Make sure that your request is specific and reasonable, and that you include all necessary information.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Application

Like all business letters, a letter of application follows the conventions of business writing. It should be typed or neatly printed and should end with a handwritten signature. It should contain a heading, salutation, body, and closing.

Keep in mind that the purpose of your letter is to state your interest and make a good first impression. Before writing your letter, do your homework! Use library or Internet sources to find the name of the person to whom you should address the letter. Then begin your letter by describing the job or program for which you're applying. List your qualifications and briefly explain why you're the best candidate. Don't brag! Use a polite, objective tone, letting your experiences speak for themselves. End by requesting an application or an appointment for an interview.

The writer directs her letter to a specific person and includes his title in the inside address.

The writer describes the job for which she's applying.

The writer lists her qualifications and relevant experiences.

The writer requests an application form and provides her telephone number so the reader can call to schedule an interview.

5 Beech Street
Cleveland, Ohio 43627
February 14, 2002

• Dr. Dean White, Director
Two Pines Camp
14 Broad Run Road
Sanford, Maine 02364

Dear Dr. White:

• I am interested in applying for the job of arts and crafts counselor at Two Pines Camp for this summer season.

• I have won several local art awards. I also have experience as a camp counselor. For the past two summers, I have worked as arts and crafts counselor for the Cleveland Metropolitan Day Camp. I taught drawing, clay sculpture, and basic woodworking to thirty-eight campers. I also organized an art show so the campers could display their work.

My work as both an artist and a counselor, and my ability to lead and interact with children, give me the background and experiences I need to be an effective and inspiring arts and crafts counselor at Towering Pines. Please send me an application form, or call me at 216-555-5411 to arrange an interview.

Sincerely,

Molly Kenah

Molly Kenah

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Activity: What summer job do you think might be fun, interesting, or challenging? Use library or Internet sources to find the name and address of the person to whom you should write in order to apply for the job. Write a letter of application, following the guidelines and the model.

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Writing a Personal Letter

Unlike a business letter, a personal letter is sent to someone you know well. The tone should be relaxed and friendly. The purpose of the letter is to share news and views. Make your personal letters fun and interesting. Organize them in paragraphs with clear topic sentences and vivid details.

As the model below shows, the form of a personal letter differs from that of a business letter in several ways. There is no inside address above the salutation, and the salutation ends with a comma rather than a colon. The reader is addressed by his or her first name or title (*Dear Andy*, *Dear Mrs. Davis*, *Dear Uncle Elian*,). The closing is often less formal than that of a business letter, and the writer usually signs only his or her first name.

The salutation is informal, followed by a comma.

The body of the letter is friendly and newsy.

The closing is informal, followed by the writer's first name.

14 Maple Street
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19830
August 9, 2002

Dear Mrs. Saltzman,

I really enjoyed seeing you and Paul at the Wednesday Night concert last night. Let's try to meet again next Wednesday, about an hour before the concert, for a picnic supper. I'll bring the fried chicken!

When I told my grandmother that I had seen you, she was eager to hear all your news. We certainly miss you in the neighborhood, but we are pleased to know that you are enjoying your new apartment.

I'll look forward to seeing you and Paul next Wednesday. If your plans need to change, please call me at 555-8833.

Your "old" neighbor,

Polly

Activity: Write a personal letter to a friend or relative, enabling him or her to catch up on your latest news and views. Use an informal, friendly tone.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing Minutes

A secretary or group member who is present at a meeting writes the minutes: a record of when and where the meeting was held, who attended it, and what discussions or actions occurred.

Like all summaries, minutes are shortened versions of larger works. The secretary concentrates on presenting the most important details rather than recording everything that was said and done.

When recording the minutes of a meeting, begin with a title that identifies the committee or group. Then record the date, time, and location of the meeting. In the body of the minutes, follow the format shown in the model. Begin by naming the leader, or chair, and the time the meeting began. Then list the names of those who attended. Use separate sections to summarize old and new business. Close by recording the date, time, and place of the next meeting, and noting when and by whom the meeting was adjourned.

A heading gives the date of the meeting.

The first sentence identifies the leader, or chair, and tells what time the meeting began.

The names of those who were present are listed.

The date, time, and place of the next meeting are provided, and the time that the meeting ended is noted.

Green Middle School Spring Concert Committee Minutes for March 23

The meeting was called to order by Erica Gero at 3:30 P.M. in the school auditorium.

Members present: Erica Gero, Danielle Stefano, Becky Fischer, Simone Sallé, Peter Tyson.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Old Business

Becky Fischer distributed copies of the concert program that she designed. It was approved by all members present. Becky will print 200 final copies of the program. Danielle Stefano reported on the refreshments that her committee will prepare and serve after the concert. Lemonade and sugar cookies were chosen.

New Business

Erica Gero volunteered to be in charge of getting tickets printed. At our next meeting, we will discuss how to organize ticket sales.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 2 at 3:30 P.M., in the auditorium.

The meeting was adjourned by Erica Gero at 4:00 P.M.

Activity: Use the guidelines and the model to write minutes for a meeting you recently attended. If you haven't attended a meeting, you can write minutes for a fictional meeting.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Synopsis

A synopsis is a short statement that gives the general idea of a longer work. For example, a synopsis of a novel describes the main characters and outlines the major conflict. You may have read the synopsis of a movie on a video box, or maybe you have skimmed the synopsis of a book on the book jacket. Like all summaries, synopses should be brief—one page or less. They contain only the most important events and details.

Before writing a synopsis of a written piece, read all of it. Then sum it up in a few sentences or paragraphs. Begin with a title that identifies the work. Then write your synopsis in paragraph form, as shown in the following model.

The title identifies the book and author.

The synopsis is written in paragraph form.

The synopsis is brief. Only the most important characters, events, and details are included.

• ***The Black Stallion*, by Walter Farley**

• On a voyage from India to England, Alec Ramsay is shipwrecked on a deserted island. The only other survivor is a wild black Arabian horse. All alone with no hope of rescue, Alex finds food and shelter for himself and the horse, and finally wins the horse's trust. After many weeks, Alex and "the Black" are rescued and eventually reach Alex's home in New York. There, they meet Henry, a retired jockey and horse trainer. Convinced that the stallion will make a champion race horse, Henry helps Alex to train him. At the exciting climax, Alex and his wild black stallion win the big race!

Activity: Use the guidelines and the model to write a synopsis of a favorite book or short story.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

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Writing a Review

A review is a brief summary and critical evaluation of an event or an artistic work, such as a movie, play, or concert. When writing a review, give your opinion of the quality of the event or of the work and its performance. Always support your opinions with examples and reasons.

Begin with a title that identifies the work. Then write your review in paragraph form. Lead off by identifying the event, work, or performance and its time and place. Include a brief description of what was read, seen, or performed. Identify the most important people involved, such as the writer, the director, and the performers. Close by summing up your point of view.

The title identifies the work and previews the critic's point of view.

The lead sentence identifies the details of the event.

This paragraph identifies the director and gives a brief synopsis of the plot.

This paragraph highlights the most important person in the cast.

This paragraph sums up the critic's point of view.

• *Climb to the Top Is Terrific!*

• The Neighborhood Theater Company production of Alan Culbertson's play *Climb to the Top*, now playing at the Morris Theater on 75th Street until September 28, is an exciting, electrifying hit.

• Directed ably by Theresa Bloch, *Climb to the Top* is based on the true story of Gloria Samuelson, who overcame a severe childhood injury to become the United States' leading women's tennis player. Her road to fame and success was extremely challenging, but she proved time and time again that she was a champion in spirit as well as in athletic achievements.

• In the lead role of Gloria Samuelson, actor Anne Rosow shows depth, determination, and sparkle. It is a challenging role, since Ms. Rosow must age, in the span of the play, from a young woman of seventeen to a grandmother of seventy-five. Her acting is so smooth and natural that it is hard to believe that she isn't the real Gloria Samuelson.

• Don't miss this production! The Neighborhood Theater Company has brought us many other terrific performances, but *Climb to the Top* is their best so far.

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Activity: Use the guidelines and the model to write a review of a favorite book, play, or movie.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Developing a Schedule

A schedule is a form that lists the times at which certain events will take place or certain tasks will be done. For example, a dentist's daily schedule shows the times of day and the people who have scheduled appointments.

A schedule is used to collect information in an organized way. When it is first created, the schedule has blank spaces that are filled with required information. On the model schedule below, the writer has begun to fill in the information. He is using the schedule to keep track of his lawn-mowing business.

A schedule needs to be neat and organized in a way that is easy to understand. If possible, use a computer to create your schedule. If a computer is not available, use a ruler, pencil, and graph paper. Begin by giving the schedule a title that identifies its topic. Then create a column or grid format, with blank entry spaces. Use horizontal and vertical headings to indicate where information is to be placed on the form and what kind of information it should be.

Weekly Lawn Mowing Customer Schedule					
Day	Times and Customers				
	10 A.M.	11 A.M.	NOON	1 P.M.	2 P.M.
Monday	Carter		(lunch)		
Tuesday		Valdez	(lunch)		Thomas
Wednesday		Lewis	(lunch)	Marx	
Thursday	Simons		(lunch)		
Friday		Dr. Kerwin	(lunch)		

The horizontal and vertical headings indicate where information is to be placed and what kind of information it will be.

Subheadings show each time of day that the writer is scheduling.

Each customer's last name is entered in the box corresponding to a day and a time.

Activity: Make a schedule for next week. On your schedule, show the hours you'll be in school, doing homework, participating in sports and hobbies, etc.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

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Creating a Tracking Form

A tracking form is used to record things as they occur. For example, a teacher's grade book tracks grades as they are earned.

A tracking form needs to be neat and well-organized so it is easy to understand and use. If possible, use a computer to create it. If a computer is not available, use a ruler, pencil, and graph paper.

Begin by giving the tracking form a title that identifies its topic. Then create a column or grid format, with blank entry spaces. Use column headings to indicate where information is to be placed on the form and what kind of information it should be. If the tracking form is to be filled in by other people, include clear instructions.

The following model was created by a veterinarian to keep track of the post-surgical treatment of a dog. Note that some entries have been filled in.

The title identifies the topic.

The instructions are clear.

Headings and labels indicate where information is to be placed and what kind of information it should be.

Each person fills in the form as care is given.

Record of Patient Care

Instructions: Please record all care given to the patient identified below. Be sure to date and time each entry, and provide your initials in the "Staff Member" column. Write entries clearly.

Patient's Name: *Jasper*

Circle: dog cat **Breed:** *beagle*

Owner's Name: *Jack Benson* **Phone:** *555-0055*

Date and Time	Care Given	Staff Member	Comments
<i>9/7 7:30 AM</i>	<i>Fed 1 cup Hefty Chow; provided water</i>	<i>T.H.</i>	<i>Appetite good! Seemed alert and comfortable.</i>
<i>9/7 8:00 AM</i>	<i>Changed bandage on right foreleg</i>	<i>K.R.</i>	<i>Wound healing nicely; swelling reduced.</i>

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Activity: Make a tracking form to keep track of the progress of an ongoing project, such as a lengthy research report, a daily exercise program, or weekly or monthly expenses. Include clear instructions for filling out the form.

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Preparing for a Job Interview

An interview is a meeting in which one person (the interviewer) asks a second person (the interviewee) questions in order to gain information. A job interview helps an employer decide whether an applicant is qualified for a specific job. The interviewer might ask questions regarding

- the applicant's relevant job experiences and skills
- the applicant's ability to follow directions, make decisions, etc.
- the applicant's dependability and trustworthiness

When you are preparing for a job interview, plan ahead. Write down the questions the interviewer might ask. Then write informative answers. Form these answers in your mind so that during the interview, you will be calm, poised, and prepared. Here is a chart that a student created to prepare for a job interview at a fast-food restaurant.

The student thought about specific questions the interviewer might ask.	Probable Question	My Answer
The student answers each question fully.	What work experience have you had preparing food?	I haven't actually worked in the food business, but I have prepared many meals at home and as a hired babysitter.
The student picked people from different parts of his life who will recommend him highly.	Our cooks, servers, and dishwashers all work together as teams. What experience have you had working cooperatively as the member of a team or group?	I've been in scouts for four years, and I'm a member of the school and district soccer team. I've also got four brothers and sisters.
The student is honest about experiences or skills he lacks, stressing that he is willing and able to learn.	What adults other than your parents can you name as a reference?	My soccer coach, Mr. Rizuto; my scout leader, Mr. Champlain; and my math teacher, Mrs. Marti.
	Have you ever held a job in which you handled money and used a cash register?	No, I haven't. But my math skills are good, and I can learn quickly how to use the cash register. I'm totally honest and trustworthy, as my references will tell you.

Activity: What after-school job might you enjoy? What skills or experiences might help you get, and succeed in, that job? What questions might an interviewer ask you? Create a chart like the one above. Use it to prepare questions and answers for the job interview. Follow the guidelines and the model.

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Conducting an Investigative Interview

An interview is a meeting in which one person (the interviewer) asks a second person (the interviewee) questions in order to gain information. During an investigative interview, the interviewer asks questions to gather information about something that has happened. For example, a police officer might interview a witness to an accident.

When planning and conducting an investigative interview, limit your questions to those that will bring out relevant facts rather than opinions. Ask for the date, time, and location of the event. Then lead with questions that ask for a full description of the event. Gather information on people involved, sights, sounds, dialogue, and so on. Use follow-up questions to gather further information and/or to clarify the meaning of the interviewee's responses.

Jen is a peer counselor at her middle school. She has been asked to interview two students who were in a heated argument. Jen will interview each student separately to gather information from each side. Then she will use the information as background for a counseling session involving both students. Here is a list of questions that Jen created for her interviews.

Jen leads with a question about the date, time, and location.

Next, she moves to a series of questions that elicit a full description of the incident.

Finally, she asks the interviewee to provide information that might otherwise have been left out.

- 1. Please give me the specific date, time, and location of the incident.
- 2. Who was present?
- 3. What issues led to the argument?
- 4. What specific pieces of dialogue do you remember, in the order in which they occurred?
- 5. Have the two of you had problems with each other before? If so, please describe them.
- 6. What further information can you tell me about the argument?

Activity: On her way home from school, your friend Kate witnessed an accident. Write a series of questions for an investigative interview you might hold with Kate.

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Conducting a News Interview

An interview is a meeting in which one person (the interviewer) asks a second person (the interviewee) questions in order to gain information. A news interview is conducted to gather information that can be written into a news story. When conducting a news interview, use a tape recorder or take complete notes.

Keep your purpose and audience in mind as you develop your questions. Lead with a question that will introduce the topic and the interviewee to your readers. Use follow-up questions to bring out the most important information, using a news reporter's six favorite words: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how*. Try to get direct quotations and vivid details. Finally, to be sure that you haven't omitted any important questions, ask an open-ended question, such as *What else do my readers need to know about this event?*

Here is a list of questions that a student named Mark created for a news interview he will conduct with a high-school student who just won the city chess championship.

Mark leads with a question that introduces the topic and the interviewee to his readers.

His follow-up questions bring out important information.

He asks for specific pieces of dialogue.

His last question is open-ended.

- 1. *What* overview can you provide my readers about the city chess championship tournament?
- 2. *Why* is the city chess championship considered a great honor?
- 3. *Who* was your opponent in the championship game?
- 4. *Where* and *when* did the game take place?
- 5. *How* did you prepare for the game?
- 6. *What* pieces of dialogue between you and your opponent do you think might show my readers the tension and suspense you were both feeling?
- 7. *What* further information can you share with my readers?

Activity: A popular magazine has selected you to interview a famous political leader, athlete, or entertainer regarding a recent achievement he or she had. Write a series of questions suitable for your news interview. Get the facts!

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Preparing a Grant Proposal

Like all proposals, a grant proposal uses persuasive writing. It requests money to pay for research. For example, a school science department might apply for a grant to study the effects of temperature on certain plants. When writing a grant proposal, begin by researching the organization offering the grant. Find out what the requirements are and when the deadline is for submitting your proposal.

Begin your draft with a title that identifies your proposal. Provide the name and address of the person to whom you are sending it. Follow it up with your name, contact information, and the date. Then describe how you will use the grant money. Support your plan with facts and examples that (1) explain how the plan meets the grant requirements; (2) describe the qualifications you have for successfully carrying out your proposal; and (3) provide reasons the grant should be awarded to you.

The writer dates the proposal and addresses the person and the organization to whom she is sending it.

PROPOSAL FOR HAYWARD SCHOOL BOTANY CLUB PROJECT

Date: October 3, 2002
Submitted to: Dr. Simon Juarez
Atlantic Enterprises
Fortune Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 29182

Submitted by: Felicia Ames
Hayward School Botany Club
14 Goshen Pike
Tampa, Florida 29180
813-555-2345

The writer leads off by describing the club's plan.

Proposal: The Hayward School Botany Club requests the annual "Help Your Neighbor" grant from Atlantic Enterprises for the following project:

The Botany Club plans to poll the residents of the Nesbitt Senior Center to gather facts and opinions regarding their garden. From the data collected, we will plant and maintain the garden.

The writer explains how the plan meets the grant requirements.

Support: According to the pamphlet, the annual "Help Your Neighbor" grant is dedicated to "funding projects in which local organizations help to improve the quality of life of local citizens." By polling the residents of the Nesbitt Senior Center to find out how they would most benefit from their garden space, and then planting and maintaining the gardens accordingly and delivering the produce, the Botany Club would certainly achieve the goal of the "Help Your Neighbor" grant.

All individuals need healthy diets rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Diets built around vegetables and fruits can deliver the nutrients the Nesbitt seniors need. As botany students with broad gardening and plant management experience, we can successfully produce those vegetables and fruits and deliver them directly to the Nesbitt kitchen.

She concludes with a strong, persuasive appeal.

The annual \$300 "Help Your Neighbor" grant would cover the costs of the seeds and supplies we need to carry out our project and improve "the quality of life" of our Nesbitt Senior neighbors.

Activity: Imagine that a local company is offering a grant of \$500 to the student with the best plan for making your community a better place. What project might you propose in order to win and use the grant? Write a proposal. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Procedural Proposal

Like all proposals, a procedural proposal uses persuasive writing. Its goal is often to solve a problem by outlining a new or better way of doing something. For example, a student might write a procedural proposal to suggest better ways to sell tickets to the school play.

When writing a procedural proposal, begin with a title that identifies what you propose. Then describe the problem that your procedure will solve. Explain your proposed procedure in a numbered sequence of steps. End by providing your name, contact information, and the date.

The title identifies the proposal.

• **Proposal for Improved Procedure for Setting Up the Arts Fair**

The introduction states the problem to be solved.

Introduction: Last year, we ran into several problems in setting up for the Arts Fair. Because our committee was small, we tried to do a lot of the labor the night before. For example, we set up the booths, covered the tables with tablecloths, and decorated. The unexpected storm later that night ruined the decorations and caused more labor and clean-up the next day. Because people were upset and under a lot of pressure to fix everything, disagreements spoiled the day for many of us.

The writer proposes a procedure to correct the problem.

Proposed Solution: I propose that we use the following procedure for this year's set-up of the Arts Fair.

1. Start now, five months before the fair, to build the committee. Encourage people to join us.
 2. Hold planning meetings. Spread the chores to subcommittees. For example, have five people in charge of setting up the stage. Have five others set up the refreshments area. Then reserve six or seven of our most dependable members to set up all the booths on the morning of the fair. Another group of four or five could then decorate the booths.
 3. Prepare typewritten sheets of directions for every committee member so that he or she knows exactly what to do. Have each team report to a captain to make sure the work gets done.
 4. The night before the fair, have all members bring a picnic supper to the fairgrounds. Allow time for relaxation and fun during set-up.
 5. Get together after the fair to share our triumph for a successful day.
- Respectfully submitted on March 2 by Kim Wong.

Numbered steps make each part of the procedure clear.

The writer identifies herself.

Activity: Think of a procedure at school, at home, or in the neighborhood that you feel could be improved. For example, you might have ideas about how to improve current recycling procedures. Write a procedural proposal to share your ideas. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Project Proposal

Like all proposals, a project proposal uses persuasive writing. It describes an intended project, with the goal of obtaining permission to carry out the project. For example, in the model below, a student prepared a project proposal to obtain permission to start a school music club.

When writing a project proposal, include a title that identifies what you propose. Then provide the date of the proposal and address your reader. Follow up with your name, address, and phone number. Begin with a crisp, clear sentence that states your proposal. Support the proposal with statements that clearly describe what the project would accomplish and why it would be beneficial. Include the project's beginning and end dates, its estimated costs, and ways to fund the costs. Be persuasive!

The title identifies the proposal.

• Music Club Proposal

The writer addresses his reader and provides his contact information.

Date: October 3
Submitted to: Dr. Marilyn Naimons, Principal
Hall Middle School

Submitted by: Roberto Restez
Grade 7, Homeroom #45
Home phone: 555-0045

The writer uses a brief, direct sentence to state his proposal.

- I propose that the Hall Middle School establish a music club.
- **Purpose of the Club:** The club would provide an opportunity for members to learn about different forms of music.

Members: Membership would be open to all students and faculty.

Faculty Sponsor: Mr. Demming has agreed to be the club sponsor and has even promised to lead a discussion about big band music.

Dates: The club would be publicized in the school paper and through posters. The club would begin as soon as possible and continue through the school year.

Meeting Times and Place: It would meet once a month in the resource center so members could use the stereo system to listen to music.

Costs: If members brought their own tapes and CDs to the meetings, the club would have no initial costs. Once the club is established, perhaps the school budget could fund the creation of a school music library.

Clearly worded sections provide the important facts and use persuasive language.

Activity: What project or new club would you like to see established at school? Think of something that would benefit you and your classmates. Write a project proposal to the appropriate person. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Developing a Business Proposal

A business proposal answers a request for goods or services. For example, in the model below, a student wrote a business proposal to respond to someone who wants to hire someone to paint her fence.

A business proposal must be neat and professional in appearance. If possible, use a computer to create a form for writing the proposal. Make the top of the form look like a business letterhead, with your name and address. Follow with the date of your proposal. Then address your customer in an inside address.

Begin the body of the proposal by stating the request to which you are responding. Then describe what goods or services you can provide, based on the customer's request. Include a quote (your price) and state exactly what the quote includes. Use facts and pledges to prove the worth of your business. Be honest, straightforward, and persuasive. End the proposal with your signature.

He addresses the customer in an inside address.

He provides his quote and states exactly what services it includes.

He explains how his services fit the requirements of the job.

To prove the worth of his services, he uses facts, references, and a pledge to guarantee customer satisfaction.

Mike's Summertime Painting Company
Mike Hamilton, Owner
347 East Oak Street
Cleveland, Ohio 45328
555-5845

May 15, 2002
To: Mrs. Katherine Valton
32 Front Street
Cleveland, Ohio 45328

In response to your request for the painting of your fence, I propose:

- Sanding and painting of 12 sections of picket fence: \$32.00
- As you requested, the job would begin May 30 and be completed by June 4. I would provide my own brushes. As agreed, you would provide the paint.
- I have had several painting jobs in your neighborhood. If you would like references regarding my work, I will share my list of customers. I guarantee that you will be satisfied with the services of Mike's Painting Company. If you are dissatisfied in any way, I will repaint at no additional cost.

Signed: *Mike Hamilton*

Activity: Write a business proposal for providing goods or services to a potential customer. Base your proposal on a real or imagined request. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Visuals in a Multimedia Presentation

A multimedia presentation is a report that uses a combination of *media* or “different forms of communication.” For example, a multimedia presentation about how to make a birdhouse might include step-by-step directions written on a transparency so that your viewers could read along as you spoke; diagrams or photographs showing each step in the process; and slides or videotaped films of bluebirds nesting or in flight. It might also include a handout listing specific materials needed to build the birdhouse and suggested stores where the materials might be purchased.

Visuals are important components to multimedia presentations. In the form of written text, they enable viewers to follow along with the words that you are delivering orally. In the form of diagrams or drawings, visuals can help to make a series of directions clear. In the form of slides, photographs, or videos, visuals can show a subject clearly and provide action. Finally, in the form of handouts, visuals can encourage viewers to take information away with them.

Here are parts of a multimedia presentation that a student created to teach the audience about the nutritional benefits of parsley and to encourage them to grow it at home.

The writer uses this transparency to list facts about parsley.

A photograph shows a parsley plant.

This transparency gives step-by-step instructions.

This handout will help the audience to obtain the supplies they need.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT PARSLEY?

- **It's delicious!** Chopped fine, it can enhance dishes featuring meat or fish, steamed vegetables, crispy green salads, and hearty soups.
- **It's packed with nutrients!** Parsley is a rich source of vitamins A, C, and K.

HOW TO GROW PARSLEY

1. Fill a small flowerpot with seed-starting mix.
2. Dampen the seed-starting mix with water.
3. Place four or five parsley seeds on the surface of the seed-starting mix. Cover very lightly (to a depth of about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch).
4. Place plastic wrap over the top of the pot. Secure it with a rubber band.
5. Place pot on a saucer in a sunny windowsill. Seeds should sprout within seven days.
6. When seeds sprout, remove plastic wrap. Keep plant in sunny location. Mist with water occasionally.

SUGGESTED SOURCES FOR MATERIALS:

Mail-Order Seed Companies:

Amory Seed Company
232 Erie Boulevard
Fort Wayne, IN 28272

Bretton Acres Seeds
878 Nashua Street
Charleston, SC 49383

Local Suppliers of Pots, Seed-Starting Mix, Plant Mistlers:

Waterford Nurseries
32 Avalon Terrace
Pittsburgh, PA 14565

Langston Garden Supply
483 Michigan Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 14576

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Activity: What skill, hobby, or project would you enjoy teaching to an audience? Plan a presentation using a wide range of visuals. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Sound in a Multimedia Presentation

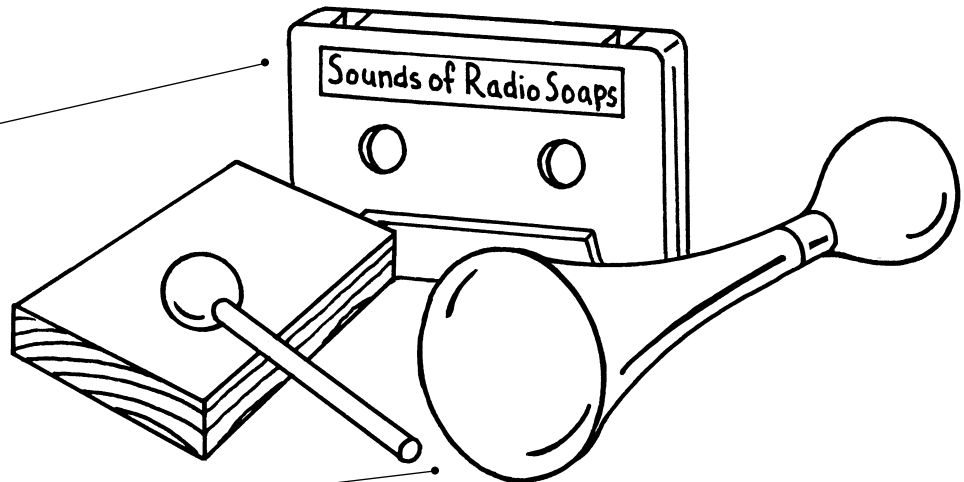
A multimedia presentation is a report that uses a combination of *media* or “different forms of communication.” For example, a multimedia presentation about how to carve an ice sculpture might include step-by-step directions written on a transparency so that your viewers could read along as you spoke; slides, diagrams, or photographs showing a sample ice sculpture at each stage in the process; and slides or still photographs of several completed ice sculptures. It might also be extended and enhanced by the use of sound.

Sound can have different roles in a multimedia presentation. Background music can establish certain moods—peppy, peaceful, energetic, sad, etc. In the multimedia presentation above, sound might also take the form of taped dialogue accompanying a video of ice sculptors at work, or sound effects of a sculptor chipping away the ice with his or her chisel.

Here are the the sound props one student used in a multimedia presentation about radio sound effects.

The presenter uses an audio cassette so the audience can hear what sound effects on radios shows sounded like.

He displays several “instruments” used in creating radio sound effects. He can also use these to demonstrate the types of sounds each one makes.



Activity: What topic would you enjoy developing into a multimedia presentation? Plan a presentation using at least three different sound props. Follow the guidelines and the model.

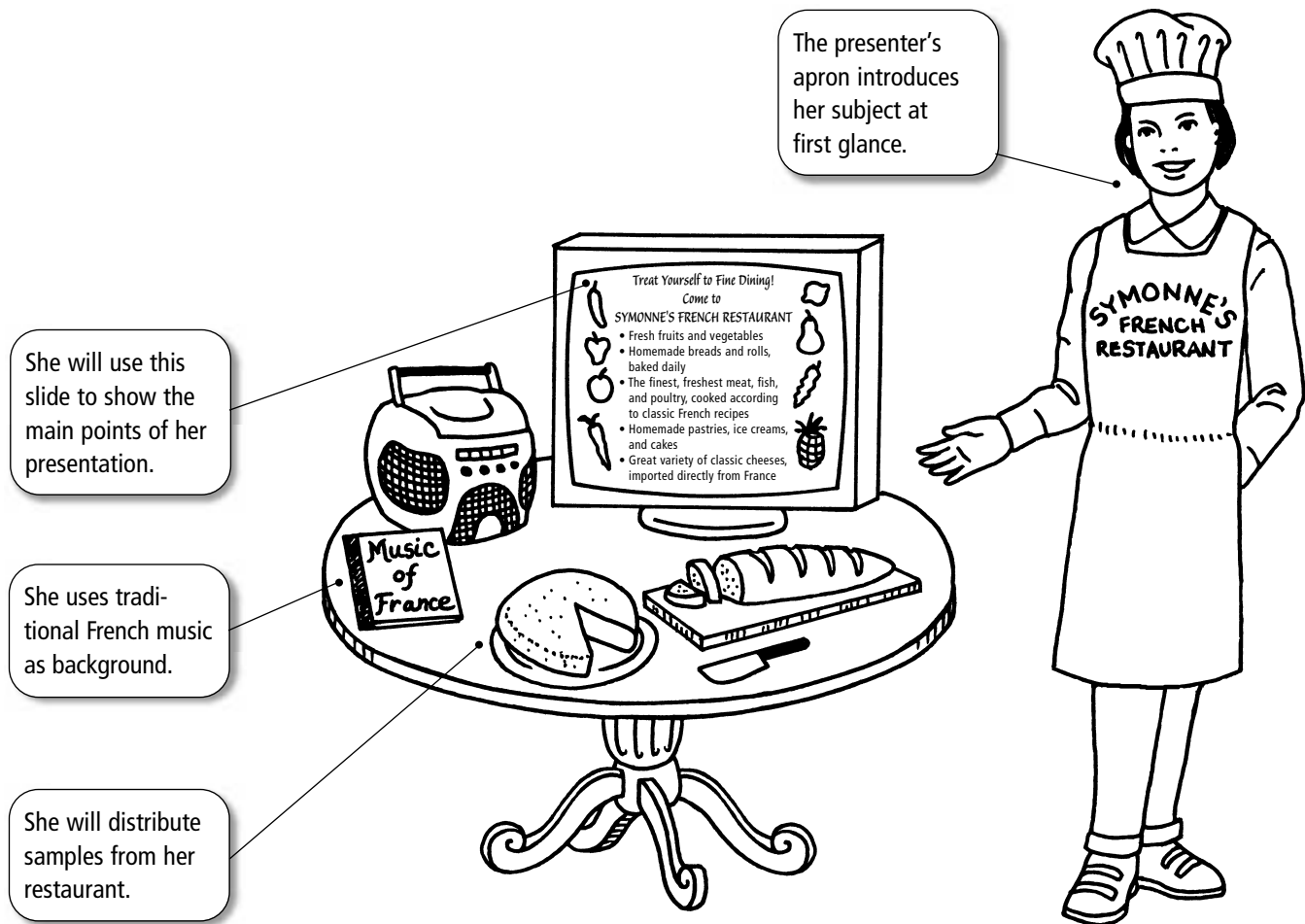
Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating a Multimedia Presentation Using a Computer

A multimedia presentation is a report that uses several *media*, or “forms of communication,” such as written words, spoken words, sound, and visuals. Sometimes, such presentations might also contain elements that appeal to the viewer’s sense of touch (feather); smell (flowers); or taste (samples of food).

There are computer programs such as spreadsheets and graphics software that you can use as you plan a multimedia presentations. You may want to create a flowchart or other graphic organizers that will illustrate the progression of your presentation. Or, you may want to use drawing software to create images that can then be used in a computer slide show. Other software can be used to organize and display all of your images and text in the final multimedia presentation. Such software allows you to combine written text, visuals (including movie clips and three-dimensional diagrams), and sound on a series of slides that can be shown automatically or slide by slide as a viewer pushes a button. Investigate and experiment with such software if your school has access to it.



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Activity: What business might you own or manage someday? Plan and create a multimedia presentation. Combine oral and written text; an array of visual images; sound. Be creative! Follow the guidelines and the model. If you have access to a computer, use it to help you plan and create your presentation.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Determining the Content of a Web Site

A great Web site begins with careful planning. First, select a topic that you will enjoy developing and sharing. Next, think about your target audience. As you plan and write, keep in mind what your target audience already knows about your topic, what they need to know in order to understand your message, and what facts and features will interest them the most.

With your audience in mind, use a graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas about the topic. Then decide whether the topic is too broad to cover well on computer screens; no Web surfer wants to tackle a screen filled with small type and few graphics.

Finally, figure out what types of research you need to do to cover your topic well, and what sources—books, magazines, Internet, and interviews with experts—will be most effective.

The writer decided on a topic for the Web site.

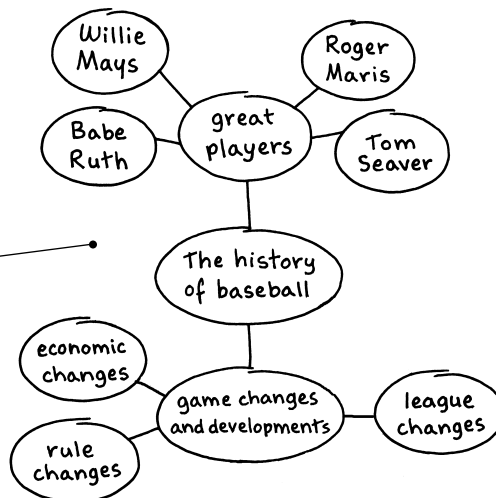
She identified her target audience.

She used a cluster diagram to brainstorm ideas about the topic.

The cluster diagram helped her to narrow her topic to a more manageable size and scope.

She used a chart to list questions she would answer through research, as well as possible sources for the answers.

- Web site topic: *The History of Baseball*
- Target audience: *anyone interested in baseball and baseball hall-of-famers*



- Narrowed topic: *Baseball's Greatest Players*

Necessary research and possible sources:

<i>Questions to answer</i>	<i>Possible source(s)</i>
<i>Which of my favorite players will the target audience know a lot about?</i>	<i>survey of baseball fans I know</i>
<i>What statistics (ERA, RBIs, home runs) will prove these players are "the greatest"?</i>	<i>All About Baseball: The Encyclopedia of Baseball and an interview with my grandmother, a 50-year baseball fan</i>

Activity: What interest, hobby, or cause would you enjoy sharing through a Web site? Follow the guidelines and the model to determine your content, scope, target audience, and research plan.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing the Content for a Web Site

The first step in creating a Web site involves selecting and narrowing a topic, determining your audience, and doing research to gather interesting facts and statistics. Once that step is complete, you're ready to plan, draft, and revise the written text. Follow these guidelines:

- Start with the main page of your Web site. Keeping your audience in mind, use your research notes to draft the written text.
- Begin by telling your visitors what your site is about. Be sure your main page includes buttons that visitors can click for more information, additional pages, and useful links. Also, provide contact information so that visitors can e-mail you.
- **Remember:** The written text that you present should be as brief as possible. No visitor wants to tackle a Web site that is filled with paragraphs of small type and no graphics. As you draft, think about what information might be presented through photos and photo captions; dramatic graphic organizers; sound; and other components.
- When your draft is complete, put it away for a while. Access Web sites that you enjoy. Think about how the creators of these Web sites presented their written text. Gather ideas for your own revision!
- Revise and proofread the written text of your Web site.

The writer opens by identifying the site and welcoming visitors.

The main page will include pictures of players.

She includes links to other pages on her site, and to a related site.

• Baseball's Greatest Players

Welcome to Becky Fischer's "Baseball's Greatest Players" Web site! I've been following baseball for about seven years. Since I love to talk about baseball with other fans, I decided to create this site. I hope you'll join me in forming an Internet Baseball Club where we can share our thoughts and enthusiasm about the great players of the past.

Some of my favorite players are pictured on this page. Click on each picture to view the player's stats. Other players can be seen by clicking

• MORE PLAYERS.

• Please also click **SOURCES** for a recommended list of books about baseball, and click **HALL OF FAME** for a link to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Finally, please click **Becky@baseballclub.com** to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions and to receive updated club news.

Activity: Write the written text for the main page of a Web site that you would enjoy creating. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Designing the Layout of a Web Site

The first step in creating a Web site involves selecting and narrowing a topic, determining your audience, and doing research. The next step is to plan, draft, revise, and proofread the written text.

Once those steps are complete, it's time to design the layout. Your first goal is to greet your visitors and hold their attention. Therefore, carefully plan how you will use sound and visuals to extend, illustrate, and decorate the written text on your main page. Follow these guidelines.

SOUND: You might use background music or sound effects, such as trumpets or the bark of a coyote, to create a mood. Be creative!

VISUALS: Keep design elements simple. Use a plain colored background rather than a busy pattern, and use only two or three photos or graphic images. Use the same types of elements on pages that you link to the main page. For example, use the same decorative borders.

When visitors access the main page, they will be greeted by a dramatic sound effect.

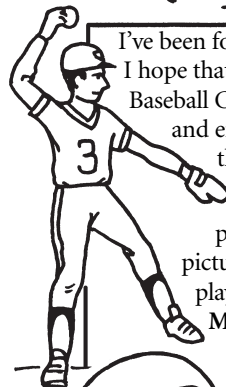
The written text appears on a bright red background.

Note the easy-to-use buttons for visitors to go to further pages and related links, as well as the writer's contact information so that visitors can send her comments.

(sound effect)

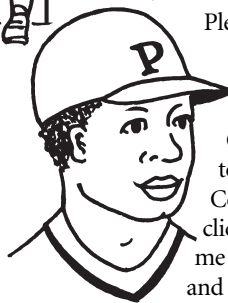
Screen layout - main page

(bright red background)

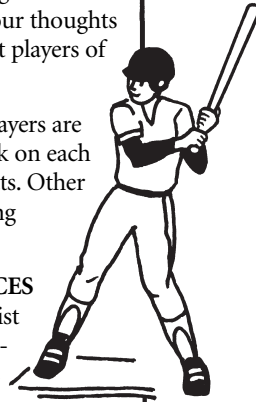


I've been following baseball for about seven years. I hope that you'll join me in forming an Internet Baseball Club where we can share our thoughts and enthusiasm about the great players of the past.

Some of my favorite players are pictured on this page. Click on each picture to view the player's stats. Other players can be seen by clicking **MORE PLAYERS**.



Please also click **SOURCES** for a recommended list of books about baseball, and click **HALL OF FAME** for a link to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Finally, please click **Becky@baseball-club.com** to e-mail me with your comments and suggestions and to receive updated club news.



more players

Sources

Hall of Fame

Becky @ baseballclub.com

Activity: Design a layout plan, with sound and graphics, for the main page of a Web site you'd like to create. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Rubrics for Activities

■ PAGE 1

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be dated
- identify the reader in the heading, and address the reader in a formal, respectful manner
- be written in a polite, formal tone
- contain a first sentence or paragraph that clearly states the purpose for writing
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 2

To evaluate students' essays, use these criteria.

The essay should

- state a point of view, supported by accurate facts, reasons, and/or examples
- show a logical flow of ideas
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange essays for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 3

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be addressed to the editor of the publication
- have a polite, respectful tone
- name the article or issue in the first sentence
- state the writer's opinion clearly
- support the writer's opinion with accurate facts, details, and examples
- show a logical flow of ideas
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 4

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be clear and brief
- have a polite, friendly tone
- identify the product or service in the first sentence, followed by an accurate description of the problem
- identify all relevant enclosures (copies of receipts, the product itself, etc.)
- request a specific solution
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 5

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be brief and to the point
- have a polite, conversational tone
- contain a reasonable, specific request
- state the request clearly
- include the writer's telephone number or a self-addressed, stamped envelope
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 6

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be addressed to a specific person, whose title should appear in the inside address
- have a polite, respectful tone
- describe the job or program for which the writer is applying
- list the writer's qualifications and relevant experiences
- briefly explain why the writer is the best candidate
- request an application form or an interview
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 7

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be in modified block format, incorporating the style features of a personal letter
- have a friendly, informal tone
- be interesting to read
- be neatly typed or handwritten
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 8

To evaluate students' minutes, use these criteria.

The minutes should

- follow the standard format for minutes
- record the date, time, location, and members present
- use separate sections to record the most important details and events of old and new business
- provide the date, time, and place of the next meeting, and note the time that the meeting ended
- be neatly typed or handwritten
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange minutes for peer evaluation.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

■ PAGE 9

To evaluate students' synopses, use these criteria.

The synopsis should

- identify the work and author in the title
- be written in paragraph form
- be brief—less than a page
- include only the most important characters, events, and details
- be neatly typed or handwritten
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange synopses for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 10

To evaluate students' reviews, use these criteria.

The review should

- identify the work and author in the title
- be written in paragraph form
- lead off by identifying the work
- include a brief synopsis
- identify the most important people involved
- clearly express a critical response, supported by reasons and examples
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange reviews for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 11

To evaluate students' schedules, use these criteria.

The schedule should

- be neat, well-organized, and easy to use
- have an appropriate title
- use headings to indicate where information is to be placed and what kind of information it will be
- include dates and times of events

You may also have students exchange schedules for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 12

To evaluate students' tracking forms, use these criteria.

The tracking form should

- be neat, well-organized, and easy to use
- have a title that identifies the topic
- contain clear instructions
- use headings to indicate where information is to be placed and what kind of information it should be
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange tracking forms for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 13

To evaluate students' interview preparation charts, use these criteria.

The chart should

- include realistic questions that the interviewer might ask regarding job experiences, skills, and personality traits
- include thoughtful, effective answers

You may also have students exchange interview preparation charts for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 14

To evaluate students' interview questions, use these criteria.

The questions should

- begin by establishing the date, time, and location of the event
- ask for information that is based on the subject's personal knowledge rather than opinions or hearsay
- be limited to those questions that will bring out relevant facts about the people involved, the sights, sounds, dialogue, and so on
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange interview questions for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 15

To evaluate students' interview questions, use these criteria.

The questions should

- begin with a question that effectively introduces the topic and the interviewee to the readers
- use *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* questions to bring out the most important information
- attempt to gather direct quotations to add vivid details and interest to the news story
- end with an open-ended question designed to prevent the omission of any important information
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange interview questions for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 16

To evaluate students' proposals, use these criteria.

The proposal should

- be addressed to a specific person and organization, and provide the grant writer's name, address, and telephone number
- begin by describing the writer's plan for using the grant money
- explain how the plan meets the grant's requirements
- list the writer's qualifications for carrying out the proposal
- provide strong support in the form of facts, statistics, and reasons
- be neatly typed or printed, and use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange proposals for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 17

To evaluate students' proposals, use these criteria.

The proposal should

- be identified in the title
- begin by describing the problem that the proposal will solve
- propose a solution, using clear, numbered steps
- end by identifying the writer
- be neatly typed or printed, and use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange proposals for peer evaluation.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

■ PAGE 18

To evaluate students' proposals, use these criteria.

The proposal should

- be identified in the title
- begin by addressing the reader and providing the writer's contact information
- state the proposal in a crisp, direct sentence
- support the proposal with strong statements or sections that describe the project and provide such information as its dates, costs, potential benefits, and procedures
- be neatly typed or printed, and use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students exchange proposals for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 19

To evaluate students' proposals, use these criteria.

The proposal should

- be neat and professional-looking
- begin by identifying the writer and providing the date
- address the potential customer in an inside address
- state the request to which the writer is responding
- include a quote, with a clear description of what the quote includes
- explain how the goods or services fit the requirements of the job
- include facts and/or pledges to prove the worth of the goods or services
- include the writer's handwritten signature

You may also have students exchange proposals for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 20

To evaluate students' plans, use these criteria.

The plan should

- call for the use of a wide variety of visual aids
- effectively promote a point of view, provide factual information, and/or explain a process
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students examine each other's plans for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 21

To evaluate students' plans, use these criteria.

The plan should

- use at least three sound effect props
- support a message with facts and details
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students examine each other's plans for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 22

To evaluate students' multimedia presentations, use these criteria.

The presentation should

- effectively combine text, visuals, sound, and, if appropriate, other sensory appeals
- indicate creative application of available media
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You may also have students examine each other's multimedia presentations for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 23

To evaluate students' Web site plans, use these criteria.

The plan should

- indicate a topic that could be effectively developed and presented on a Web site
- target a specific audience
- use a graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas
- indicate a realistic and effective research plan

You may also have students examine each other's Web site plans for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 24

To evaluate students' main page text, use these criteria.

The text should

- introduce the topic and attempt to grab the visitor's attention
- clearly state the purpose of the Web site
- be brief, informative, and interesting
- indicate a plan for including photos and other graphics
- include buttons for visitors to use to access additional information
- include contact information
- use correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics

You may also have students examine each other's main page text for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 25

To evaluate students' layout plans, use these criteria.

The plan should

- combine written text, sound, and graphics effectively
- be designed in such a way as to grab and hold the reader's attention
- include buttons for visitors to use to access additional information and related links
- include contact information
- use correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics

You may also have students examine each other's layout plans for peer evaluation.



Business and Technical Writing Activities Grade 8



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Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Conventions of Business Writing

The term *business writing* covers such materials as formal letters, office memos, newsletters, and multimedia presentations. Although each type of business writing has specific features and purposes, all business writing follows these basic conventions, or standards:

- a formal, polite tone and a straightforward style
- brevity and clarity
- strong topic sentences supported by accurate facts, details, and examples
- block or modified-block format, with typed or neatly printed text
- lack of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage
- lack of slang or clichés (worn-out expressions)

The writer types the letter using block format.

In his first sentence, the writer uses a straightforward style to state his purpose for writing.

The writer supports his initial sentence with facts, details, and reasons.

The writer uses a polite, conversational tone.

29 Glenside Road
Patterson, New Jersey 18976
May 6, 2002

Dr. Rosa DeLuca
Chester Animal Hospital
14 Youngstown Boulevard
Patterson, New Jersey 18745

Dear Dr. DeLuca:

I am writing to apply for the job of veterinary assistant, which you advertised in the May 5 edition of the *Patterson Daily Telegraph*.

For two years, I have worked as a volunteer at the Patterson Animal Shelter, feeding and exercising the dogs. My love for animals and my willingness to work hard make me an excellent candidate for the position at your hospital. I know that I would enjoy the job!

Please send an application form to the address at the top of the page or call me at 555-999-0000 to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Reese

Jonathan Reese

Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, write a formal letter that Dr. DeLuca might write to answer Jonathan's letter. Be sure to follow the conventions of business writing.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Business Ethics and Writing

A person's *ethics*, or code of behavior, are based on values such as honesty, self-respect, and courage. Business writing should reflect a positive code of ethics. The writing should be honest and straightforward, reflect principles of fairness, and exhibit a polite tone.

Most of the time, it is simple for writers to follow the code of business ethics. However, sometimes it is hard—particularly when the purpose for writing is to persuade, to complain, or to disagree. Because the purpose for writing involves winning an argument, some writers go overboard. They may stretch the truth, they may support their arguments with opinions rather than facts, or they may write in an angry, disrespectful tone.

Make sure your business writing avoids such pitfalls. Keep the following guidelines in mind.

Purpose for Writing	Guidelines
to persuade	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present your point of view using straightforward, positive language. <i>Don't:</i> Walt Cameron is the best candidate for class president, and anyone who disagrees is ignorant. <i>Do:</i> Walt Cameron is the best candidate for class president, and I'd like to tell you why. 2. Support your opinion with accurate facts and examples. Don't exaggerate. <i>Don't:</i> Walt's the only honest student in the race. I heard that Lucy Miller cheated on a math test. <i>Do:</i> Walt's completely honest. His record clearly shows that he has never cheated on his schoolwork.
to complain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the problem accurately. Focus your disappointment on the issue, not on the reader. <i>Don't:</i> I paid hard-earned money for this terrible pen at your store, and I was cheated. <i>Do:</i> I am dissatisfied with the pen that I bought at your store. 2. Politely ask for a reasonable and fair solution. <i>Don't:</i> Give back my money and a better pen. <i>Do:</i> Please refund my money or provide a new pen.
to disagree	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the issue and briefly state your position. Be polite and fair. <i>Don't:</i> The editorial said bus fares should be increased. That's stupid. <i>Do:</i> The editorial said bus fares should be increased. I disagree. Before fares are raised, service should be improved. 2. Support your position with accurate facts and details. <i>Don't:</i> Every single time I ride a city bus, the driver is rude to me, and the buses are always late. <i>Do:</i> The drivers are often rude. Twice last week, the 8:40 A.M.—Marshall St. bus was late by more than fifteen minutes.

Activity: Write an essay answering the question *What are some benefits for using a polite, respectful tone in business writing?* Support your viewpoint with facts, reasons, or examples.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Inquiry

Business letters use formal, polite language. They are written in either block or modified-block format, and are typed or neatly printed, with a handwritten signature. The letter should be brief—one page or less—and straightforward.

When writing a letter of inquiry address a specific person; use library or Internet sources to find the person's name, title, and address. Begin the letter by stating your question or request clearly. Include all necessary information. To assure a reply, include your telephone number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Close by thanking the reader for his or her help.

The writer identifies the reader in the inside address and salutation.

The writer states her inquiry clearly.

The writer encloses a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The writer thanks the reader for her help.

The letter is neatly typed, with a handwritten signature. The tone is polite and formal.

41 King Terrace
Hinckley, Illinois 67454
September 10, 2002

Ms. Amanda Jacobs, Research Librarian
Clements College
18 Old Ridge Pike
Cortland, New York 10017

Dear Ms. Jacobs:

I am writing to inquire about the Cortland Foundry, which I believe was in business until 1900. My great-grandfather Harold Bickerman worked there, and I am researching his life for a school project. I am specifically interested in information about the types of iron products the foundry produced.

If possible, please send photocopies of any records on file in the Clements College Library. I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bickerman

Sarah Bickerman

Activity: Write a letter of inquiry to a librarian or an expert in a field of study or recreation that interests you. Ask for specific information. Follow the guidelines and the model above.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Complaint

Every business letter should have a formal, polite tone. Being polite is especially important when you are writing to express your dissatisfaction. As you write, keep your focus on the problem itself, explain exactly why you are displeased, and use persuasive language to convince your reader to correct the problem. A friendly letter that describes a problem accurately and politely suggests a realistic solution will be more successful than an angry, overly critical letter.

Begin your letter by identifying the product or service clearly. Then describe the problem accurately. Be brief and to the point. If possible, enclose copies of receipts and any other related paperwork. Finally, request a specific, reasonable solution. Always keep the original receipts and copies of all letters sent and received until the complaint has been resolved.

The writer describes the problem accurately.

The writer encloses a copy of the receipt. (She will keep the original copy until the complaint has been resolved.)

The writer requests a specific, reasonable solution.

Throughout the letter, the tone is polite and friendly.

4 Broadhurst Avenue
Dallas, Texas 76874
October 12, 2002

Mr. Hamilton Swansea, Manager
Dairy Delight Restaurant
3 National Boulevard
Dallas, Texas 76799

Dear Mr. Swansea:

On October 11, I took my aunt to your restaurant for a birthday lunch. When the check arrived, I thought that the total due was too high. However, I didn't want to embarrass my aunt by arguing with the server. Therefore, I paid the check and asked for a receipt. When I got home, I examined the receipt closely. Instead of charging me \$6.98 for the hamburger platter, the server charged me \$9.98, and she also charged me for two cups of coffee at \$1.98 each. Neither my aunt nor I ordered any coffee. I have enclosed a copy of the receipt, with these prices circled.

By my calculations, I was overcharged by \$6.96. Please send me either a check or a credit certificate for this amount.

Sincerely,

Hillary Knight

Hillary Knight

Activity: You bought a CD at a store or through a Web site. When you opened the sealed package, the CD was missing! Write a letter of complaint. Describe the problem accurately and request a specific, reasonable solution.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Application

A letter of application follows the conventions of business writing. The purpose of your letter is to convince someone to hire you, consider you for membership in an organization, or give you an award. Use carefully chosen words and effective persuasive writing skills.

Before writing your letter, do your homework! Use library or Internet sources to find the name and title of the person to whom you should address the letter. Describe the job, program, or award for which you're applying. List your qualifications and give a brief explanation of why you're the best candidate. Use a polite, objective tone, letting the facts speak for themselves. End by requesting an application form or an appointment for an interview.

The writer directs her letter to a specific person and includes the person's title in the inside address.

15 Baltimore Pike
Annapolis, Maryland 23776
February 2, 2002

Dr. Marilyn Peters, Director
Annapolis Recreation League
14 Center Street
Annapolis, Maryland 23776

The writer describes the job for which she's applying.

Dear Dr. Peters:

I am very interested in working as an assistant swimming coach for the Annapolis Recreation League's summer program.

The writer lists her qualifications and relevant experiences.

I have attended the program, as both a member of the relay team and a competitive diver, for five years. Last year my relay team won the state championships and later I won the gold medal in diving at the county meet.

The writer explains why she's the best person for the job.

My skills as a swimmer and diver, along with my proven ability to work with a team, make me a strong candidate for the assistant coach position. Please send me an application form or call me at 555-897-9046 to arrange for an interview.

Sincerely,

Susan Kelly

Susan Kelly

Activity: What summer job do you think might be fun, interesting, or challenging? Use library or Internet sources to find the name and address of the person to whom you should write to apply for the job. Write a letter of application, following the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Most newspapers and magazines encourage readers to write letters to the editor to respond to recent articles or sound off on topics of interest to other readers. Like all business letters, a letter to the editor should follow the basic conventions of business writing.

Check the editorial page or masthead of a periodical to find the name of the editor. Begin your letter by identifying the issue that you will address and clearly stating your opinion. Then support your opinion with accurate facts and statistics, sound reasoning, and relevant examples. Close by summarizing your main points and, if possible, offering a solution.

The writer directs her letter to the editor of the magazine.

14 Turner Square
Dallas, Texas 77233
March 2, 2002

The writer identifies her purpose for writing in the first sentence.

Ms. Nancy Dubin, Editor
Focus on Photography Magazine
11 Billings Court
Arvada, Colorado 80004

The writer supports her opinion with facts.

Dear Ms. Dubin:

I am writing to respond to Valerie Balding's article, "Shooting and Enlarging Nature Photos," in your February issue. I disagree with Ms. Balding that 400-speed film is the best choice for nature photographs.

The writer states her opinion clearly.

Ms. Balding is right that a fast film, like 400-speed, is effective for "freezing" moving animals. However, its high speed leads to grainy and fuzzy enlargements. With practice and patience, 200- or 100-speed film can be used to capture clear shots of animals in motion. Moreover, the images can be enlarged to poster size without loss of the crisp focus.

The writer sums up her main point.

I felt that Ms. Balding's recommendation for 400-speed film was not on target. I am convinced, from experience, that your readers will get far better results if they use 200- and 100-speed film instead.

The writer suggests a solution.

Sincerely,
Kathy Symonne
Kathy Symonne

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Activity: Think about a recent article that inspired you to react strongly. You might have agreed, and wished to share your ideas; or you might have disagreed, feeling disappointed or angry and wanting to sound off. Write a letter to the editor to state and supporting your point of view.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Announce

A memo (short for *memorandum*) is a brief note that communicates important information. Memos are written in formal language but have a friendly tone. They are often sent to people you know or work with. Memos can be used to convey many kinds of important messages. For example, you might send a memo to remind someone about an event, to ask or answer a question, or to make an announcement.

Like all memos, a memo written to announce should be brief—one page or less. Start with the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. In the SUBJECT line, use a few well-chosen words to sum up your announcement. Then move on to the body of the memo. In the first paragraph, make the announcement. Follow up with brief paragraphs containing important details and information, such as dates, times, and phone numbers.

The writer identifies herself, states the subject clearly in a few well-chosen words, and notes the date that the memo is sent.

TO: All Members of the Stage Crew
FROM: Cicely Henderson, Captain
SUBJECT: Schedule Change for Set-Building Meeting
DATE: November 6

The writer makes the announcement in the first paragraph.

The set-building meeting we scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, at 4:30 P.M. has been postponed. The new meeting time is Thursday, November 12, at 3:45 P.M.

All important information is provided in two brief follow-up paragraphs.

Please adjust your schedules. Remember to wear old clothes and bring hammers, screwdrivers, and paintbrushes. The drama department will provide all paint and lumber.

The tone is both formal and friendly throughout.

If the schedule change makes it impossible for you to attend the meeting, please call me at 555-009-8576. Otherwise, see you Thursday!

Activity: You are the director of the school play or the captain of a school sports team. Write a memo to the members of your cast or team to announce an upcoming practice.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Remind

A memo is a brief business note that gives the reader important information. Memos are written in formal language but have a friendly tone. They are usually sent to people you know. Memos have many different purposes. For example, you might send a memo to make an announcement, to assign a task, or to remind committee members about an upcoming event.

Like all memos, a memo written to remind should be brief and clear. It should start with the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. The body of the memo should begin with a phrase such as “Remember to . . .” Then the most important information should appear in the first sentence or two. Other information should follow. Always include such necessary details as dates, times, addresses, and phone numbers.

The writer identifies his readers and himself, states the subject clearly, and notes the date that the memo is sent.

TO: All Members of the Spring Cleanup Committee
FROM: Orlando Marato, President
SUBJECT: Saturday Work Crew
DATE: March 23

The most important information about the event, appears in the first two sentences.

I'd like to remind you that our first Saturday Work Crew session will be held on March 28. Please meet at the school maintenance building at 8:30 A.M. to get your assignments and pick up tools and supplies.

Additional details are included in the second paragraph.

As we decided at our meeting on April 24, our first project is repairing and repainting the fence around the Science Center garden. Therefore, please wear old clothes and bring work gloves. If you have any questions, please call me at 555-5523.

I'm looking forward to our first session. See you there!

Activity: You are the president of the school Computer Club. The club has scheduled a meeting at which it hopes to sign up new members. On a separate sheet of paper, write a memo to all club members, reminding them about the meeting and urging them to prepare a presentation that will interest new members. Include any other information that you think is important.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Assign a Task

A memo is a brief business note that gives the reader important information. Memos are written in formal language but have a friendly tone. They are usually sent to people you know. Memos can be used to convey many kinds of important messages. For example, you might send a memo to request information, to make an announcement, or to assign a task to someone.

Like all memos, a memo written to assign a task should be brief—one page or less. Start with the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. In the SUBJECT line, identify the task you are assigning. Then move on to the body of the memo. Lead off with a sentence that begins with such language as “Your job is to . . .” Follow with a brief description of the task. Be sure to include all important information, such as materials needed and the date by which the task must be completed.

The writer identifies the task in the subject line.

The writer describes the task in a few brief sentences.

The writer names a date by which the task must be completed.

The writer uses a formal but friendly tone throughout.

TO: Jeremy Slater, Team Mascot
FROM: Shelly Taylor, Pep Team Captain
SUBJECT: Costume Repair
DATE: September 12

Your first job as team mascot is to repair the mascot costume. Many of the feathers need to be replaced, and the side seams need to be restitched. The eagle’s left wing is about to fall off!

Please make all repairs by Tuesday, October 1, the next meeting of the pep team. At that meeting, you need to wear the mascot costume in order to practice with the Pepsters. Please also bring receipts for any expenses you must pay for the repairs. The pep team will reimburse you.

If you have any questions, please call me at 555–1234. I’m eager to see you suited up as the Elmwood eagle, and I know that we’ll all have fun as members of this year’s pep team!

Activity: You are the president of the school Environment Committee. Next week the committee is sponsoring Cleanup Day. Write a memo to assign a specific task to a member of your committee.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Project Schedule

A project schedule is a table or chart that lists each step in a task, assigns each step a completion date, and shows the progression of the work. If more than one person is involved in the project, the schedule lists each participant and describes his or her assignment.

An easy-to-read work plan can make a large job seem more manageable. Seeing the overall progress, step by step, will provide a sense of organization and accomplishment.

Begin your project schedule with a title. Then list the project goals or objectives and the dates that the entire project will begin and end. Describe each step in the project. Next to each step, list its completion date. You might also include a column for checking off each step as it is completed.

The title identifies the project.

The objectives are clear.

The project start and end dates are shown.

Each step in the project is listed, followed by a scheduled completion date and a box for checking off each step as it is completed.

Social Studies Report Work Plan		
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use library and Internet resources efficiently To research and write a report on South America To learn facts about a specific South American country 		
Project Dates The project was assigned September 8 and is due on October 1.		
Project Steps	Scheduled Completion Date	Completed (✓)
Select country for report topic.	9/9	
Purchase index cards and other materials.	9/9	
Create and organize questions and answers to guide research.	9/12	
Search Internet and school library for appropriate sources.	9/13	
Complete research.	9/20	
Organize notes and create report outline.	9/22	
Write first draft.	9/25	
Revise.	9/28	
Proofread.	9/29	
Finish final draft.	9/30	

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Activity: Create a project schedule for completing a large class assignment or a project involving a hobby or interest. Follow the guidelines and the model chart.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating an Assignment Schedule

An assignment schedule is a table or chart that lists each step in a project, assigns each step a completion date, and shows the progression of the work. The schedule also identifies which member of the group is responsible for each step in the project.

Begin an assignment schedule with a title. Then list each person involved in the project. Next to each person's name, list his or her tasks and the date by which each task must be completed.

The title identifies the project.	Talent Show Committee Work Plan			
Each committee member is listed.	Committee Member	Assignment	Due Date	Date Completed
Each member's responsibility is listed, followed by a due date.	Alicia Peters	Reserve school auditorium for rehearsals and show. Set up tryout schedule.	2/7 2/9	
	Herb Danzell	Create a building crew for making stage sets. Finish building sets.	2/8 3/1	
	Gloria Salinas	Write article for school newspaper to announce tryouts. Write article for school newspaper to report on success of show.	2/10 3/5	
	Dave Barton	Manage tryouts. Manage rehearsals, including final dress rehearsal.	2/20 3/1	
	Therese Bolli	Create posters to promote show. Take photos during show for school newspaper and yearbook.	2/23 3/2	
	Jim O'Connor	Get tickets printed. Organize sales force for ticket sales.	2/15 2/16	

Activity: Create an assignment schedule for a large task to be accomplished by a team, committee, or study group. Follow the guidelines and the model shown.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Developing a Budget

Some projects involve the payment of expenses for materials and services. For example, a project requiring photographs would require the purchase of film and payment for photo development. An easy-to-read budget can help you before, during, and after your project. At the start, a budget helps you to estimate your project expenses so that you're prepared. During the project, it helps you to keep track of your expenses as they are paid. After the project has been completed, the budget helps you to evaluate your costs.

In the title of the budget, identify the project. Then make an easy-to-read chart in which you list all of the costs involved in the project. Estimate each cost. Then during the project, record actual expenses as they are paid. Include the date each expense was paid and keep all receipts in a safe place.

The title identifies the project.

Each expense is listed.

Before beginning the project, the writer estimated each cost.

As she pays each expense, she will record the exact cost, followed by the payment date.

Budget for Window Box			
Expenses (to make two boxes)	Estimated Costs	Actual Costs	Date Paid
1 sheet of plywood	\$20.00		
plastic liner	\$3.00		
nails and hanging brackets	\$1.50		
paint	\$15.00		
potting soil	\$3.50		
4 geraniums	\$8.00		

Activity: Create a budget for a project. The project might have been assigned at school or one you are planning as part of a hobby or a special interest. Follow the guidelines and the model chart.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Print PSA

A **public service announcement (PSA)** is an advertisement that promotes a good cause, such as contributing money to cancer research, adopting a pet from an animal shelter, or wearing a bicycle helmet. There are three basic categories of PSAs: broadcast ads, which include messages on TV or the radio; outdoor ads, which appear on billboards or posters; and print ads, which are found in newspapers and magazines.

To write an effective print PSA, begin with a clever headline that catches the readers' attention. Then use a striking, dramatic picture or graphic aid to hold onto their attention. Include brief, crisp written text ("copy") to explain or develop the message. Be sure to keep the copy brief and persuasive; your headline and images should carry the weight of your message. Always include the name of the organization or agency who sponsored the message and a telephone number, address, or Web site so that your readers can respond or take action.

As a headline, the writer uses a question to grab the reader's interest.

The writer uses a dramatic photograph.

A crisp, one-line piece of copy adds to the message.

The organization sponsoring the PSA, along with its phone number, is included.

• **Tired of all the fuss about conserving water?**



• **You may find out that it was good to the last drop!**

• **Eco-Water Foundation**
1-800-555-555

Activity: What good cause would you like to promote in a PSA appearing in a newspaper or magazine? Use a clever headline, dramatic graphics, and persuasive copy to get your message across.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a PSA for Television

A **public service announcement (PSA)** is an advertisement that promotes a good cause. A PSA for television has the duration of only fifteen to thirty seconds. Therefore, the advertisement must include vivid sights (“visuals”) and sounds, and each scene must contain dramatic action to catch and hold the viewers’ interest. When writing the script for a PSA for television, be sure to note the time limitation and these crucial elements. You can check the length of an ad by reading it aloud several times while someone times you. Remember to use persuasive language to convince viewers to support your cause and include either a narrator’s lines for a voice-over text or an actual dialogue between two or more characters.

The following model shows the script for a PSA for television that urges viewers to vote for a presidential candidate. Note the “IMAGE CUES” in parentheses, used to describe the visuals that will accompany all spoken text.

The title shows the group for whom the PSA was written, its title, and its duration in seconds.

Each “Image Cue” clearly describes the visual to be shown on the screen.

“Voice-over” label indicates that the line will be spoken by an off-camera narrator.

National Emma Sanderson for President Campaign

“Working for a Better Tomorrow”
• 15-second TV spot

• (IMAGE CUE: Emma Sanderson at a middle school library, surrounded by eighth-graders, including her son Mick)

Voice-over: Emma’s son Mick, an eighth-grader at Millis Middle School, keeps Emma tuned in to the concerns and trends of our most dynamic group of citizens—today’s learners, tomorrow’s leaders. As president, Emma works diligently to improve the educational opportunities of such students all over the nation.

(IMAGE CUE: Emma and eighth-graders turn to camera and speak together energetically.)

Emma and students: Let’s work together! Let’s work for a better tomorrow!

Activity: Write the script for a PSA for television to promote a cause or a candidate that you strongly support. Include vivid visual images and persuasive spoken words. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Preparing a PSA for Radio

A **public service announcement (PSA)** is an advertisement that promotes a good cause. A PSA for radio cannot contain visual images. Instead, it must rely on crisp, clear, dramatic words, often heightened by appropriate background music or sound effects.

A radio spot has a duration of thirty to sixty seconds. Therefore, the advertisement must get right to the point, grabbing and holding the listener's attention with vivid words and sounds. When writing the script for a PSA for radio, be sure to note the time limitation and these crucial elements. You can check the length of an ad by reading it aloud several times while someone times you. Remember to use persuasive language to convince viewers to support your cause.

The following model shows the script for a PSA for radio that urges motorcycle riders to wear helmets. Note the "SFX" (sound effects) cues.

The title shows the group for whom the PSA was written, its title, and its duration in seconds.

The SFX labels indicate sound effects.

The character labels indicate lines spoken by actors.

United States Bicycle Safety Commission

"Heads UP"

30-second Radio spot

SFX: Footsteps. Screen door opens and shuts.

George: Hey, Mrs. C! Thought I'd drop in to your bike shop and pick up some new gloves. Big race coming up tomorrow.

Carol: Oh hi, George. Great to see you! All the gloves are in this bin.

SFX: drawer rolling open

George: These gloves will do just fine.

Carol: I'll tell you something, George. They're a big waste of money.

SFX: dramatic music chord

George: Huh? What do you mean?

Carol: If you don't wear a helmet, you shouldn't bother with gloves. Hey, George! HEADS UP! What good does it do to protect your hands if you smash your head?

George: Gosh, you're right, Mrs. C. Show me the helmets.

Carol: Right this way, George. Now THAT'S what I call "using your head"!

Activity: Write the script for a PSA for radio to promote a good cause that you strongly support. Include sound effects and persuasive spoken words. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Billboard PSA

A **public service announcement (PSA)** is an advertisement that promotes a good cause, such as contributing food to a homeless shelter, serving as a scout leader, or eating nutritious foods. To accomplish their purpose for writing, PSA writers use persuasive language, often backed up by strong visual images and a combination of facts, statistics, reasons, and examples.

There are three basic categories of PSAs: broadcast ads, which include messages on TV or radio; print ads, which are found in newspapers and magazines; and outdoor ads, which appear on billboards or posters.

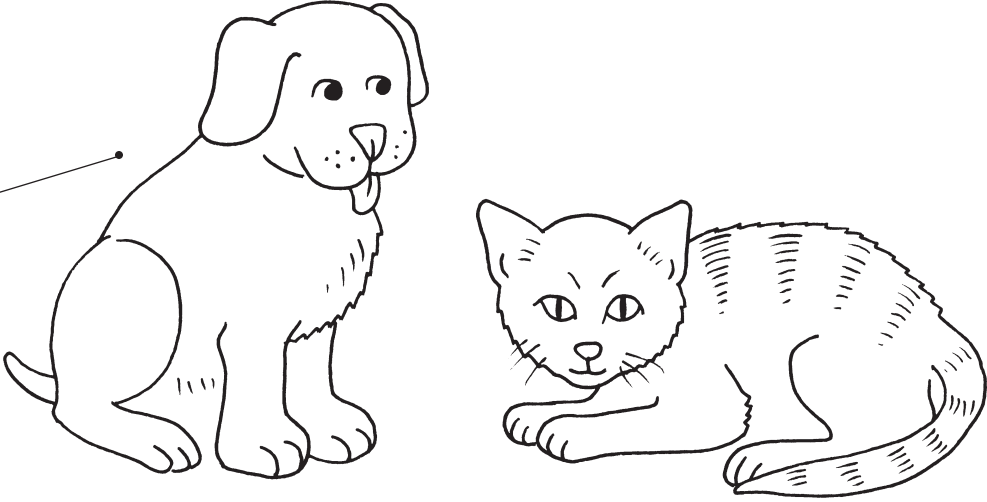
A billboard is most often viewed by people as they ride by in cars, buses, and trains. The billboard is within the person's sight for only seconds. Therefore, the advertisement must get its message across with strong visuals and brief yet memorable text. The outdoor ad must also include the sponsor's contact information so that viewers can take action.

The text is brief and memorable, framing the image.

The image catches the viewer's eye.

The organization's contact information is included.

• **Need a new best friend?**



Adopt one today!

• Cleveland Animal Shelter
412-555-5550

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Activity: What good cause would you like to promote on a billboard PSA? Get your message across with dramatic visuals and brief, memorable copy. Follow the guidelines and model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Preparing a Newsletter for a Club

Newsletters are used to communicate information to many kinds of audiences, including the employees of a company, the customers of a business, or the members of a club or a special interest group. Newsletters might be published and distributed to subscribers weekly, monthly, or yearly.

Like all newsletters, a newsletter for a club or a special interest group should have a name that reflects the interests of the group, as well as an attractive masthead. Its text should include factual information such as dates, times, and locations of meetings and events. Additionally, the newsletter should offer articles and graphics on topics of interest to the specific audience; a summary of the last group meeting; and other features such as letters to the editor, classified ads, and mail-in coupons for reservations or orders.

The newsletter's masthead contains the title, the name of the club, the volume number, and the date.

An informative article is accompanied by a photograph.

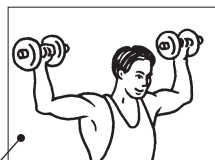
Members have submitted letters to communicate with other members.

The newsletter lists upcoming events.

It's Your Life!

• The Newsletter of the Somerset Fitness Club Volume 3, No. 4

March



New Exercise Coach Begins Classes by Sheila Boone

Emmet Elvarez,
formerly of the

Highlander Gym, has been hired as our new Exercise Coach. His classes will begin on Monday, April 15. Please come to the office and sign up. Class size will be limited to 15 members.

Emmet has had fifteen years of experience as an instructor of yoga, step aerobics, and water aerobics. He graduated from West Chester University in 1999 with a degree in physical education. You might be interested to know that his best-selling book, *Sign Up, Step Up, Cheer Up!* published by Altogether Press in 2001, is available at several local bookstores.

• Upcoming Club Events

March 12 Step Aerobics Sign-up,
9:30 A.M.

March 14 Mother and Daughter Swim,
3:30 P.M.

March 18 Cooking Seminar: Tofu to You!
9:00 A.M. (bring aprons)

March 25 Pool Closed for Plumbing
Repairs

April 1 Come Meet Emmet Elvarez!
Meeting Room, 7:30 P.M.

• Letters

Dear Members,

On February 15, when I returned to the locker room after my step aerobics class, I discovered that my black raincoat (size 12) was missing from the coat rack. If anyone took my coat by mistake, please call 555-3957. Thanks! Bunny Pearsall

Hi, Everyone!

Just wanted to let you know that the planning committee for the annual Somerset Fitness Club Tennis Tournament is busily at work planning this year's tournament, which will begin on May 5. If you're interested in serving on the committee, please call me at 555-0304. Chris Buehl

Activity: What club, real or imaginary, might you write a newsletter for? Try it! Follow the guidelines and the models.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Newsletter for Employees

Newsletters are used to communicate information to many kinds of audiences, including the members of a club or a special interest group, the customers of a business, or employees of a company.

Like all newsletters, a newsletter for employees should have a title that reflects the interests of the readers. The title should be displayed in an attractive masthead, which should also contain the volume number, the issue number, and the date of publication. The newsletter's text should include factual information such as dates, times, locations, and details of upcoming events for employees, such as a meeting or a picnic. Additionally, the newsletter should report on news about employees, such as new hires and promotions. It should include photographs, if possible. It might also contain a classified section for employees to advertise items for sale.

The newsletter's masthead contains the title, the volume and issue number, and the date.

An informative article is accompanied by a photograph.

Upcoming events are listed.

News about employees' personal lives and promotions appear in a regular column.

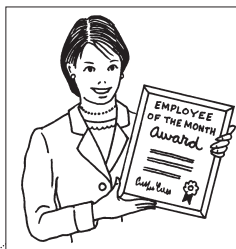
The Carlson Cracker Company News **Volume 4, No. 1** **January**

Betsy Callahan Employee of the Month

by Sterling Arness

Betsy Callahan, a fifteen-year member of the Carlson packaging department, has won the first Employee of the Month award for the year 2002. For the last five years, Callahan has led the packaging team for Carlson Crispy Waferoonies. Prior to that, she was a line packager for Carlson Salty Snackeroots.

At the awards ceremony, which took place on January 5, Callahan's supervisor, Ramon Juarez, stated, "Betsy is a natural leader, with terrific people skills. The members of her packaging team are productive and enthusiastic assets to the Carlson Cracker Company."



Upcoming Events of Note

January 14
Lunch Seminar, "Menu Planning for Healthy Hearts," with guest speaker Dr. Barbara Gibbs, 12:30 P.M., Harris Cafeteria

January 16
Bring Your Daughter to Work Day

January 21
Carlson Winter Bowling League, 7:30 P.M., Allen Lanes

January 28
Human Resources Presentation:
"Investing Your Pension Wisely,"
Auditorium E, 4:30 P.M.

Just Between Us: News to Share

Congratulations to **Jim Sweeney**, Baker's Assistant, and **Wanda Ellery**, Nifty Nuttery line packager, on their recent engagement. Jim and Wanda plan a July wedding.

Human Resources Director **Carla Brigham** announces with great pleasure the promotion of **Deena Adams**, formerly secretary to **Bob Vane**, to the position of Executive Secretary to **Christine McAdam**, VP of Marketing.

Activity: You have been hired to create a newsletter for the employees of the XYZ Company. Decide what type of company it is and create news stories and features that would interest the employees. Follow the guidelines and the models.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Newsletter for Customers

Like all newsletters, a newsletter for the customers of a store or a business should have a title that reflects the interests of the readers. The title should be displayed in an attractive masthead, which should also contain the volume number, the issue number, and the date of publication.

Because the main purpose of a business newsletter is advertising and product promotion, the newsletter should include news about special sales or store events, new products and services, or new hours of business. It might contain graphics, photos, or coupons for the reader to cut out and use. Filler articles on such topics as household hints or safety tips should also be included. A newsletter for the customers of a bicycle shop might, for example, have an article on bicycle safety tips; a newsletter for a sports clothing outlet might have an article on how to clean athletic shoes.

The newsletter's masthead contains the title, the volume and issue number, and the date.

An informative article, intended to draw customers to a new business location, is accompanied by a photograph.

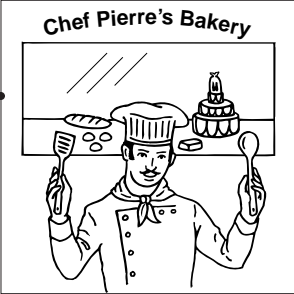
Including a recipe promotes the sale and use of a product.

A coupon encourages customers to come to either business location.

Chef Pierre's Bakery

Fine French Bread, Cakes, and Pastries

Volume 3, No. 5 July 1



GRAND OPENING BASTILLE DAY PARTY!
CHEF PIERRE'S NEW BAKERY AT WILMONT HILLS MALL

Pierre Sallé, known to his customers as "Chef Pierre," is pleased to announce the June 25 opening of a new bakery at the Wilmont Hills Mall. Bolstered by the huge success of his original bakery in Littleton Center, Chef Sallé looks to the new location with great confidence. "It will be a wonderful opportunity for the people of Wilmont Hills to share the bounty of fresh French bakery products," he beamed.

As a special GRAND OPENING celebration, both new and established customers are invited to come to the Wilmont Hills Mall location for free French coffee and pastries from 10:00 A.M. until noon on Bastille Day, July 14.

FROM THE KITCHENS OF CHEF PIERRE
Try this delicious spread of herbs and cheese on thin slices of Chef Pierre's French bread!

Herbed Cheese Spread
Makes 1 cup
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced
1 teaspoon fresh dill, minced
1 teaspoon fresh oregano, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon pepper
Mix all ingredients. Store covered in refrigerator.
Serve at room temperature.

Save 50 cents off the price of a CHEF PIERRE cake!

Coupon good at Littleton Center and Wilmont Hills bakeries.
Expiration date July 31, 2002

Activity: What type of store or business would you like to own or manage some day? Practice advertising and promotion skills by writing a newsletter for your customers. Follow the guidelines and the models.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

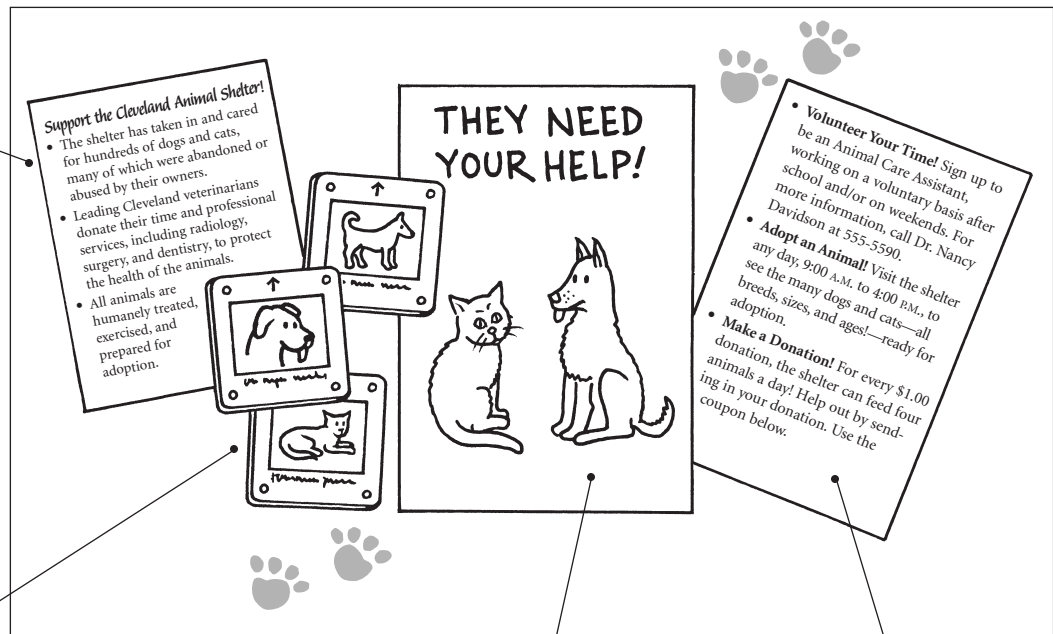
Name Class Date

Using Visuals in a Multimedia Presentation

In a multimedia presentation, you use multiple sight and sound media to give your audience information. You can use such media as photos, slides, charts, videos, and audio cassettes. If computer presentation software is available, you can combine text, graphics, and sounds to produce a computer slide show.

Visuals are extremely important components of multimedia presentations. In the form of written text, visuals enable viewers to follow along with the major points that you are making in your oral presentation. In the form of diagrams or drawings, visuals can help to make a series of directions clear. In the form of slides, photographs, or videos, visuals can show a subject clearly and provide action. Finally, in the form of handouts, visuals can encourage viewers to take information away with them for follow-up or action.

The writer uses this transparency to display the major points he will make in his presentation.



These slides show some of the dogs and cats available for adoption.

This visual makes the writer's topic clear and appeals to the viewer's emotions.

This handout helps the audience to take specific steps to support the shelter.

Activity: What worthy cause, field of interest, or point of view would you enjoy sharing with an audience? Plan a multimedia presentation. Combine several different forms of media, such as written text, spoken text, sounds, and a wide range of visuals. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Sound in a Multimedia Presentation

In a multimedia presentation, you use multiple sight and sound media to give your audience information on your topic. You can use such media as photos, slides, videos, CDs, and audio cassettes. If computer presentation software is available, you can combine text, graphics, and sounds to produce a computer slide show.

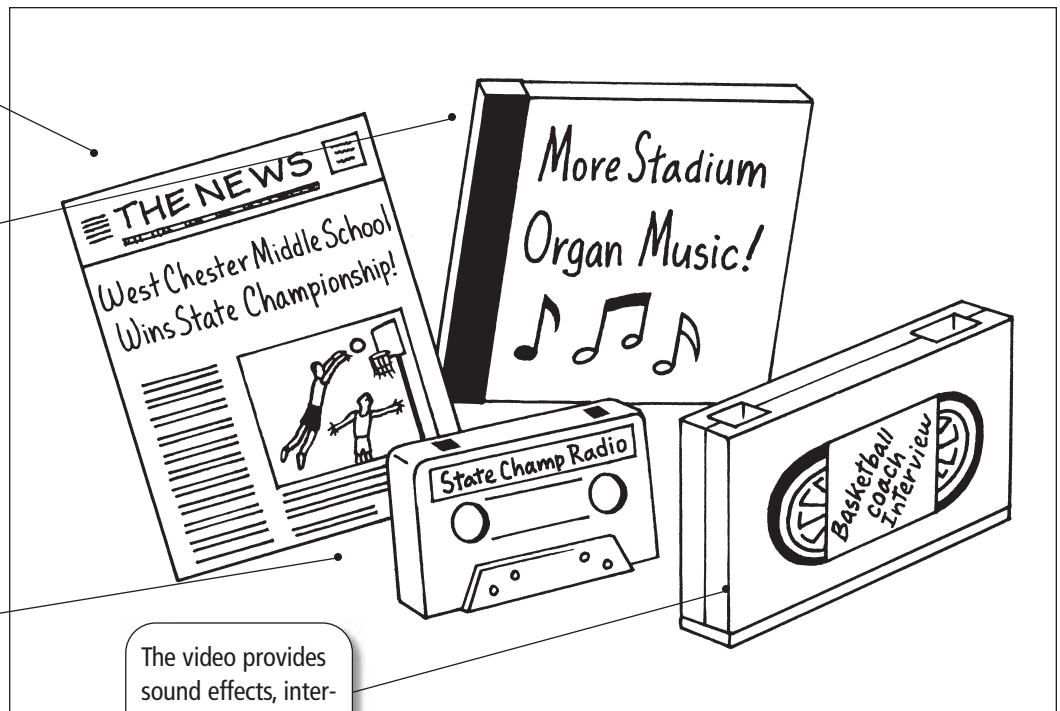
Sound can have many roles in a multimedia presentation. Background music can establish the mood—peppy, peaceful, or sad. Taped dialogue or a “sound bite” quotation can provide relevant input on your topic from experts or participants. Finally, sound effects (a speeding train, the howl of a wolf, a buzzing mosquito) can bring your topic or setting to life for your audience.

The writer uses a photocopied newspaper article.

As background music during part of her presentation, the writer uses traditional ballpark organ music.

The audio tape lets the audience hear part of the radio broadcast of the championship game.

The video provides sound effects, interview excerpts from the coach and players, and exciting action shots from the championship game.



Activity: What topic would you enjoy developing into a multimedia presentation? Use researched facts and details from personal experience, sound (sound effects, background music, recorded dialogue), and various visuals to get your message across. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Planning an Instructional Multimedia Presentation

A multimedia presentation uses several *media*, or forms of communication, such as written words, spoken words, sound, and visuals. Many multimedia presentations are instructional, aiming to inform the audience about a topic or to explain how to accomplish a task.

Once you have chosen a topic, plan your instructional multimedia presentation carefully.

- What facts might be best presented to the audience in a graphic?
- What facts might be best presented on a transparency as a step-by-step list?
- What photographs, videos, slides, background music, or sound effects might enhance your presentation?
- What handout might you prepare and distribute to your audience?

When using slides with visuals and written text, use large type and keep the visuals simple. Two typefaces and three colors are plenty. Therefore, avoid clutter!

The writer presents a slide to accompany his explanation of each step in the process.

The writer distributes this handout to encourage the audience to seek further information.

The writer presents his written text in a chart, showing each step in the process.


The writer uses appealing background music.

To learn more about using a potter's wheel and pottery, contact an after-school or Saturday morning class, contact:

Acton Potters
3 Garland Lane
Kenosha, WI 53140
555-908-7854

Kenosha Community Center
4 Melrose Blvd.
Kenosha, WI 53140
555-342-0123

How to Use a Potter's Wheel to Make a Clay Pot	
Steps in the Process	Details
1. Place a lump of clay in the middle of the wheel.	Begin spinning the wheel by pressing the foot. As the clay spins, smooth the sides and poke holes into the top of the lump to make it hollow. (See slide #1.)
2. Shape the sides of the pot.	Draw your hands firmly up the sides of the jug as the wheel continues to spin. When your hands reach the rim, lock your thumbs together to add steady pressure. (See slide #2.)
3. Trim off the excess clay and remove from wheel.	Use a wire to trim off excess clay. Then, use a wire, flat knife or sandpaper to smooth the rim of the pot. (See slide #3.)
4. Glaze and fire the pot in a kiln.	Apply glaze to the finished pot. Fire the pot in a kiln. (See slide #4.)



#1 ↑

#2 ↑

#3 ↑

#4 ↑

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Activity: What historical event, nature study, or other personal interest or hobby would you enjoy developing into an instructional multimedia presentation? Do the necessary research, contact experts, and combine text, sound, and various visuals to share with your audience. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Determining the Content of a Web Site

A great Web site begins with careful planning. First, select a topic that you will enjoy developing and sharing. Next, plan your site around a target audience, keeping in mind what they already know about your topic, what they need to know to understand your message, and what information will be of greatest interest to them.

Use a graphic organizer to list ideas. Then decide whether your topic is too broad; no computer user wants to tackle a screen filled with small type and few graphics! Finally, figure out what types of research you need to do and what sources—books, magazines, Internet, and interviews with experts—will be most effective.

The writer decides on a topic for the Web site.

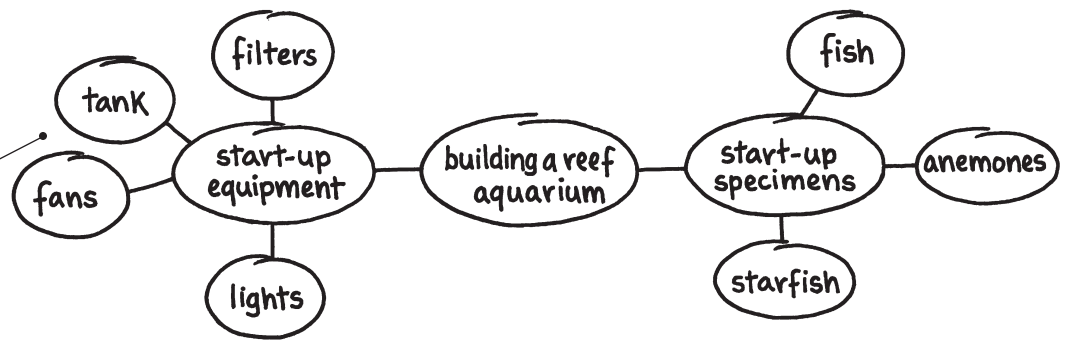
• Web site topic: *Building a Reef Aquarium*

• Target audience: *students and adults interested in having a reef aquarium at home*

He identifies his target audience.

He uses a cluster diagram to list ideas.

The cluster diagram helps narrow the topic.



• Narrowed topic: *Recommended Start-up Specimens for a Reef Aquarium*

Necessary research and possible sources:

The chart lists questions to be researched, as well as possible sources.

<i>Questions to answer</i>	<i>Possible source(s)</i>
<i>What concerns should someone have about specimens when starting out to build a reef aquarium?</i>	<i>Reef magazine; phone interview with Dr. Maria Ballotin, director of the PA State Aquarium</i>
<i>What animals are the easiest to care for?</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Reef Specimens</i>

Activity: What interest, hobby, or cause would you enjoy sharing through a Web site? Follow the guidelines and the model to determine your content, scope, target audience, and research plan.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing the Content for a Web Site

When you're ready to draft the written text that your Web site will present, follow these guidelines:

- Keeping your audience in mind, use your research notes to draft the written text.
- Begin your main page by telling visitors what your site is about and by grabbing their attention with concise, interesting text and bold graphics. Be sure that your main page includes buttons that visitors can click for more information and useful links. Be sure to provide contact information so that visitors can e-mail you.
- Remember, the written text that you present should be as brief as possible. No visitor wants to tackle a Web site that is filled with paragraphs of small type and no graphics. As you draft, think about what information might be presented through photos and photo captions, dramatic graphic organizers, sound, and other components.
- As you draft, concentrate on getting your ideas on paper. When the draft is complete, put it away for a while. Access Web sites that you enjoy. Think about how the creators of these Web sites presented their written text. Gather ideas for your revision!
- Revise and proofread the written text of your Web site.

The title is set in large bold type.

The writer states the purpose of the Web site.

Site includes graphic images of marine fish and invertebrates. By clicking, visitors access written text describing the animal.

Other buttons provide visitors with access to additional pages.

E-mail address allows visitors to contact webmaster.

• Welcome to the Reef Aquarium Start-up Club!

My dad and I built our first reef aquarium about three years ago, and I have created this Web site as a place for people to share information about aquariums, sources for supplies and specimens, and recommended books and magazines.

When selecting your first marine fish and invertebrates, keep three things in mind: (1) cost, (2) ease of care, and (3) ability to interact with other specimens. Some of my favorite specimens are pictured on this page. Click each image to view a window of information.

Please click **MORE SPECIMENS** to access additional pictures and information. Click **SUPPLIES** for a list of mail-order and Internet sources for aquarium equipment. Click **SOURCES** for geographically indexed lists of recommended stores offering marine specimens. Finally, please click **JASON@aquareef.com** to contact me with questions, comments, or suggestions for this Web site!

more specimens **supplies** **sources**

JASON@aquareef.com

Activity: Write the written text for the main page of your Web site and plan the buttons and links that you will provide. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Designing the Layout of a Web Site

When laying out the design of a Web site, plan sound and visuals that will extend, illustrate, and decorate the written text on your main page. Follow these guidelines.

SOUND: You might use background music to create a mood, your own voice to welcome visitors to the site, or sound effects such as the wind or a bird. Be creative!

VISUALS: Keep design elements simple. Use a plain background rather than a busy pattern and use only two or three graphic images. To give your Web site a professional look, use the same elements on subsequent pages that you link to the main page, for example, the same background or the same decorative borders. Think about the moods that different colors suggest. Cool colors (light blue, green, gray) create peaceful moods, while warm or bright colors (red, yellow, orange, bright blue) create moods of action and energy.

Visitors are greeted by the writer's voice. As they listen, the written text appears.

The bright blue background complements the vivid colors of the marine fish.

Three favorite specimens flutter as if they are moving within the aquarium.

Note the buttons that provide links to other pages and the writer's e-mail address.

(SOUND CUE IN MY VOICE): Welcome to the Reef Aquarium Start-up Club! I'm Jason Silber. My dad and I built our first reef aquarium about three years ago, and I've created this Web site as a place for people to share information about aquariums, sources for supplies and specimens, and recommended books and magazines.

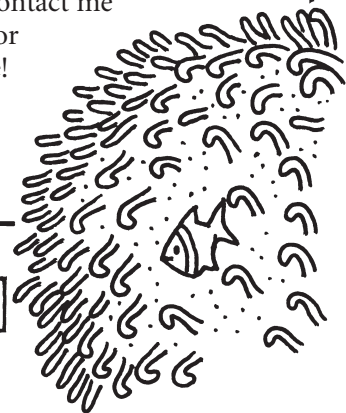
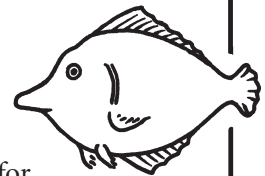
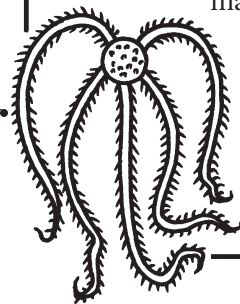
Screen layout - main page

(bright blue background)

When selecting your first marine fish and invertebrates, keep three things in mind: (1) cost, (2) ease of care, and (3) ability to interact with other specimens. Some of my favorite specimens are pictured on this page. Click each image to view a window of information.

Please click **MORE SPECIMENS** to access additional pictures and information. Click **SUPPLIES** for a list of mail-order and Internet sources for aquarium equipment. Click **SOURCES** for geographically indexed lists of recommended stores offering marine specimens. Finally, please click

JASON@aquareef.com to contact me with questions, comments, or suggestions for this Web site!



more specimens

supplies

sources

JASON@aquareef.com

Activity: Design a layout plan, with sound and graphics, for the main page of your own Web site. Follow the guidelines and the model.

Rubrics for Activities

■ PAGE 1

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- include a heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing, and signature
- have a formal, respectful tone
- contain a first sentence or paragraph that clearly states the purpose for writing, followed by sentences containing supportive facts, reasons, statistics, details, and examples
- show a logical flow of ideas
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 2

To evaluate students' essays, use these criteria.

The essay should

- provide specific examples of benefits, supported by facts, reasons, and/or examples
- show a logical flow of ideas
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange essays for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 3

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be clear and brief
- have a polite, formal tone
- identify the reader by name and title
- lead off by stating the question or request clearly
- include all necessary information
- include a telephone number or refer to an enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 4

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be clear and brief
- have a polite, friendly tone
- identify the product or service clearly, followed by an accurate description of the problem
- identify all relevant enclosures (such as copies of receipts or the product itself)
- request a specific, realistic solution

- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 5

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be addressed to a specific person whose title should appear in the inside address
- have a polite, formal, respectful tone
- describe the job or program for which the writer is applying
- list the writer's qualifications and relevant experiences
- briefly explain why the writer is the best candidate
- request an application form or an interview
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 6

To evaluate students' letters, use these criteria.

The letter should

- be addressed to the editor of the publication
- have a polite, respectful tone
- name the article or issue in the first sentence
- state the writer's opinion clearly
- support the writer's opinion with accurate facts, reasons, and examples
- show a logical flow of ideas
- be neatly typed or printed, with a handwritten signature
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange letters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 7

To evaluate students' memos, use these criteria.

The memo should

- be formatted correctly
- summarize the announcement in the SUBJECT line
- make the announcement in one or two short sentences in the first paragraph
- use one or more brief follow-up paragraphs to include all necessary information
- be written in a formal but friendly tone
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange memos for peer evaluation.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

■ PAGE 8

To evaluate students' memos, use these criteria.

The memo should

- state the topic clearly in the subject heading
- include all important information
- be brief

You may also have students exchange memos for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 9

To evaluate students' memos, use these criteria.

The memo should

- be formatted correctly
- name the task in the subject line and in the first sentence of the memo
- follow up with a brief description of the task
- give a date by which the task must be completed
- be written in a formal but friendly tone
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange memos for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 10

To evaluate students' project schedules, use these criteria.

The schedule should

- identify the project in the title
- list objectives clearly
- show project start and end dates
- list each step in the project, with realistic completion dates
- be in an easy-to-read format

You may also have students exchange project schedules for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 11

To evaluate students' assignment schedules, use these criteria.

The schedule should

- identify the project in the title
- list each member
- list each member's responsibilities, followed by individual due dates
- be in an easy-to-read format

You may also have students exchange assignment schedules for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 12

To evaluate students' budgets, use these criteria.

The budget should

- identify the project in the title
- list each material or service requiring an expense
- show each estimated expense
- provide columns to record actual expenses and dates of payment
- be in an easy-to-read format

You may also have students exchange budgets for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 13

To evaluate students' PSAs, use these criteria.

The PSA should

- have a clever headline to grab readers' interest
- have bold, dramatic graphics
- have brief, persuasive copy to explain or develop the message
- identify the sponsor and provide information on how people can respond or take action
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange PSAs for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 14

To evaluate students' PSAs, use these criteria.

The PSA should

- indicate a realistic duration of time
- include vivid visuals, clearly described in the script
- contain persuasive copy to explain or develop the message
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange PSAs for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 15

To evaluate students' PSAs, use these criteria.

The PSA should

- indicate a realistic duration of time
- contain persuasive copy to develop the message
- incorporate appropriate sound effects and/or background music
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange PSAs for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 16

To evaluate students' PSAs, use these criteria.

The PSA should

- include dramatic visuals
- include brief, memorable copy
- identify the sponsor and provide information so that viewers can take action
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange PSAs for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 17

To evaluate students' newsletters, use these criteria.

The newsletter should

- have an attractive masthead, as shown in the model
- contain informative articles of interest to the members
- contain graphics, photographs, coupons, etc.
- list upcoming events

Business and Technical Writing Activities

- include such features as letters and classified ads, allowing members to communicate with each other
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange newsletters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 18

To evaluate students' newsletters, use these criteria.

The newsletter should

- have an attractive masthead, as shown in the model
- contain informative articles of interest to employees
- contain graphics, photographs, etc.
- list upcoming events
- include such features as news about promotions, marriages, and retirement dinners
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange newsletters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 19

To evaluate students' newsletters, use these criteria.

The newsletter should

- have an attractive masthead, as shown in the model
- contain informative promotional articles
- contain graphics, photographs, etc.
- include such features as filler articles, safety, household tips, and coupons
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students exchange newsletters for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 20

To evaluate students' multimedia presentations, use these criteria.

The presentation should

- combine written text, oral presentation materials, and visuals
- effectively promote a point of view, provide factual information, and/or explain a process
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students examine each other's multimedia presentations for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 21

To evaluate students' multimedia presentations, use these criteria.

The presentation should

- combine text, visuals, and sound effectively
- support a message with facts and details
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students examine each other's multimedia presentations for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 22

To evaluate students' multimedia presentations, use these criteria.

The presentation should

- combine text, visuals, and sound effectively
- present information and/or instructions clearly and completely
- be free of mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage

You may also have students examine each other's multimedia presentations for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 23

To evaluate students' Web site plans, use these criteria.

The plans should

- indicate a topic that could be effectively developed and presented on a Web site
- target a specific audience
- use a graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas
- indicate a realistic and effective research plan

You may also have students examine each other's web site plans for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 24

To evaluate students' main page text, use these criteria.

The text should

- introduce the topic and attempt to grab the visitor's attention
- clearly state the purpose of the Web site
- be brief, informative, and interesting
- indicate a plan for including photos and other graphics
- include buttons for visitors to use to access additional information
- include contact information
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics

You may also have students examine each other's main page text for peer evaluation.

■ PAGE 25

To evaluate students' layout plan, use these criteria.

The plan should

- combine written text, sound, and graphics effectively
- be designed to grab and hold the reader's attention
- include buttons for visitors to use to access additional information, graphics, etc.
- include contact information
- be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics

You may also have students examine each other's layout plans for peer evaluation.



Business and Technical Writing Activities

Grade 9



Glencoe

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Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Conventions of Business Writing

Business writing is a special form of expository writing that communicates information in an efficient way. All forms of business writing have a distinct purpose, such as to request information, apply for a position, or express an opinion. The purpose is usually stated clearly in the first sentence or the first paragraph.

Business writing must include correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The language should always be polite and respectful, although the tone may be conversational. For the most part, the elements in a business letter are important to all forms of business writing. A business letter is usually single-spaced and written on only one side of a sheet of stationery. The most commonly used style of business letters is the *block style*, which is illustrated in the letter shown below.

The writer states her purpose briefly and clearly in the first sentence.

The writer uses polite conversational tone throughout the letter.

Paragraphs are separated by a line space.

The letter is typed, but the writer signs her name at the end.

4678 Ashland Avenue
Austin, Texas 78746
March 1, 2001

Col. John Brandon, Director
Texas Historical Society
111 South Capital Street
Austin, Texas 78700

Dear Colonel Brandon:

I am writing to request an interview with you. For my ninth-grade research project, I am writing a biography of Stephen Fuller Austin. I would like to ask you a few questions about Mr. Austin and his role as the political leader in the Republic of Texas in the 1800s. The interview would take less than one hour.

I would welcome the opportunity to set an interview time with you. I can be reached at 555-9923 after 4:00 P.M. weekdays.

Sincerely,

Susan Mullane

Susan Mullane

Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter to your teacher describing the main characteristics of business writing. Be sure to follow the conventions of business writing throughout your letter.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Ethics and Business Writing

The term *ethics* means “a code of behavior.” A person’s ethics is governed by such personal values as respect, honesty, and courage. Whenever a person creates any form of business writing—whether a business letter, memo, or report—a strong, positive code of ethics should be reflected in that piece of writing.

There are some business writing situations, however, in which people find it difficult to be honest, fair, and respectful. When the purpose for writing is to persuade, complain, or disagree, people don’t always “play fairly” because the writing purpose involves winning an argument. However, an untruthful, angry, or disrespectful business document does not encourage a positive response from its recipient.

Keep the following guidelines in mind as you write.

Purpose for Writing	Guidelines
To persuade	Use clear, positive language. Support your point of view with accurate facts and examples. Don’t: Maria Reynosa is the best candidate for valedictorian. Anyone who disagrees is stupid. Do: Maria Reynosa is the best candidate for valedictorian. I’d like to tell you why.
To complain	Describe the problem accurately. Politely ask for a specific, reasonable solution to the problem. Don’t: I paid a lot for this bug-ridden software. I want my money back, and I want a program that actually works. Do: I am dissatisfied with the software program that I bought through your catalog. It repeatedly crashes. Please refund my money or send me the latest upgrade.
To disagree	Briefly state your position and support it with accurate facts, examples, statistics, and reasons. Don’t: The editorial stated that our town needs to expand. That’s ridiculous! Who wants more traffic, urban sprawl, chain restaurants, and higher taxes? Do: The editorial stated that our town needs to expand and take advantage of the booming economy. I strongly disagree. Before expansion takes place, a town plan needs to be in place to accommodate the increase in population, traffic, and demand on public services.

Activity: Write a letter to the school board with the purpose of persuading the board to adopt a new policy or change an existing policy regarding an issue such as dress code, study hall rules, open-lunch hour, or class scheduling. Support your argument with accurate facts, reasons, or examples.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter to the Editor

One page of the daily newspaper is usually devoted to Letters to the Editor. In these letters, people express their opinions on various topics, hoping to persuade others to adopt their point of view.

An effective persuasive letter to the editor begins with a clear statement of the writer's opinion. If the writer's opinion is in disagreement with another point of view, the writer states the opposing position clearly and correctly. By showing an understanding of the opposing position, the writer establishes credibility as a reasonable person and encourages others to consider what he or she has to say. The writer supports his or her opinion with statistics, accurate evidence, or valid reasons. Finally, the writer makes sure the letter uses correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

The writer clearly states his opinion at the beginning of the letter.

The writer expresses understanding of the opposing point of view.

The writer uses a reasonable tone.

The writer suggests fair and reasonable alternatives to the opposing position.

717 Lake View Drive
Carol Beach, Wisconsin 53100
May 1, 2001

Editor of the *Pleasant Prairie News*
14 Main Street
Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin 53015

Dear Sir or Madam:

- I am writing to express my disagreement with the recent decision of the village board to gate the entrance to the lakefront road in Carol Beach. (See "Village Board Closes Gate," *Pleasant Prairie News*, April 15, 2001, p. B2.)
- I understand the board's concern regarding the increased problem with litter on the beach. I, too, am distressed when I see garbage strewn on the beach by irresponsible people. However, I do not believe the answer is to gate the entrance to the lakefront, thus closing the lake in that area to responsible citizens.

I propose that the board consider other alternatives, such as creating a volunteer clean-up crew, installing DO NOT LITTER signs and more garbage cans, and establishing a Neighborhood Litter Watch to deter those who litter.

I urge the village board to reconsider their decision and reward the responsible citizens of Pleasant Prairie with an open gate to the lake.

Sincerely,

Max Chan

Max Chan

Activity: Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about an environmental issue that currently affects your town or city. In the letter, express your opinion on the issue.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Apology

A letter of apology expresses regret for something. There are many situations that may require a letter of apology. Perhaps a company or an individual has made a mistake that needs to be corrected. Perhaps a product shipment has been delayed, a request refused, or a schedule inconveniently changed. Whatever the occasion for the apology, the writer should express regret with diplomacy and maintain goodwill with the recipient of the letter.

Notice how the writer of the following letter of apology expresses regret in a straightforward, yet diplomatic, manner.

154 Seventy-fifth Street
Des Plaines, Illinois 60013
February 23, 2002

Mr. Jules Johnson
280 Seventieth Street
Des Plaines, Illinois 60013

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I wish to apologize for delivering the last two Sunday newspapers late. My route manager and I have discussed how to better communicate any problems to each other so that late delivery does not happen again. I have asked the subscription department to credit your account for those two editions of the paper.

I take pride in delivering the paper and have enjoyed being your delivery person for the past three years.

I regret any inconvenience my error may have caused you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Tobey

Jennifer Tobey

The writer accepts responsibility for her error and apologizes in a diplomatic manner.

The writer explains what action has been taken so the error does not occur again.

The writer extends goodwill to the letter recipient.

Activity: Write a letter of apology regarding a mistake you made or an inconvenience you caused someone.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Application

When you are applying for a job, an internship, or a volunteer position, you need to write a letter of application to accompany your résumé. In a letter of application, you want to make a good impression. This means paying particular attention to details of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and format. A letter of application should fit on one page and be typed.

In the opening paragraph of the letter, clearly state what position you are applying for. In the second paragraph, briefly describe your qualifications, highlighting experiences that apply to the position. If you are enclosing a résumé or any other related information, mention the materials that are enclosed. In the third paragraph, express your enthusiasm for the position and a desire to be granted an interview. Finally, express your appreciation for the person's time and consideration.

5432 Grant Street
Davenport, Iowa 52803
April 29, 2001

Ms. Janice Unger
WKRV
303 South River Road
Davenport, Iowa 52801

Dear Ms. Unger:

- I am writing to apply for the position of summer intern at WKRV, as advertised in the *Quad-City Times* on April 20.

- For the past two years, I have worked as the disc jockey at our school dances. This year I had the opportunity to work as the sound manager for our school's productions of *The Music Man* and *Grease*. These experiences have given me a strong interest in sound production and radio broadcasting. My résumé is enclosed, along with two demo tapes of my most recent work as a disc jockey.

- I am very interested in meeting with you to learn more about the internship at WKRV and to discuss my qualifications. Working at WKRV would be a dream-come-true opportunity for me.

- Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Michael Jacobs

Michael Jacobs
enclosure

The writer clearly states his purpose and the position for which he is applying.

The writer highlights his experiences that specifically relate to the position.

The writer expresses his enthusiasm for the position.

The writer expresses his thanks.

Activity: Write a letter of application for a summer job related to one of your personal interests or areas of study.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Thank-You Letter

A thank-you letter expresses gratitude for a specific courtesy someone has granted you. After a job interview, for example, you would write a letter expressing your thanks for the person's time and consideration. A thank-you letter for a job interview is also the perfect place in which to follow-up on the interview and keep your name fresh in the potential employer's mind. A thank-you letter shows that you are courteous, motivated, and persistent.

When you write a thank-you letter for a job interview, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Thank the interviewer for granting you the interview. Mention the job specifically.
- Note interesting information you learned during the interview. Remind the interviewer that you are well qualified for the job.
- Restate your enthusiasm for the job and the potential employer or company.

5432 Grant Street
Davenport, Iowa 52803
May 10, 2001

Ms. Janice Unger
WKRV
303 South River Road
Davenport, Iowa 52801

Dear Ms. Unger:

In the first paragraph, the writer thanks the interviewer and specifically mentions the position for which he is applying.

In the second paragraph, the writer notes something he learned during the interview.

In the third paragraph, the writer restates his enthusiasm for the position.

- Thank you for taking the time to discuss the summer internship position at WKRV. The challenges of working in the broadcasting field are exciting.
- I was particularly interested to learn of WKRV's dedication to educating new broadcasting interns and to hear that many of WKRV's previous interns now have successful careers in the field. As I mentioned during the interview, I am interested in learning new skills in broadcasting.
- I know that I could be an asset to WKRV. Again, thank you for considering my application and for granting me an interview. I very much appreciated your enthusiastic words about my demo tapes. I look forward to hearing from you and possibly working as your intern this summer.

Sincerely,

Michael Jacobs

Michael Jacobs

Activity: Write a thank-you letter as a follow-up to an interview for a summer job.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Announce

A memo is a brief note that communicates important information. Memos are the main form of communication between members of a group—such as a school, a club, a business, or an organization. Memos can serve such different functions as to announce or inform others of a meeting, to record specific information for a formal business record, or to assign a specific task to an individual or group of people.

Because a memo is designed for highly efficient communication, its format is simple and direct. An announcement memo starts with the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. As with all memos, the information given in the subject heading of an announcement memo should be clear. The message, which follows the headings, should include the announcement itself and important details such as the date, time, and location of the event. Any additional details can be included in the second paragraph.

The writer clearly states the subject of the memo.

There is no salutation in a memo.

All important information is given in the first paragraph.

The second paragraph includes additional details.

TO: Photography Club Members

FROM: Jimmy Rogers, President

SUBJECT: Memorial Gallery Field Trip

DATE: November 9

As we discussed at our last meeting, Mr. Ramirez has given us permission to attend the photography exhibit at the Memorial Gallery on Friday, November 16. Ms. Stedwell will be coming with us. We will leave school at 1:30 P.M. Remember to bring bus fare (\$1.00) and meet at the school's main entrance at 1:15 P.M. sharp.

If you want to come on the field trip, please sign up on the form posted on Mr. Ramirez's door.

Thanks!

Activity: Write a memo to your classmates about an upcoming school-related activity, such as a club meeting, auditions for a school play, or a sporting event. Remember to include all the important information that your classmates will need to know about the event.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Remind

A memo is a brief note that communicates important information. Memos are the main form of communication between members of a group—such as a school, a club, a business, or an organization. Memos can be an efficient and helpful form of communication when you need to remind an individual or a group of people about an upcoming deadline, event, or activity. Memos may be distributed on paper or sent via electronic mail.

The format of a memo to remind is simple and direct. It includes the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. As with all memos, the information given in the subject heading should be clear. The message, which follows the headings, should include the message itself and important details such as the date, time, and location of the event. Any additional details can be included in the second paragraph.

There is no salutation in a memo. One line space is placed between the headings and the message.

All important information is given in the first paragraph.

The second paragraph includes additional details.

TO: All Members of the Varsity Basketball Team

FROM: Gregg Thomas, Captain

SUBJECT: Team Picture

• DATE: January 11

• Please remember that the team photograph will be taken this Friday, January 15, at 4:00 P.M. in the main gym before practice. Be dressed and ready in the locker room by 3:45 P.M. It is important that everyone appears in the team photograph. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

• The photographer will provide picture proofs in about two weeks. At that time, you can order the number of photographs you wish to have. I'll let you know when the proofs arrive and what the cost of the photographs will be.

Activity: Brainstorm to create a list of important details about an upcoming special event for a club or an organization to which you belong. Then organize the information into a clear memo to remind other members about the upcoming special event.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Assign a Task

A memo is an efficient way to communicate important information to members of a group—such as a school, a club, a business, or an organization. Memos can also be a helpful form of communication when you need to assign a specific task to an individual or assign a variety of related tasks to a group of people for an upcoming project or event.

The format of a memo to assign a task is simple and direct. It includes the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. As with all memos, the information given in the subject heading should be clear. The message, which follows the headings, should include the assigned task and important details regarding the task, such as expectations and the deadline or completion date.

The writer identifies herself.

The writer clearly states the subject of the memo.

Completion dates and other related expectations are clearly stated.

The tasks are clearly described and assigned.

TO: All Humane Society Volunteers

FROM: Patty Olsen, Director

SUBJECT: Valentine's Day Fund Drive

DATE: January 12

Here is the list of tasks that need to be accomplished by February 12 in preparation for our fund drive. Please check your assigned task and let me know immediately if there is a conflict or a question. We all need to coordinate our efforts in order to be ready in time.

Good luck! Many thanks to each of you for your continued dedicated service.

Name	Task
Mary	Prepare fund-drive announcements for newspaper inserts. Have 25,000 announcements printed by February 1 and delivered to the newspaper.
Sharon	Organize and schedule volunteers to be on-site at the four main grocery stores on Saturday, February 14.
Jerry	Organize and schedule canine and feline visitors to appear at the four grocery store sites. Each animal should have ample water and treats and be scheduled for a maximum visit time of one hour.
Max	Secure donations of red and white carnations from local florists.
Holly	Create large decorative canisters for donations at the four donation sites. Deposit funds at noon and again at the end of the day. Keep sites supplied with Humane Society information brochures.

Activity: Write a memo to assign a specific group of tasks to members of a club or an organization. All of the tasks should be related to an upcoming event, such as a music competition, drama auditions, or a school dance.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Completing a Job Application

Every time you apply for a job, you will fill out a job application. A job application asks for personal information, such as your address, phone number, work experience, and educational background. Generally a job application asks for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of personal references. Some job applications have a special section where you can write a statement describing additional information or experience that you feel makes you especially qualified for the job.

Sometimes a potential employer will allow you to complete a job application at home and return it later. When you need to complete a job application on-site, however, you should be sure to have the necessary information with you. Think of a job application as your opportunity to make a good first impression.

Review the application and read any instructions carefully before completing the form.

Fill the form out completely. If a question or category doesn't apply to you, indicate that on the application by writing *n/a*.

Review your answers. Make sure that you have provided complete and correct information.

Name: _____ Today's date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Birthdate _____ Sex: ____ Soc. Sec. #: _____

Job History (List each job held, starting with the most recent job.)

1. Employer: _____ Phone #: _____

Dates of employment: _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

2. Employer: _____ Phone #: _____

Dates of employment: _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

Education (List the most recent level of education completed.)

Personal References:

1. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Relationship: _____

Activity: Review the job application on this page and then fill out the form. You may use fictitious information for employers and references. After completing the application, exchange forms with another student. Check each other's applications for neatness and accuracy.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating a Membership Application

A membership application form includes categories of information that are important to a specific club or organization. When creating a membership application, think carefully about the information you need to know from applicants. Essential information, such as name, address, and phone number should appear at the top portion of the application. Other information that may be important includes an applicant's interests and related experiences. You also might consider asking the applicant why he or she wants to join the club. Take a look at the Drama Club application form below.

Essential information appears at the top of the application.

Areas of interest are listed.

The form asks why the applicant wants to become a member of the club.

The form allows room for the applicant to describe related experiences and skills.

<h3>DRAMA CLUB APPLICATION</h3>	
Name: <u>Janet Cuperson</u>	Today's Date: <u>September 15</u>
Address: <u>1234 Winsome Road, Boulder, CO 80302</u>	
Phone: <u>442-6892</u>	Grade Level: <u>9</u>
Name(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian(s): <u>Sheila and Tim Cuperson</u>	
Address: <u>same as above</u> Phone: <u>same as above</u>	

Please check the areas you are most interested in:	
<input type="checkbox"/> publicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> creating sets
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> locating props	<input type="checkbox"/> stagehand
<input type="checkbox"/> acting	<input type="checkbox"/> directing
<input type="checkbox"/> ticket sales	
Why do you want to be a member of the Drama Club?	
<u>I have always enjoyed theater, especially watching live performances. I think helping to create the sets and find props would be challenging, creative, and rewarding.</u>	
Describe any previous experience in the areas you have checked above.	
<u>I don't have experience creating actual theater sets, but I have worked with my dad rehabbing houses. My carpentry skills would be helpful in making the sets.</u>	
Describe any previous acting experience. List the plays in which you have appeared.	
<u>n/a</u>	
How many hours per month could you assist the Drama Club?	
<u>5-10 hours</u>	

Activity: Develop a membership application form for a club or an organization. Before creating the application, brainstorm to develop a list of information that you need to know from the applicant. After creating the membership application, exchange applications with a classmate. Review each other's applications; consider other questions that may be relevant to the application.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing E-Mail to Work Associates

E-mail is an efficient way for coworkers and business associates to communicate with each other. Just like a memo, an e-mail is a brief message that contains important information. E-mail has a simple, direct format. The heading tells who is receiving the e-mail, who is sending it, the date, and the subject. After the heading, the purpose of the e-mail should be stated clearly and concisely. The whole point of e-mail is efficient communication.

Here are a few guidelines to remember when writing e-mail to work associates.

- State your main point clearly and concisely.
- Use an appropriate tone. The recipient(s) of your e-mail cannot see an expression on your face. A comment that you meant to be humorous may offend someone.
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters. Using all capital letters in e-mail correspondence is considered rude.
- Use correct spelling. Although e-mail is sometimes informal, errors are not acceptable.
- Remember that others may read your e-mail. Do not write anything that may be damaging to someone.

The main point of the e-mail is stated clearly and concisely.

The e-mail is written in an appropriate tone.

Standard punctuation and grammar rules are followed.

To: CreativeTeam@WonderCo.com
From: HernanRios@WonderCo.com
Date: January 7, 9:22 A.M.
Subject: Dream Project Progress Meeting

The next progress meeting is scheduled for January 15 at 9:30 A.M. in the design area conference room. The meeting will probably run until noon. All members of the Creative Team should attend. Please be prepared to report progress in your specific area of responsibility.

Activity: Create a budget plan for a project involving expenses. It might be a project assigned at school or one you are planning as part of a hobby or a special interest. Follow the guidelines and the model chart.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing E-Mail to a Public Official

E-mail is a quick way to send a message. The tone and format may be informal when you're writing to a friend. However, when you're writing an e-mail to someone other than a friend, a more formal format and style, similar to that of a memo, should be used. When you're writing an e-mail to a public official, such as the mayor of your town or a local councilperson, use a polite, respectful tone.

The heading of an e-mail should identify who is receiving the e-mail, who is sending it, the date, and the subject. The subject line is especially important because it helps people decide whether to open the e-mail immediately. After the heading, the main point or purpose of the e-mail should be stated clearly and concisely. If you want the public official to address a specific problem or issue, state that clearly at the beginning of the message.

Here are a few guidelines to remember when writing e-mail to a public official.

- State the purpose of your message clearly and concisely.
- Use a respectful, polite tone.
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters. Using all capital letters in e-mail correspondence is considered rude.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Remember that others may read your e-mail. Do not write anything that may be damaging to someone.

The main point of the e-mail is stated clearly and concisely.

The e-mail is written in a polite, respectful tone.

The sender clearly states what action she wants the council to take.

To: Fred Peters@local.gov
From: Mary Citizen@school.edu
Date: May 15, 7:19 P.M.
Subject: Glenwood Park Swing Set

The swing set in Glenwood Park is rusted through and poses a safety hazard to the children who play on the swings in the park. With the busy outdoor season soon upon us, it seems prudent for the city to replace the old swing set with a new one. I have left three phone messages with our alderman, who has not returned my calls. Therefore, I am now asking the city council to address the problem before any children are injured.

Activity: What good cause would you like to promote in a print PSA appearing in a newspaper or magazine? Use a clever headline, dramatic graphics, and persuasive copy to get your message across.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

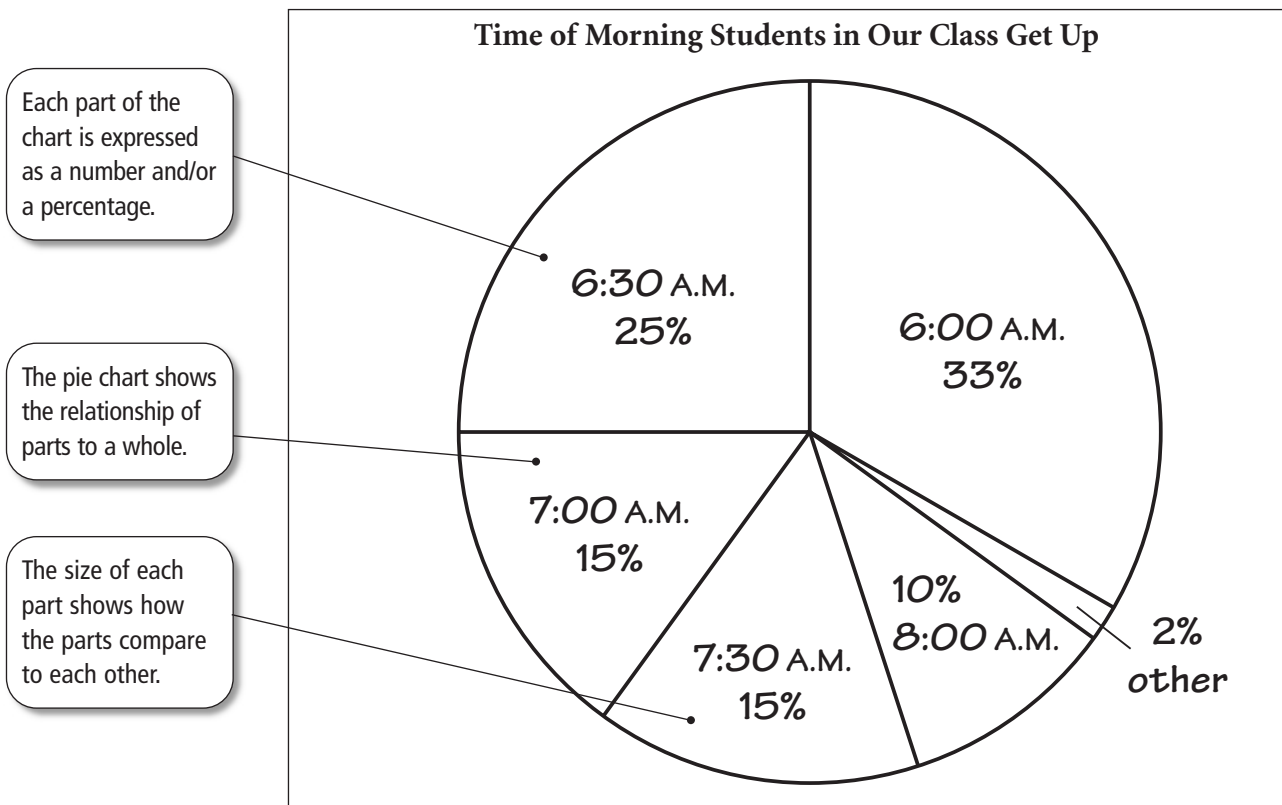
Name Class Date

Choosing an Appropriate Graphic Organizer

A graphic organizer presents information visually. An effective graphic organizer can make difficult or complex information easier for a reader to understand. The many kinds of graphic organizers include tables, charts, line graphs, bar graphs, and circle graphs or pie charts. One kind of graphic organizer may be more appropriate or effective than another kind for presenting particular information. For example, to show the results of a class survey on what time students get up in the morning, a circle graph or pie chart would probably be the most effective organizer.

Review the following characteristics of various graphic organizers before selecting which organizer is most appropriate for presenting particular information.

- A table organizes information into columns and rows.
- A line graph shows changes in quantity over time.
- A bar graph shows how quantities compare to each other or how they change over time.
- A circle graph or pie chart shows the relationship of parts to a whole. Each part of the circle or pie represents a certain percentage of the whole, which is always 100%.



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Activity: Choose which graphic organizer would be most effective for the following information:

1. To show the amounts of money raised by five students during a fund-raiser for the Humane Society: Devon (\$55); Kim (\$20); Marsha (\$15); Max (\$40)
2. To show changes in the amounts of garbage produced in the United States during a twenty-five year span (1975–2000)
3. To show the favorite school subjects among the students at your school

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

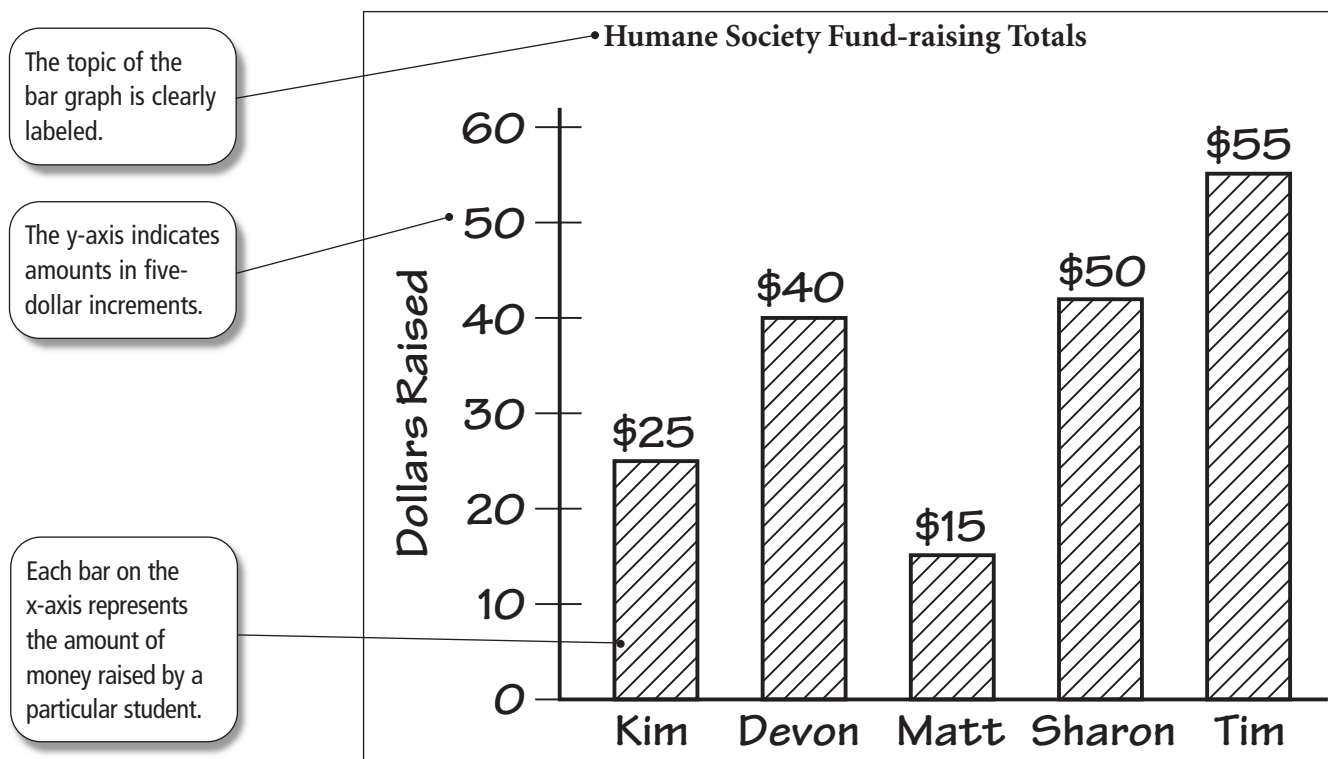
Using a Bar Graph

A bar graph usually shows quantities and is used to highlight comparisons or contrasts between those quantities. A bar graph plots data along a vertical line called the y-axis and a horizontal line called the x-axis. One axis displays the quantities; the other indicates the subjects being compared.

When using a bar graph to present information visually, keep the following points in mind.

- Clearly identify the topic of the graph.
- Make sure that each bar on the graph accurately represents a number or quantity.
- Display the quantities in easy-to-understand increments.
- Label the subjects being compared.

Look at the following bar graph, which compares the amounts of money raised by five students during a fund-raiser.



Activity: Use a bar graph to represent visually one of the following sets of data:

- the number of students in the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes who have part-time jobs
- the highest mile-per-hour speed at which a lion, a giraffe, an elephant, a monkey, and a python can move
- the number of students absent on a given Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

You may create fictitious statistics to use in your bar graph.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating an Organization Chart

An organization chart illustrates how the positions of individuals or departments in an organization are related. For example, if an organization chart shows four different boxes on the same level, the chart is indicating that the four positions have equal rank. Organization charts make it easy for a reader to understand the structures of a variety of organizations, from the local fire department to the three executive branches of the United States government.

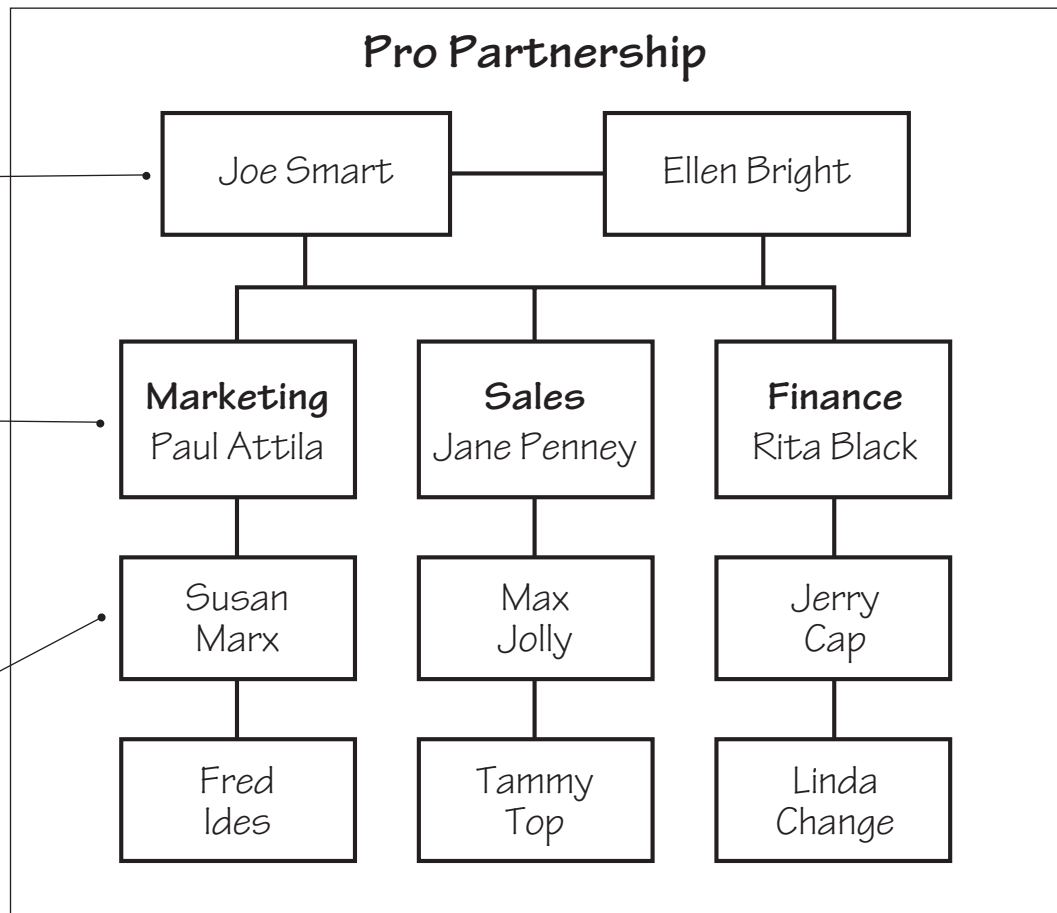
With many word processing programs, an organization chart can be created easily by simply selecting the Organization Chart function under the Draw menu. If that function is not available, drawing tools may be used to create an organization chart.

Review the following organization chart, which illustrates the positions of individuals within a fictitious company.

The two boxes at the top are on the same level, indicating that the company is an equal partnership.

The three boxes on the second level illustrate the three divisions of the company and the identify the person responsible for each division.

The third level illustrates the supporting staff for each division within the company and the relative ranking of those individuals.



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Activity: Create an organization chart for a fictitious company or organization. If possible, use a word processing program that either has an organization chart function or drawing tools.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing Instructions

When people write directions or instructions, they sometimes leave out steps that have become automatic. The missing steps are not automatic, however, to the frustrated person trying to assemble the bicycle or find the way to a particular place. Good instructions clearly explain each step in the process in the order in which the steps need to be done. Good instructions include a list of tools and equipment needed to complete a task. In many cases, a simple drawing is helpful in illustrating a specific step or the finished product.

Keep the following tips in mind when you're writing instructions.

- Be sure you completely understand the process you are describing.
- List tools or equipment that will be needed and define unfamiliar terms.
- Divide the process into clearly defined steps and include helpful visuals.

All required tools and materials are listed at the beginning.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to the audience are defined.

The steps are organized in chronological order.

The instructions include a helpful visual.

How to Plant a Vegetable Garden

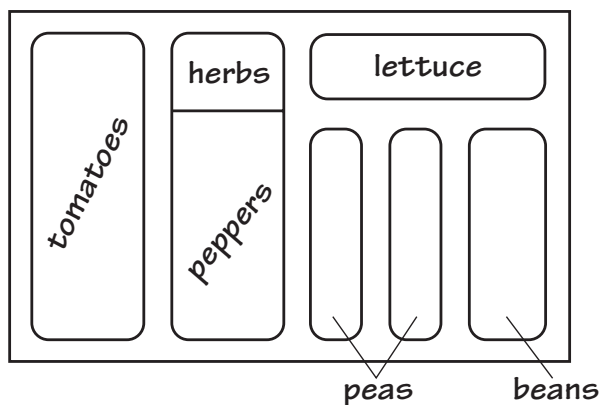
- **Tools and Materials:** spade, rake, hand trowel, compost (decomposed organic matter), grid paper and pencil, seedlings (young plants), water, watering can

Step 1. Prepare the soil. Spread compost over the soil with a rake. Dig into the soil with the spade, turning over the soil and compost. Rake the soil to even out the surface area.

Step 2. Draw a layout of the garden. Plot the garden area to scale on grid paper. Indicate sections of the garden where specific groups of seedlings will be planted.

Step 3. Plant the seedlings. Position the seedlings on top of the soil. Use the hand trowel to dig the correct depth of hole for each type of seedling. Place the seedling gently into the hole and cover the roots and lower stem with soil. Water the seedling carefully.

- **Step 4.** Keep the plants thriving. Check frequently to be sure the plants are well watered and free of insects or disease.



Activity: Write step-by-step instructions for a process with which you are completely familiar, such as grooming a dog or shooting a lay-up. Clearly label each step in the order in which it needs to be completed. List necessary tools and define unfamiliar terms.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Graphic Aids in Technical Writing

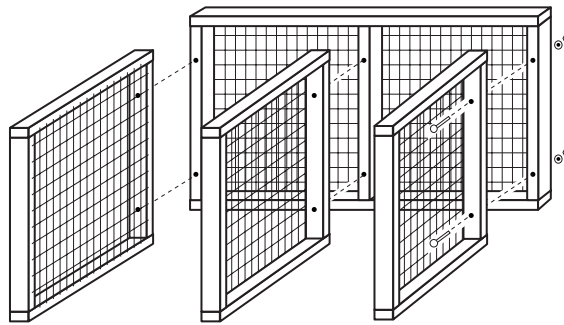
In technical writing, graphic aids can help readers better understand or more quickly grasp the material that is being presented. A flow chart, for example, could illustrate the steps in a procedure and help readers visualize the process. A diagram in an instruction booklet could help readers understand how to assemble something. A group of line drawings could help readers identify the tools needed to complete a task. One well-prepared graphic aid enhances even the most fluent writing, making clear in one picture the material explained in a whole page of writing.

The graphic aid in the following model helps illustrate how to construct a compost bin for the garden.

How to Build a Compost Bin

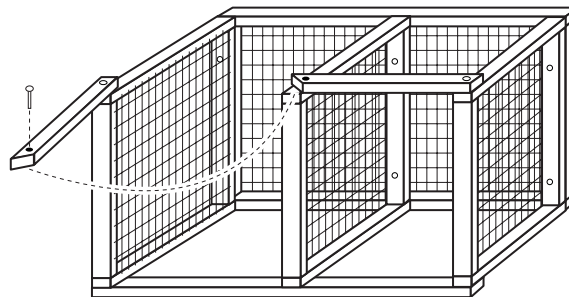
Part A

- Construct panels of pressure-treated 2x4 lumber. Staple galvanized dogwire to all panels.
- Attach 4' x 4' side panels to 4' x 8' back panel with bolts.



Part B

- Attach top rails with carriage bolts.
- Cut ends diagonally.
- Nail the bottom 2x4 in place.



The instructions are enhanced by the use of graphic aids.

The graphic aids illustrate two steps in the procedure.

The second graphic also shows how the product should look when nearly completed.

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Activity: Write a brief set of instructions for performing a specific task, such as executing a football play, wrapping a present, assembling a bicycle, or planting a tree. Include a graphic aid that will help readers understand the steps involved in the task or highlight one of the more difficult steps.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing an Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of a scientific report or a professional article. The abstract often appears at the beginning of the report to give readers a preview of the contents. An abstract may also be published in catalogs and databases used by researchers. These catalogs and databases are often a researcher's first step. A well-written abstract tells researchers exactly what information the report contains. The abstract should highlight all important information so that researchers do not overlook a report that is relevant to their work. The abstract should also be accurate and clear so researchers do not unnecessarily spend time reading a report that is not relevant to their work.

Generally an abstract is one paragraph in length. The abstract explains the question or the hypothesis posed in the experiment and offers a concise summary of the results. If a report is lengthy or complex, the abstract may be three or four paragraphs in length. However, the writer's goal is to make the abstract concise without compromising the accuracy of the information.

The question or purpose of the experiment is posed as a statement in the opening sentence.

The writer concisely summarizes the results.

Abstract

- This report, based on data collected at three sites along the lakeshore, demonstrates that a small change in location can make a difference in the range of microclimate temperatures. The widest range of temperatures occurs at the lakeshore. A moderate range of temperatures occurs .5 km due west of the shore. An inverted range of temperatures occurs 1 km due west of the shore.

Activity: Write an abstract for a research paper or scientific report you have written for this or another class or for a report you would be interested in writing.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Scientific Report

There are many types of technical reports. One type is a scientific report that describes an experiment and explains the data and the results of the study. Like other technical reports, a scientific report presents information in a specific format. A scientific report usually includes the following parts:

- title page—the title of the report, the name of the writer, and the date the report was written
- abstract—a brief summary of the report
- introduction—a brief statement of the purpose of the experiment or study
- materials and methods—a description of the materials used and the procedure followed
- results—a description of the results of the experiment, including graphs showing data
- conclusions—a discussion of the conclusions that can be drawn from the results

The following model shows an excerpt from a scientific report.

The report is divided into five parts, beginning with the abstract.

The introduction states the purpose of the experiment.

The table illustrates the data collected during the experiment.

The conclusion discusses the results of the experiment.

ECOLOGY LAB: HOW LOCATION AFFECTS MICROCLIMATES

Abstract

This report demonstrates that a small change in location can make a difference in the range of microclimate temperatures. The widest range of . . .

Introduction

The purpose of this experiment was to determine the variation in microclimate range with small changes in location on the western shore of Lake . . .

Materials and Methods

Thermometers were set up in three locations on the shore of Lake Michigan for a 24-hour period. Two thermometers were placed on the sand shore with no shading at heights of 100 cm and 10 cm above the water surface. Two . . .

Results

Table 1 shows the variations in temperature of the three sites.

Temperature	Lakeshore		.5 km West		1 km West	
	1 m above	10 cm above	1 m above	10 cm above	1 m above	10 cm above
Minimum	43	39	46	45	42	46
Maximum	55	42	55	52	49	57

(a) Temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit

Conclusions

A microclimate can extend to a range as small as a few centimeters. The wide range of microclimate at the lakeshore is probably due to the insulating . . .

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Activity: Write a scientific report, stating the hypothetical results of a simple experiment you would like to perform. Begin by establishing the purpose for your experiment. Then imagine what materials and methods you would use and create the results that you think will occur. Draw conclusions from those results.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Collaborating to Develop an Oral Report

Collaboration refers to the process of people working together. A team of people can share their individual ideas and talents to solve problems and create a first-class product. When the collaboration process works well, it can be a rewarding experience for all members of the group. Sometimes, however, people do not work well together, and collaboration turns into a frustrating experience. More-outgoing members of a group may push their ideas onto others; more-reserved members of a group may be reluctant to voice their ideas.

The skill that is most important for working collaboratively as part of a team is active listening. An active listener makes sure that everyone's point of view is heard and understood. An active listener pays attention to what others say and paraphrases their ideas to be sure the ideas are understood. When you are an active listener, you avoid interrupting and try not to disagree with someone before he or she has fully expressed a point of view. An active listener asks open-ended questions.

When you collaborate, consider the following suggestions.

- Begin by discussing the project and coming to an agreement on its purpose.
- State the purpose clearly in writing and make sure everyone understands the purpose.
- Assign sections of the project or specific responsibilities to individuals in the group. Make use of people's individual talents, skills, and interests.
- Have the entire group evaluate each section, suggest revisions, and proofread the final document.

Activity: Work in a small group to create an oral report on a topic selected by the group. Begin collaborating by sharing ideas for the topic of the report. After you collaborate, write a statement summarizing your experience, particularly considering the active listening skills and the way the group organized itself. Comment on the group's areas of strength and areas where improvements could be made for a more rewarding collaboration experience.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Collaborating to Develop an Ad Campaign

An agency that creates advertising and marketing campaigns for clients generally relies on a team approach to develop new ideas for their campaigns. Collaboration is most effective and rewarding when individual team members listen actively to one another, cooperate, and contribute equally. A team that works effectively makes use of the strengths, skills, and interests of individual team members. For example, one member of the team may be a strong spokesperson, while another may be highly skilled at planning marketing strategies.

As your team collaborates to develop an ad campaign, keep the following suggestions for active listening in mind. They will help your team work together in an effective, rewarding way.

- Make sure everyone's point of view is heard and understood.
- Pay attention to what others say.
- Avoid interrupting when someone else is speaking.
- Ask open-ended questions.

When collaborating, establish specific tasks, goals, and schedules. Look at the following model to see how one team began collaborating on an ad campaign.

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS, INC.

Abstract

Ad Campaign for Always There Pet Care

Purpose of the campaign: to create radio advertisement spots and print advertisements promoting the personal pet care service

Team members: Kathy Huang, Marsha Levenson, David Marcus, Art Pepper

Radio advertisements: Kathy and Art will collaborate on radio script ideas. Kathy will polish the three best script ideas; Art will record the scripts for presentation to the client. After client approval, Art will buy radio time.

Print advertisements: Marsha and David will collaborate on print ideas. Marsha will write text for three advertisements. David will generate drafts of the print layouts, showing how Marsha's text will appear in the ad. After client approval, David will generate final advertisements. Marsha will buy newspaper space.

Schedule:

May 1: Team evaluation of radio advertisement drafts
May 2: Team evaluation of print advertisement drafts
May 9: All revisions complete
May 10: Team presentation of ad campaign ideas to client
May 22: Team presentation of final campaign products for client approval

Activity: With a small group, collaborate to create an ad campaign for a nonprofit organization, such as the Humane Society of America. As you discuss the project and brainstorm for ideas, decide which specific tasks to assign to individual group members. Set a schedule for evaluating progress and completing the campaign.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

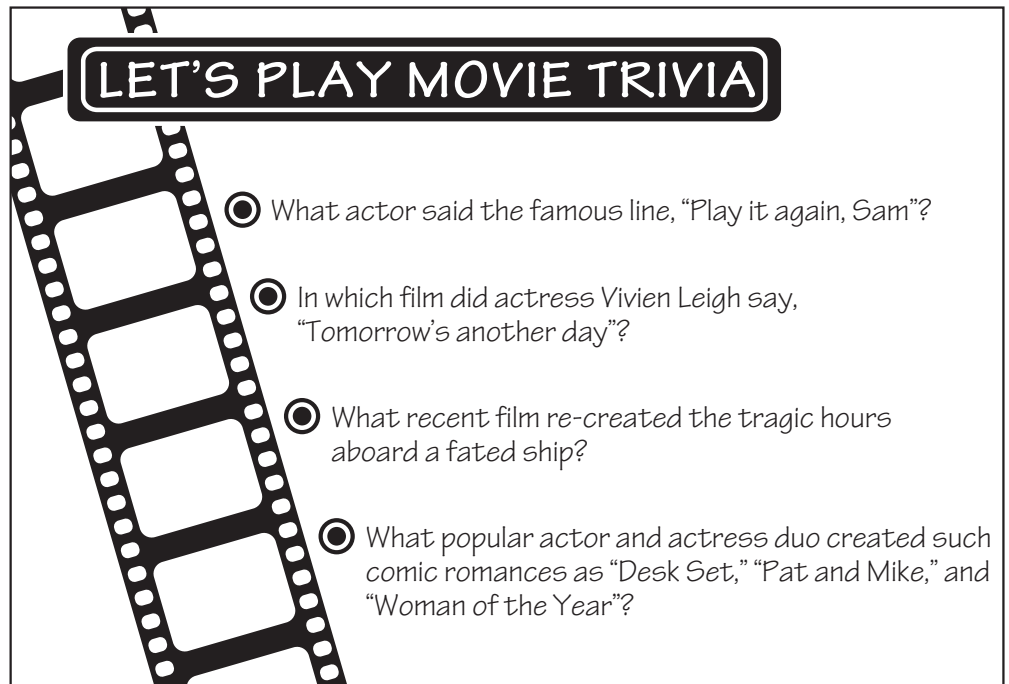
Name Class Date

Determining the Content of a Web Site

As you know from surfing the Internet, there are millions of Web sites containing a wide variety of information. The content of a Web site is determined by many different factors, such as the Webmaster's purpose in creating the site and the audience he or she hopes to reach.

Like the purpose of a piece of writing, the purpose of a Web site may be to entertain, inform, or persuade. The purpose of a site is probably the most influential factor in determining the site's content. The content of a Web site that has the purpose of entertaining viewers with movie trivia, for example, would be enormously different from the content of a site that has the purpose of persuading people to support the efforts of the Film Preservation Society. The purpose of a Web site determines the site's content, approach, layout and graphics, images, sound and music effects, and hyperlinks.

Look at the following page from a fictitious Web site. What do you think the purpose of the site is? How did the purpose help determine the content?



Activity: Write a description of a Web site you would like to create. State the purpose of your site and identify the audience you hope to reach. Explain how the purpose and the audience will affect the choices you make in determining the site's content, approach, layout and graphics, images, sound and music effects, and hyperlinks.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

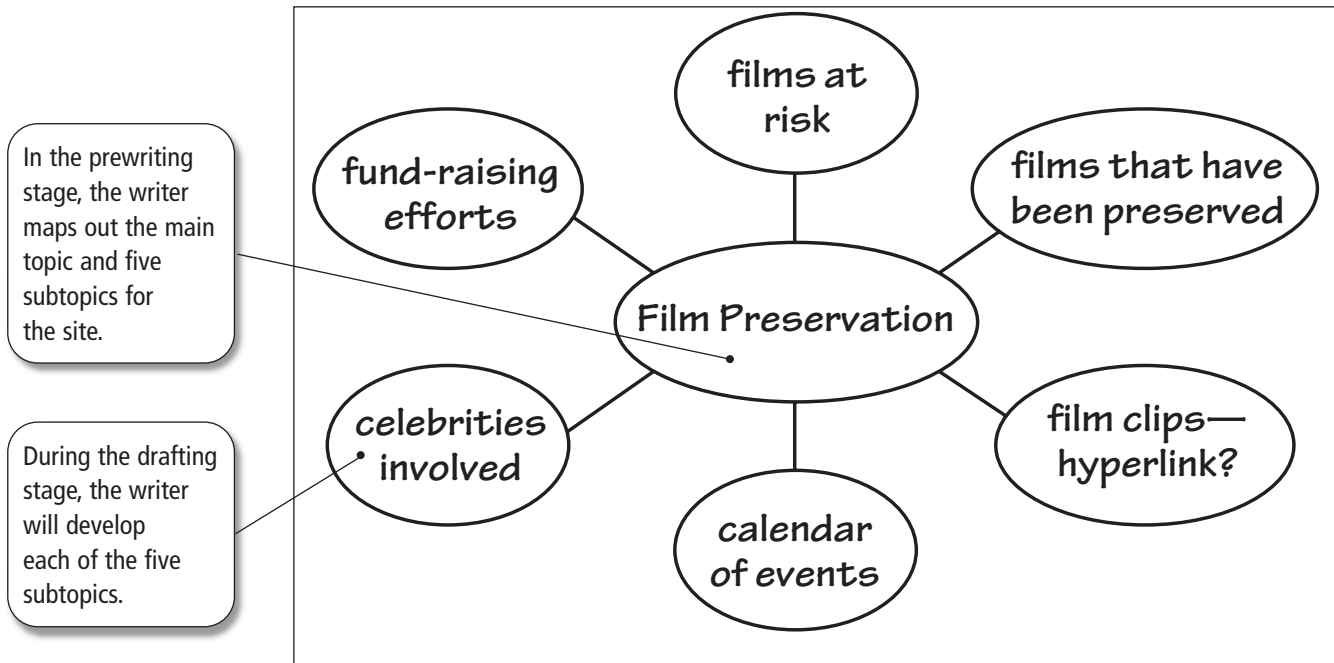
Name Class Date

Writing the Content for a Web Site

Once you have determined the content for a Web site, the time has come to begin writing. As with any writing assignment, you'll want to follow the five steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and publishing/presenting. When prewriting, you may wish to create a cluster diagram or other graphic organizer to help identify the main topic and the subtopics of your site. This diagram will also help you as you develop each page in the site.

After prewriting, begin drafting the content for your Web site, using your graphic organizer as a working guide. Develop each subtopic and indicate ideas you have about visual enhancements, layout, graphics, sound, and hyperlinks. Remember—during the drafting stage you just want to get as much written down on paper as possible.

After drafting, you might consider having one or two friends look at your draft. They can point out where you need to make your writing clearer. Take another close look at the manuscript yourself. Then revise the text; incorporate the suggestions made by your peers and the ideas you have written down about layout, graphics, images, and hyperlinks.



Activity: Create an organization chart for a fictitious company or organization. If possible, use a word processing program that has either an organization chart function or drawing tools.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Designing the Layout of a Web Site

What do you think is the most important thing to remember when designing a Web site? In a word: Simplicity. In developing the content for your site, you have already considered the purpose and the audience intended for the site. Now you need to design a layout that will make the content you've developed easy to read and understand. More importantly, perhaps, you need to design a layout that has continuity between the pages and offers the viewer logical pathways to follow throughout the site. As you design the layout for your Web site, keep your readers in mind.

The clear, simple design makes the Web site seem accessible and the content easy to read.

The logical pathways help the viewer navigate through the Web site.

Note the easy-to-use buttons for visitors to go to further pages, and the writer's contact information so that visitors can send him comments.



Activity: Design a layout for a Web site you would like to create. Show one specific page in the site, such as the Home Page, or show the design elements you would use to establish continuity between two or three pages in the site.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Rubrics for Activities

■ PAGE 1

Students' business letters should

- describe the main characteristics of business writing (communicates information in an efficient way, is brief and clear, has a specific purpose, uses polite and respectful language, is conversational in tone)
- follow the conventions of business writing
- be polite and conversational in tone
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 2

Students' letters should

- persuade the school board to adopt a new policy or change an existing policy
- include supporting facts, reasons, and/or examples
- be polite, respectful, fair, and truthful
- follow the conventions of business writing
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 3

Students' letters to the editor should

- state a clear opinion on a local environmental issue
- state the opposing position(s) clearly and correctly
- show an understanding of other points of view
- support opinions with statistics, facts, and reasons
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 4

Students' letters of apology should

- express regret for a mistake made or an inconvenience caused
- apologize with diplomacy and maintain goodwill
- be written in a polite and respectful tone
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 5

Students' letters of application should

- state the purpose for writing and the position that is being applied for
- highlight experiences that specifically relate to the position
- be written in a polite conversational tone
- express enthusiasm for the position
- express thanks for time and consideration
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 6

Students' thank-you letters should

- thank the interviewer for granting the interview
- mention the potential position specifically
- note something that was learned during the interview and explain why this was of particular interest
- remind the employer of qualifications
- restate enthusiasm for the position and employer/company
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 7

Students' announcement memos should

- announce an upcoming school-related event to classmates
- include the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE
- include all important information such as date, time, and location in the first paragraph
- include any additional information in a second paragraph

■ PAGE 8

Students' memos should

- remind club or organization members about an upcoming event
- include the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE
- include all important information such as date, time, and location in the first paragraph
- include any additional information in a second paragraph

■ PAGE 9

Students' memos should

- assign specific tasks to members of an organization
- include the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE
- include all important information such as deadlines for the tasks, the details involved in the tasks, and the expectations related to the completion of the tasks

■ PAGE 10

Students' job applications should

- be filled out completely
- be written with neat, legible handwriting
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 11

Students' membership applications should

- include areas for necessary information, such as name, date, address, and phone number, at the top of the form
- include questions relevant to the organization
- ask the applicant about related skills or experiences
- ask the applicant why he or she wants to become a member
- be easy to fill out

■ PAGE 12

Students' e-mail messages to coworkers should

- announce a change in work schedule
- include a heading
- state the main point in a paragraph following the heading
- use an appropriate tone
- be clear and concise
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

Business and Technical Writing Activities

■ PAGE 13

Students' e-mail messages to a public official should

- include a heading that identifies the recipient, sender, date, and subject
- state a specific issue or problem affecting the local community
- state any specific action the sender wishes the official to take
- use a respectful, polite tone
- be clear and concise
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 14

Students should choose

- a bar graph
- a line graph
- a circle graph or pie chart

■ PAGE 15

Students' bar graphs should

- represent visually one of the data groups provided
- label clearly the topic of the graph
- make sure that each bar on the graph accurately represents a quantity
- display the quantities in easy-to-understand increments
- label the subjects being compared

■ PAGE 16

Students' organization charts should

- show the relative positions of individuals or departments within a fictitious company or organization
- include clearly marked labels for easy understanding

■ PAGE 17

Students' instructions should

- provide step-by-step instructions
- list necessary tools or equipment
- be clearly written
- organize the steps in chronological order
- include helpful visuals
- define unfamiliar terms

■ PAGE 18

Students' graphic aids should

- enhance readers' understanding of the written instructions
- illustrate the series of steps involved in a specific task or highlight one of the more difficult steps in the task
- help readers visual the task
- be clear and easy to understand

■ PAGE 19

Students' abstracts should

- begin with a restatement of the question posed in a scientific report or a professional article
- summarize the important information included in the report

- be one paragraph in length
- be concisely written

■ PAGE 20

Students' scientific reports should

- include the following parts: abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, and conclusions
- include any necessary tables or graphs illustrating data
- include details and data for a hypothetical experiment
- be clearly and precisely written

■ PAGE 21

Students should

- collaborate in a small group to create an oral report on a topic selected by the group
- practice active listening skills while collaborating.
- write a summary of their collaboration experience, identifying the group's areas of strength and areas where improvements could be made for a more rewarding collaboration experience

■ PAGE 22

Students should

- collaborate in a small group to develop an ad campaign for a nonprofit organization
- use active listening skills as they brainstorm for ideas
- assign specific tasks to individual group members
- establish a schedule for evaluating progress and completing the campaign

■ PAGE 23

Students should

- describe a Web site they would like to create
- explain the purpose of the site and identify the intended audience
- explain how the purpose and the audience will determine the site's content

■ PAGE 24

Students should

- create a prewriting graphic that illustrates the main topic and the subtopics of the Web site
- write one page of content for the Web site, developed from their diagrams
- create one page of content that use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 25

Students' Web-site layouts should

- be simple, clear, and easy to follow
- show one specific page in the site or the design elements that would establish continuity between the two or three pages in the site



**Business and Technical
Writing Activities
Grade 10**



Glencoe

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Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Conventions of Business Writing

Business writing is a special form of expository writing that communicates information in an efficient way. Examples of business writing include business letters, memos, reports, and abstracts. Whatever the form, each piece of business writing is created for a distinct purpose.

The essential characteristics of all forms of business writing include brevity, clarity, and accuracy. A brief, clearly written business document enables the reader to grasp the message quickly. The purpose of the document is usually stated clearly in the first sentence or the first paragraph. The language should always be polite and respectful, although the tone may be conversational. Many companies and organizations establish writing and style rules in their own style guides, which help to create a consistent appearance throughout all documents. Business writing must incorporate correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

The elements in a business letter are important to all forms of business writing. A business letter is usually single-spaced. The most commonly used style of business letters is the *block style*.

The heading includes the writer's return address and the date.

2289 Seventy-third Street
Marshall, Ohio 43200
March 20, 2001

A colon follows the salutation.

Ms. Anna Klaus
Klaus, Jeffries, and Stuart, Ltd.
406 West Pearl Street
Marshall, Ohio 43202

The writer states his purpose briefly and clearly in the first sentence.

Dear Ms. Klaus:

I am a member of the Baylor High School Career Day planning committee. I am writing to invite you to participate again in our Career Day, which is scheduled for May 1. Our school greatly appreciated your participation last year. We realize that your schedule is busy, but we would be honored to have you or another member of your law firm representing the legal profession.

Paragraphs are separated by a line space.

Please let me know by April 1 if you are interested in participating. If you have any questions about the event, you may write to me at the above address or call me at 555-2194 anytime after 3:00 P.M. on weekdays.

The writer uses a polite conversational tone throughout the letter.

Sincerely,

Matt Wallace

Matt Wallace

Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, write a business letter to a person, a company, or an organization requesting information about an upcoming event. Be sure to follow the conventions of business writing throughout your letter.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Ethics and Business Writing

A person's code of conduct, called *ethics*, is governed by such personal values as honesty, fairness, and courage. Generally, a person treats others as he or she wishes to be treated. A person's ethics in the business world should be no different from his or her ethics in personal life. Strong, positive personal values should always guide a person's ethics, whether in personal or business matters.

Whenever a person creates any form of business writing, his or her ethics should be reflected in that piece of writing. There are some business writing situations, however, in which people sometimes find it difficult to be honest, fair, and respectful. When the purpose for writing is to persuade, complain, or disagree, people don't always "play fairly" because the writing purpose involves winning an argument. To win an argument, people may create business documents that are not entirely truthful, that support their argument with opinions instead of facts, or that are written in a disrespectful tone. Needless to say, an untruthful, angry, or disrespectful business document does not encourage a positive response from its recipient.

Keep the following guidelines in mind as you write.

Purpose for Writing	Guidelines
To persuade	Use clear, positive language. Support your point of view with accurate facts and reasons. Don't: People who don't recycle are lazy and ignorant. Do: People need to be educated about the importance of recycling and learn how they can participate.
To complain	Focus your dissatisfaction on the problem instead of on the reader. Politely ask for a specific, reasonable solution. Don't: The zipper on the jacket I bought through your catalog broke. Do you only sell cheap-quality goods? Do: The zipper on the jacket I bought through your catalog last month has already broken. Please refund my money or replace the jacket.
To disagree	Briefly state your position and support it with accurate facts and examples. Show understanding of the opposing point of view. Disagree politely. Don't: Jim proposed that we fine members \$5.00 for each meeting they miss. What a dumb idea! People have obligations other than attending these boring meetings. Do: Jim proposed that we fine members \$5.00 for each meeting they miss. While I appreciate Jim's frustration with low attendance, I believe the weather, particularly the last two snow storms, kept many members from traveling on the roads.

Activity: Write a letter to a business partner regarding an unethical business practice on the part of your company. The purpose of your letter is to persuade your partner to agree with your point of view and to take steps to correct the unethical action.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Complaint

The purpose for writing a letter of complaint is not only to complain about a product or service, but to request that a company take a specific action in response to your complaint. Do you want an apology, a replacement, or a refund? Before writing a letter of complaint, decide what action you want the company to take.

In the first paragraph of your letter of complaint, clearly explain the problem and specifically state what you want the company to do. As with all business letters, your letter of complaint should be written in a polite tone. If the nature of the problem is serious, the tone of your letter should be formal and firm. A formal letter of complaint communicates to the reader the message that your complaint is to be taken seriously.

Use this salutation when addressing a department rather than a specific individual.

The writer clearly states the problem.

The writer tells what action she wants the company to take in response to her complaint.

108 East Sunset
Amarillo, Texas 78700
September 11, 2001

Customer Service
Big Video Services, Inc.
1535 Broadway
New York, New York 10019

• To Whom It May Concern:

• I ordered the enclosed video from your fall catalog. A line of static runs throughout the video, making the film unviewable. I would like you to send me a replacement as soon as possible. I would also like you to refund in full the return postage amount shown on the enclosed receipt.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Walters

Stephanie Walters

Activity: Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about an environmental issue that currently affects your town or city. In the letter, express your opinion on the issue.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Cover Letter

A cover letter should accompany your résumé when you apply for a job. In many ways, a cover letter is your first opportunity to make a good impression upon your prospective employer. Therefore, when writing a cover letter, you need to pay particularly close attention to details of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and format. A cover letter should fit on one page and be typed.

In the opening paragraph of a cover letter, clearly state the purpose of your letter and identify the position you are applying for. Mention that your résumé is enclosed. In the second paragraph, briefly describe your qualifications, highlighting experiences that apply to the position. Do not simply restate information included in your résumé. In the third paragraph, express your enthusiasm for the job and a desire to be granted an interview. Finally, express your thanks for the person's time and consideration.

The writer clearly states his purpose and the position for which he is applying.

The writer highlights his experiences that specifically relate to the position.

The writer expresses his enthusiasm for the position and his availability for an interview.

The writer expresses his thanks.

3120 Western Avenue
Southport, Wisconsin 53140
May 29, 2001

Ms. Linda Matthews
Milwaukee Sentinel
400 Main Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Ms. Matthews:

- I am writing to apply for the position of part-time editorial assistant in the sports department. My résumé is attached.
- As my résumé shows, I have worked for the past two years as the sports editor for Grant High School's newspaper, *The Guard*. This year I had the opportunity to attend a journalism camp at State University, where I participated in workshops on layout and design, copyediting, and AP style. These experiences have given me a strong interest in pursuing a career in journalism.
- I would like to meet with you to learn more about the position and to discuss my qualifications. Working at the *Sentinel* would be a dream come true for me. I can be reached at the phone number indicated on my résumé.
- Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joshua Harris

Joshua Harris
enclosure

Activity: Write a cover letter to accompany your résumé in application for a part-time job related to one of your personal interests or areas of study.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter to the Editor

One page of the daily newspaper is usually devoted to Letters to the Editor. In these letters, people express their opinions on various topics, hoping to persuade others to adopt their point of view.

An effective letter to the editor begins with a clear statement of the writer's opinion. If the writer's opinion is in disagreement with another point of view, the writer states the opposing position clearly and correctly. By showing an understanding of the opposing position, the writer establishes credibility as a reasonable person and encourages readers to consider what he or she has to say.

Remember, whenever you express your opinion, your credibility as a writer is important. When writing a letter to the editor, keep the following points in mind.

- State your opinion and the opposing position(s) clearly and correctly.
- Be sure your facts are correct.
- Be sure to use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

The writer expresses understanding of the opposing point of view.

The writer suggests fair and reasonable alternatives to the opposing position.

The writer uses a reasonable, polite tone.

2813 Ocean View
Corpus Christi, Texas 75052
May 1, 2001

Editor of *Corpus Christi Courier*
84 Trailway Road
Corpus Christi, Texas 75500

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express my disagreement with the City Council's recent proposal to prohibit the use of skateboards on the public pathways in Ocean Park. (See "Skate Away," *Corpus Christi Courier*, April 15, 2001, p. C2.)

- I understand the council's safety concerns. I, too, have witnessed irresponsible skateboarders who make the public pathways a hazard. However, I do not believe the answer is to prohibit the use of skateboards.
- I propose that the council consider alternatives, such as putting together a team of volunteer skateboarders to monitor the pathway and installing signs at the main entrances that list "Rules of the Road" for skateboarders.
- I urge the City Council to reconsider their proposal and let courteous and responsible skateboarders continue their healthy sport at Ocean Park.

Sincerely,

Marie Callahan

Marie Callahan

Activity: Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about an issue that currently affects your town or city. In the letter, express your opinion on the issue.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Application

When you apply for membership in an organization or acceptance at a school, a letter of application accompanies the application materials. Think of a letter of application as your opportunity to make a good impression.

Therefore, when writing a letter of application, you need to pay close attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and format. A letter of application should fit on one page and be typed.

In the opening paragraph of your letter, clearly state your purpose for writing. In the second paragraph, briefly describe your qualifications, highlighting any related skills and experiences. In the third paragraph, express your interest in and/or enthusiasm for the organization and your desire to be accepted. Finally, express your appreciation for being considered.

405 Old Trail Road
El Paso, Texas 78740
January 23, 2001

Ms. Katrina Sorenson
President, El Paso Chapter of the Equestrian Club of America
P.O. Box 700
El Paso, Texas 78700

Dear Ms. Sorenson:

I am writing to apply for membership in the Equestrian Club of America. My application form and photocopies of related certificates are enclosed.

As my application shows, I have been riding and competing since I was ten years old. This year my Appaloosa and I won "Best in Beginner's Class" at the state competition. In addition to riding and competing, my horse and I are certified as an animal therapy team and work with developmentally disabled kids at a private stable. This work is highly rewarding and confirms my belief in the bond between humans and animals

I would be honored to become a member of the Equestrian Club. I hope that you consider my experience and credentials worthy of your fine organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha Janus

Martha Janus

The writer states that additional application materials are enclosed.

The writer highlights experiences that specifically relate to the application.

The letter is written in a polite and conversational tone.

The writer expresses her thanks.

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Activity: Write a letter of application to become a member of an organization or club. Remember to indicate your qualifications for acceptance and explain why it is important to you to become a member of the organization.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Condolence

A letter of condolence expresses sympathy to a person who is suffering from pain, misfortune, or grief. Usually a letter of condolence is brief and formal in tone. However, if the writer has a close relationship with the recipient of the letter, the message may be much more personal in tone. Whatever the specific reason for a letter of condolence, the writer should express sympathy with consideration, delicacy, and empathy for another human being's suffering.

25 Second Street
Highland Park, Illinois 60013
February 28, 2001

Mr. David Garcia
Garcia and Gegarty, Inc.
200 East Wacker
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear David:

- Please accept my deepest sympathies on the sudden death of Jerome Gegarty, your business partner and dear friend for nearly twenty years. Jerry was
- among the most respected professionals in our field, and we will greatly miss
- his expertise, sophistication, and gentle humor.

Sincerely,

Michael Smith

Michael Smith

The writer expresses his sympathy with a brief and heartfelt statement.

The writer praises the virtues of the deceased.

The tone of the letter is formal and considerate.

Activity: Write a letter of condolence, expressing sympathy to a friend who has recently lost a family member.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Announce

If you want to communicate important information in an efficient way, send a memo. Memos are the main form of business communication between members of a group—such as a school, a club, a business, or an organization. Less formal than a business letter, memos are written to announce or inform others of a meeting, to record specific information for a formal business record, to remind a group of people of an event, or to assign a specific task to an individual or group of people.

The content of a memo is always direct, clear, and to the point. Even the format of a memo is designed for efficiency. An announcement memo starts with the double-spaced headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. The single-spaced message, which follows the heading, should include the announcement itself and important details such as the date, time, and location of the activity or event. Any additional details can be included in the second paragraph.

There is no salutation in a memo. One line space is placed between the headings and the message.

All text is flush left.

All important information is given in the first paragraph.

The second paragraph includes additional details.

TO: Members of Band Boosters
FROM: Jason Crane, Fundraising Chairperson
SUBJECT: Delivery of Chocolate Bars
DATE: October 20

The boxes of chocolate bars for our fall fundraising campaign will be delivered to the school loading dock this Friday, October 23, between 2:00 and 4:00 P.M. You may pick up your boxes anytime after 4:00 P.M. on Friday, or between 8:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. on Saturday. PLEASE—the boxes will be marked with your name; take only the number of boxes you ordered.

Deliver all chocolate to supporters by Sunday evening. We did purchase an additional 50 boxes of chocolate bars. Please tell anyone who would like to purchase additional chocolate that we will make a second round of deliveries next weekend.

Thanks to everyone for the terrific sales work on this successful fundraising effort!

Activity: Write a memo to fellow club members announcing details about an upcoming event. Remember to include all the important information that your classmates need to know about the event.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Request

A memo is a brief note that communicates important information. Memos are the main form of communication between members of a group—such as a school, a club, a business, or an organization. Memos can be an efficient and helpful form of communication when you need information. For example, you may need to know the status of a current project, or you may want to ask an individual or a group of people to take action.

Designed for efficiency, the format of a memo is simple and direct. It includes the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE. As with all memos, the information given in the subject heading should be clear. The message, which follows the headings, should include the message itself and important details such as the date, time, and location of the activity or event. Any additional details can be included in the second paragraph.

Each heading is capitalized and followed by a colon.

There is no salutation in a memo. One line space is placed between the headings and the message.

All important information is given in the first paragraph. The writer's request for information is direct and to the point.

• TO: Maya Pagels, Head Librarian
FROM: Patricia Cook, Principal
SUBJECT: Reference Databases
DATE: August 1

• Please send me a current list of the databases available on CD-ROM to our students. In addition, send me the titles of the three databases you feel would be valuable additions to our library collection. Include a brief comment on the usefulness of each database.

I would appreciate receiving this information by August 10.

Thank you.

Activity: Write a memo to a group of classmates requesting that they take responsibility for a specific task related to an upcoming event such as a dance, a banquet, a pep rally, or a fundraiser.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Completing an Award Application

Similar to other kinds of applications, an award application asks for personal information, such as your address and phone number. Depending on the award, the application may ask for educational background, related work experience, and other relevant information. An award application may also ask for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of personal references. Almost all award applications have a special section where you may write a statement explaining why you (or another person) are especially qualified for the award.

Because you want an award application to convey a positive impression, you should complete the form with accurate information that is written neatly and legibly.

Read the instructions carefully before completing the form.

If a question or a category doesn't apply, indicate "not applicable" by writing "n/a" on the form.

Review your answers. Make sure that you have provided complete and correct information.

STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD APPLICATION

Please type or print in black ink.

Name of Nominee: _____ Today's date: _____

Name of Person Making the Nomination: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Student's school: _____

Student's current grade level: _____ Current grade point average: _____

Student's grades in the following classes: (After the letter grade, indicate the title of the class. For example, underneath Science, specify Botany, Advanced Biology, Chemistry, etc.)

- English: _____
- Math: _____
- Science: _____
- Social Science: _____
- Other: _____

Use the back of this sheet if you need more space to answer the following questions.

Awards and/or Commendations: _____

Community and/or Volunteer Work: _____

Please write a statement describing the qualities of the nominee that make you feel he/she is deserving of the award: _____

Activity: Review the application on this page. Fill out the form, nominating yourself or another student for the award. You may use fictitious information to complete the application. Now exchange forms with another student. Check each other's work for completeness of information and accuracy in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating an Event Application

When people apply to participate in an event, such as a dog show, they need to complete an event application. An event application requests information that is important to those who are organizing the event.

The first step in creating an event application is to think carefully about the particular information you need from applicants. For example, if you are organizing a dog show, you might need to know the names and phone numbers of entries' veterinarians in case of an accident or injury. Similar to other applications, essential information, such as name, address, and phone number, appears in the top section of an event application. Other kinds of information that may be important include an applicant's previous participation in related events, awards or honors received at the related events, and category preference. Take a look at the event application below before you create your own.

Essential information appears at the top of the application.

The application requests additional information specifically related to the entry and event.

The application is designed so that it is easy to fill out.

SOUTHPORT KENNEL CLUB ENTRY FORM

ALL-BREED DOG SHOWS & OBEDIENCE TRIALS

Owner: _____

Owner's Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Phone #: _____

Check the box(es) indicating which day(s) you are entering:

☐ Saturday, May 19, 2001

☐ Sunday, May 20, 2001

• ENTRY FEES must be received for each entry each day

☐ \$20.00 for the first entry of each dog (except Puppy Class)

☐ \$10.00 for the second entry of the same dog

☐ \$13.50 Puppy Class entry

Full Name of Dog: _____

Breed: _____ Sex: _____

AKC Registration #: _____ AKC Litter #: _____

• Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Breeder: _____

Veterinarian: _____ Phone: _____

Activity: Create an application for an event. Then exchange work with a classmate. Review each other's applications; consider the relevancy of the categories of information and the questions included on the application.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing E-Mail to Work Associates

Many businesses use e-mail to send messages to coworkers and associates. Just like a memo, an e-mail is a brief message that contains important information. E-mail has a simple, direct format. The heading tells who is receiving the e-mail, who is sending it, the date, and the subject. After the heading, the main point or purpose of the e-mail should be stated clearly and concisely. The whole point of e-mail is efficient communication.

Here are a few guidelines to remember when writing e-mail to work associates.

- Begin with a heading.
- State your main point clearly and concisely.
- Use an appropriate tone. The recipient(s) of your e-mail cannot see an expression on your face. A comment that you meant to be humorous may offend someone else.
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters. Using all capital letters in e-mail correspondence is considered rude.
- Use correct spelling. Although e-mail is sometimes informal, errors are not acceptable.
- Remember that others may read your e-mail. Do not write anything that may be damaging to anyone else.

The heading identifies the recipient of the e-mail, the sender, the date, and the subject.

The e-mail is written in an appropriate tone.

The main point of the e-mail is stated clearly and concisely.

-
- The diagram shows an email structure within a large rectangular box. The top section is the heading, followed by the body text. Three callout boxes on the left point to specific parts of the email: the first points to the heading, the second points to the body text, and the third points to the main point of the email.
- To: All Employees@Best&Brightest.com
From: Janice Domingo@Best&Brightest.com
Date: October 31, 9:14 A.M.
Subject: Personal and Sick Days
 - All employees must use all accumulative personal and sick days by December 29. Please note that failure to do so will result in loss of days earned. This
 - new policy is effective immediately.

Activity: Write an e-mail to coworkers who are on your project team, informing them of an upcoming status meeting. State the specific information that they need to know. Also indicate to your coworkers if they will need to provide any information at the meeting or be responsible for any portion of the meeting.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing E-Mail to a Webmaster

The creator of a Web site is called a Webmaster. You may wish to write an e-mail to a Webmaster regarding information found on the site. Perhaps you wish to inform him or her of an error you found; maybe you wish to compliment a particular feature of the site or complain about it. In any case, think of an e-mail to a Webmaster as a very brief letter to the editor.

As you know, e-mail is a quick way to send a message. An informal tone and format are acceptable when you're writing to a friend. However, when you're writing an e-mail to someone other than a friend, such as a Webmaster, it is important to use a more formal format and style. When you're writing an e-mail to a Webmaster, it is important to write in a polite, respectful tone.

The heading of an e-mail should identify who is receiving the e-mail, who is sending it, the date, and the subject. The subject line is especially important because it helps people decide whether to open the e-mail immediately. Most likely a Webmaster would quickly open an e-mail with the subject line "Two Errors Found" so that he or she could identify and correct the problem. After the heading, the purpose of the e-mail should be stated clearly and concisely.

Here are a few guidelines to remember when writing e-mail to a Webmaster.

- Begin with a heading.
- State the purpose of your message clearly and concisely.
- Use a respectful, polite tone.
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters. Using all capital letters in e-mail correspondence is considered rude.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Remember that others may read your e-mail. Do not write anything that may be damaging to anyone else.

The main point of the e-mail is stated clearly and concisely.

The sender clearly states what beneficial action he hopes the Webmaster will take.

To: Webmaster@acoolwebsite.com
From: Frank Berry@someisp.com
Date: March 21, 8:22 P.M.
Subject: Navigation of Site Links

- Unfortunately I have found your site difficult to navigate. This seems a shame because the site's content and links are thorough and reliable. I am not a novice surfer of the Net, so I assume that others (and especially newcomers to the Net and to your site) are experiencing similar frustrations. I truly believe your site would benefit from a more direct and clear set of pathways.

Activity: Write an e-mail message to a Webmaster of one of your favorite Internet sites. Write the Webmaster to pay a compliment regarding a particular aspect of the site, to complain about a problem, or to provide details regarding errors at the site.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

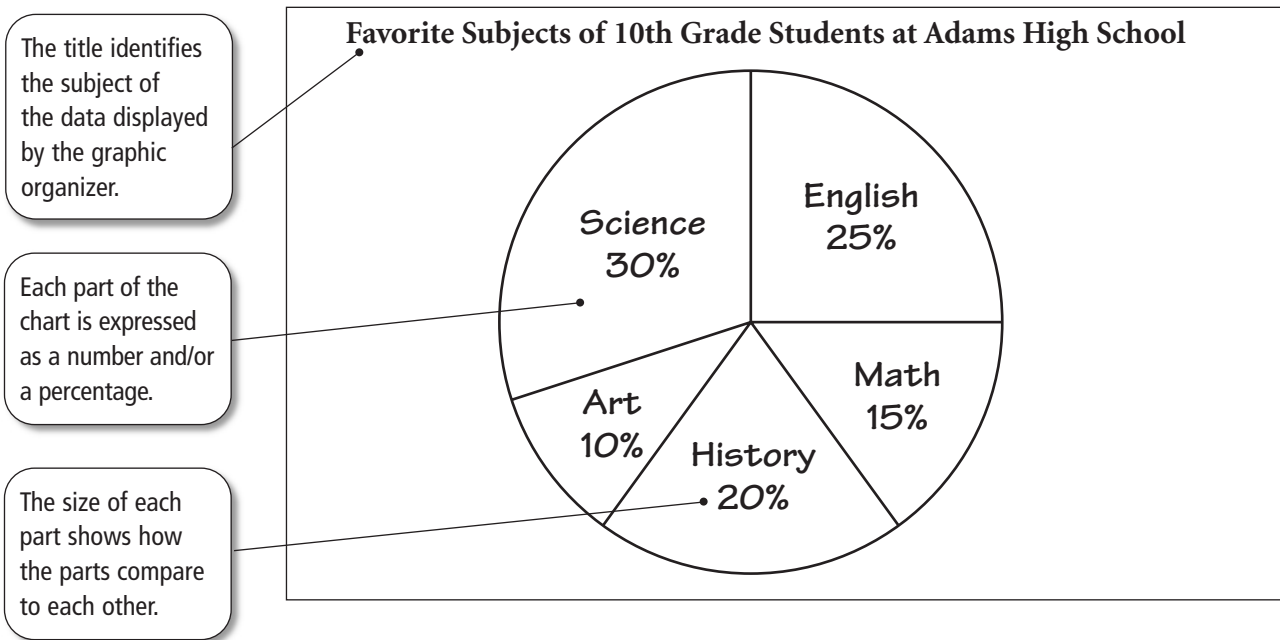
Name Class Date

Choosing an Appropriate Graphic Organizer

Because a graphic organizer presents information visually, it can be effective in making difficult or complex information easier for a reader to understand. There are many kinds of graphic organizers, including tables, charts, line graphs, bar graphs, and circle graphs or pie charts. One kind of graphic organizer may be more appropriate or effective than another kind for presenting particular information. For example, to show the results of a class survey on students' favorite school subjects, a circle graph or pie chart would probably be the most effective organizer.

Consider the following characteristics of various graphic organizers before deciding which organizer is most appropriate for presenting particular information.

- A table organizes information into columns and rows. Individual cells in a table contain data.
- A line graph shows changes in quantities over time.
- A bar graph shows how quantities compare to each other or how they change over time.
- A circle graph or pie chart shows the relationship of parts to a whole. Each part of the circle or pie represents a certain percentage of the whole, which is always 100%.



Activity: Choose which graphic organizer would be most effective for each of the following kinds of information.

1. To show the number of American eagles returned to the wild each year over a thirty-year span of time (1970–2000).
2. To show the average number of hours students in your class study each week for four subject areas. Data: Math (6 hrs); Science (8.5 hrs); English (4.5 hrs); History (5 hrs).
3. To show the favorite forms of exercise in which students at your school participate on a regular basis.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating a Table

A table organizes information (usually facts and figures) into columns and rows. The columns in a table are the vertical elements; the rows are the horizontal elements; the cells are the individual boxes that contain data.

A table can usually be created using a word processing program. Select the Table function and indicate the number of rows and columns you need in the table. You can also create a table using a spreadsheet program. The spreadsheet is already formatted in rows and columns. Input the data you wish to appear in each cell. You can also enhance the appearance of a table by adding borders, shading, or color.

When creating a table, keep the following points in mind.

- Clearly label appropriate rows and columns with headings that describe the data.
- Make sure that each cell in the table contains accurate data.
- Use borders and shading sparingly to make the information easier to read and understand.

The following table presents the December sales figures for The Little Shop in the Mall.

The table is organized into columns and rows.	Dec. Dates	Clothing	Jewelery	Bath Products	Puzzles and Games	Books	Music	Cards and Gift Wrap
	1–7	\$350.98	\$274.50	\$102.65	\$35.00	\$178.76	\$201.88	\$74.78
The simple border has been added to separate the columns and rows.	8–14	\$400.75	\$300.95	\$158.00	\$57.98	\$200.13	\$215.00	\$186.99
	15–21	\$425.00	\$359.99	\$256.75	\$20.50	\$450.95	\$425.75	\$210.15
	22–28	\$795.25	\$500.00	\$487.26	\$176.00	\$600.99	\$800.95	\$300.00
The final row shows the totals for each column.	29–31	\$200.00	\$150.95	\$55.75	\$5.25	\$210.00	\$199.99	\$50.99
	TOTALS	\$2171.98	\$1586.39	\$1060.41	\$294.73	\$1640.83	\$1843.57	\$822.91

Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, create a table to show the difference in cost between five brands of the same product, such as athletic shoes, computer monitors or printers, or blue jeans. You may create fictitious statistics to use in your table. If you have access to a computer, create your table using either a word processing or a spreadsheet program.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

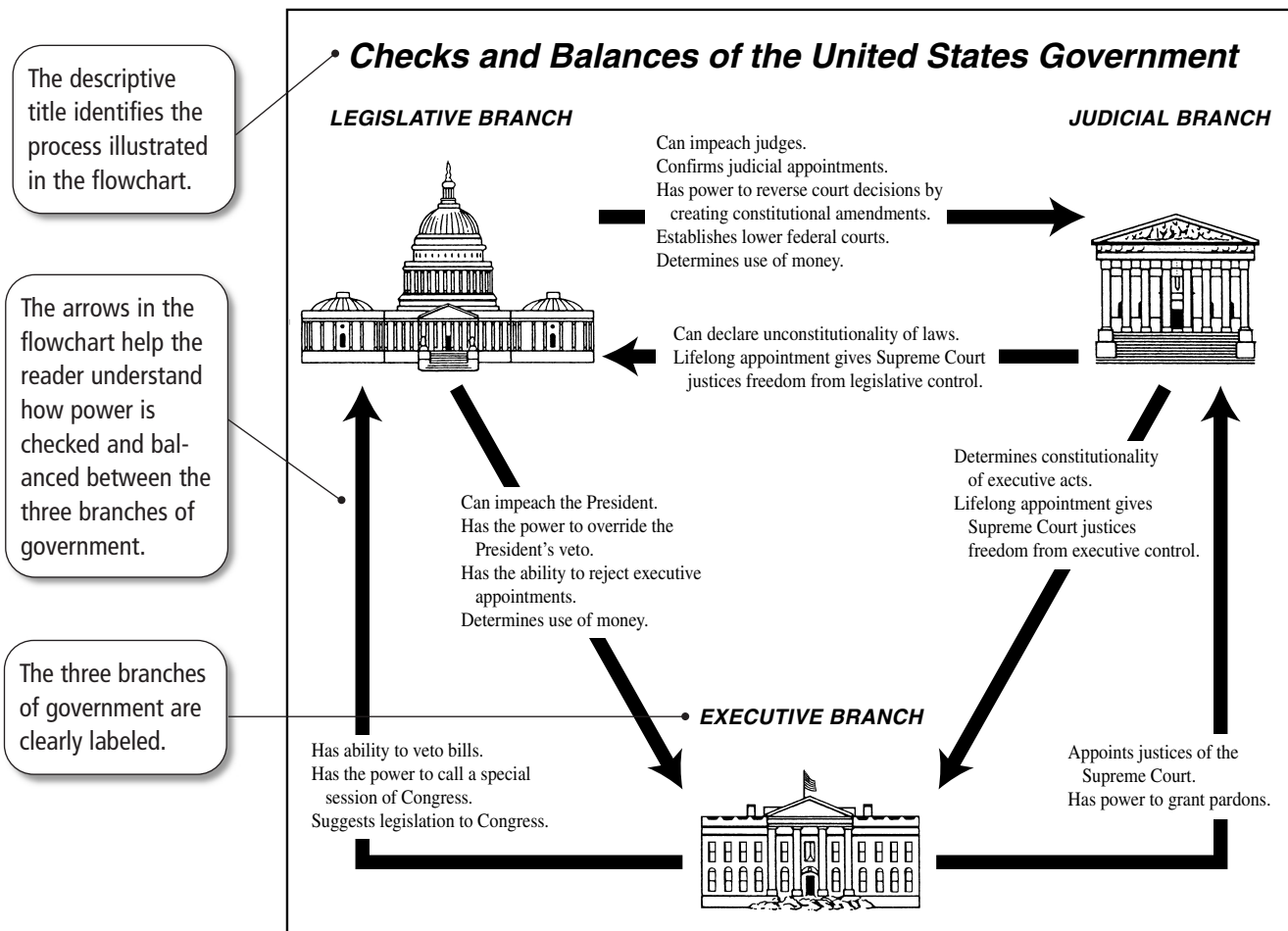
Developing a Flowchart

A flowchart outlines the steps in a process. Flowcharts can help a viewer or reader understand any process, whether that process is simple or complex. An effective flowchart identifies each step and its sequence in the process.

When creating a flowchart, keep the following tips in mind.

- Include a descriptive title for the flowchart.
- Identify each step and its place in the process.
- Be consistent in labeling.
- Check for accuracy.

Review the following flowchart, which illustrates the process of checks and balances in the United States government.



Copyright © The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Activity: Create a flowchart that outlines the steps in a process with which you are familiar. Select a fairly simple process that is comprised of several steps.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing Instructions

Have you ever tried to follow poorly written instructions or confusing directions? Instructions are confusing when the writer has left out one or more steps in the process or has placed the steps in incorrect order. The writer may think that the missing steps are not necessary or are obvious to anyone trying to complete the process described in the instructions. The missing steps are not obvious, however, to the frustrated person trying to assemble a new computer system or to the visitor who has become hopelessly lost while trying to find the way to a particular location.

Good instructions clearly explain each step in the process in the order in which the steps need to be done. Good instructions include a list of the tools and equipment needed to complete a task. In many cases, a simple drawing is helpful in illustrating a specific step or the finished product.

When you're writing instructions, keep the following tips in mind.

- Be sure you completely understand the process you are describing.
- List tools or equipment that will be needed.
- Divide the process into clearly defined steps organized in chronological order.
- Include helpful visuals.

All required tools and materials are listed at the beginning.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to the audience are defined.

The process is divided into four clearly defined steps.

The instructions include a helpful visual.

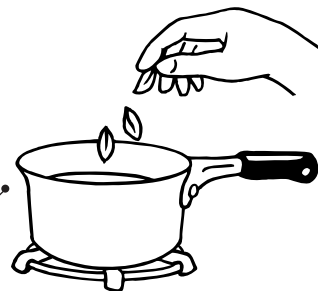
How to Make Simple Tomato Sauce

• **Tools and Materials:** 1-quart saucepan, paring knife, wooden spoon, measuring cups and spoons, paper towels, olive oil, 2 garlic cloves, 8 plum tomatoes (small, oblong-shaped red tomatoes), salt and pepper, fresh basil leaves

• **Step 1.** Put 1/3 cup olive oil and the peeled garlic cloves in the saucepan. Place the saucepan on the stove and turn on the heat to medium.

Step 2. Wash and dry the tomatoes. Chop them into chunks.

Step 3. When the garlic turns a pale gold color, add the tomatoes to the saucepan. Turn the heat down to very low. Stir the mixture. Cook the tomatoes and garlic for about 20 minutes, until the oil floats free of the tomatoes.



Step 4. Add 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Stir the sauce. Cook the sauce for another 2 to 3 minutes.

Step 5. Gently wash the basil leaves and pat them dry with a paper towel.

Step 6. Turn off the heat. Tear the basil leaves into small pieces and add them to the sauce. Stir the sauce.

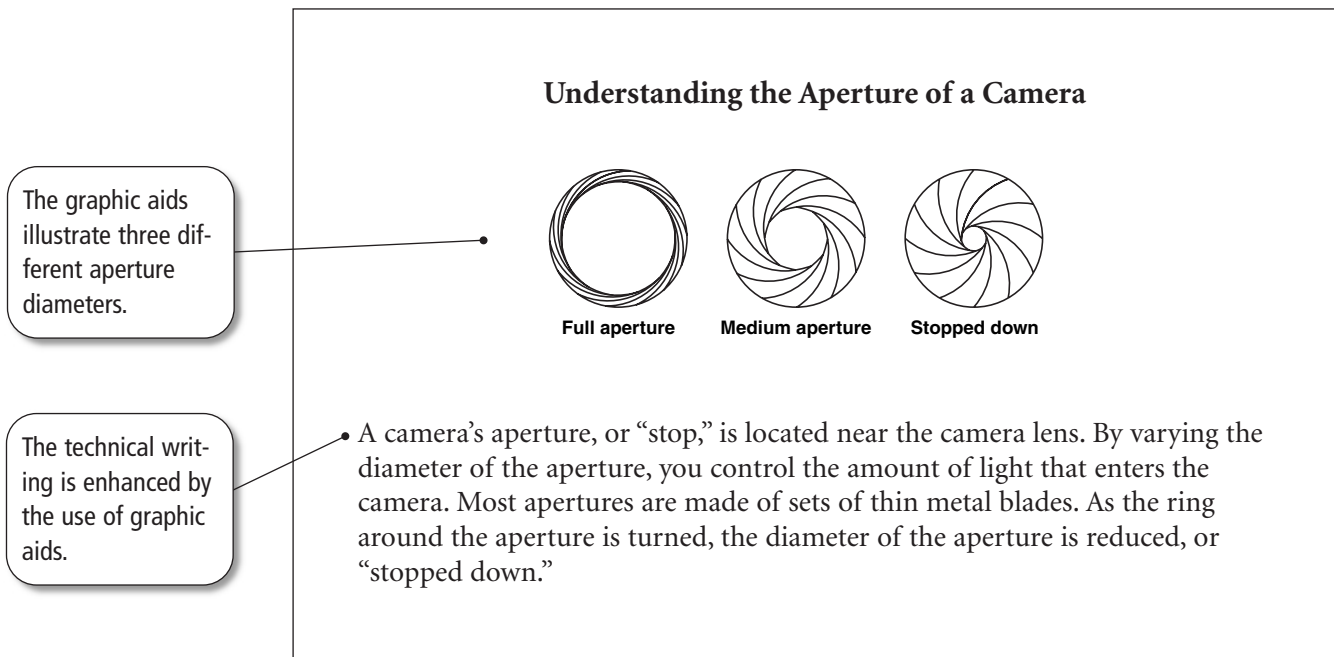
Activity: Write step-by-step instructions for a process with which you are completely familiar, such as grooming a dog or shooting a lay-up. Clearly label each step in the process in the order in which it needs to be completed. List necessary tools and define unfamiliar terms.

Name Class Date

Using Graphic Aids in Technical Writing

Do you recognize the saying “One picture is worth a thousand words”? In technical writing, one picture or graphic aid can help readers better understand or more quickly grasp the material that is being presented. An organization chart, for example, would show how departments in a company are related. A flowchart would illustrate the steps in a procedure and help readers visualize the process. A diagram in an instruction booklet would help readers understand how to assemble something. A line drawing would show how a particular part looks. One well-prepared graphic aid enhances even the most fluent writing, making clear in one picture the material explained in a whole page of writing.

The graphic aid in the following model enhances the paragraph of technical writing by illustrating different diameters in a camera’s aperture.



Activity: Write a paragraph defining a scientific or mathematical concept or term. Use a graphic aid to supplement the technical paragraph and to help readers understand the concept or term that is defined.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Spreadsheets

A table allows you to organize and present data in columns and rows. A spreadsheet, which looks like a table, allows you to sort and group categories, analyze data, and perform mathematical operations. A spreadsheet software program is helpful in business and at home and school. Like other types of software programs, a spreadsheet program offers many options and benefits. One benefit of a spreadsheet program is that the program automatically recalculates data, such as expenditures or costs, whenever the data has been changed.

The following spreadsheet identifies the various expenses for a school biology lab.

The spreadsheet is divided into categories.	Name of Item	Cost Per Item	Number of Items Ordered	Total Costs
The spreadsheet identifies various expenses for the biology lab.	Test tubes	\$1.00	100	\$100.00
	Beakers	\$4.95	15	\$74.25
	Microscope slides	\$0.75	150	\$112.50
The spreadsheet calculates the total costs.	Microscopes	\$399.00	5	\$1995.00
	TOTAL			\$2281.75

Activity: Imagine that you are in charge of planning the food for an upcoming class picnic. Use a spreadsheet software program to identify the various individual expenses and total costs for food, such as hot dogs and hamburgers, buns, chips, salads, condiments, and soda.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing an Abstract

An abstract is a brief summary of a scientific report or professional article. The abstract often appears at the beginning of the report; it may be published in catalogs and databases used by researchers. A well-written abstract tells researchers exactly what information the report contains. The abstract should highlight all important information so that researchers do not overlook the report.

An abstract is usually one paragraph in length. The abstract explains the question or hypothesis posed in the experiment and offers a concise summary of the results. If a report or article is lengthy or complex, the abstract may be three or four paragraphs in length. However, the writer's goal is to make the abstract concise, without compromising the accuracy of the information.

Abstract

The question or purpose of the experiment is posed as a statement in the opening sentence.

The writer concisely summarizes the results.

- This report demonstrates the range of humidity at a greenhouse over three sequential 24-hour periods. The lowest ranges in percentage of humidity occur between the hours of 3:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M. The moderate ranges in percentage of humidity occur between the hours of 10:00 P.M. and 3:00 A.M.
- The highest ranges in percentage of humidity occur between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M.

Activity: Write an abstract for a research paper or report you have written or would like to write for a science or history class.

Name Class Date

Collaborating to Develop an Oral Report

Collaboration and teamwork are stressed in today's business world. Collaboration refers to the ability of people to work together. A team of people engage in open discussion to generate ideas, analyze and solve problems, and evaluate performance and progress. When the collaboration process works well, it can be a creative and rewarding experience for all members of the group. Sometimes, however, people do not work well together. More outgoing members of a group may push their ideas onto others, while quiet members of the group may be reluctant to share their ideas. When this happens, collaboration can become an experience in frustration.

For the collaboration process to be effective and rewarding, each member of the team must be proficient in active listening. An active listener makes sure that everyone's point of view is heard and understood. An active listener pays attention to what others say and paraphrases their ideas to be sure the ideas are understood. When you are an active listener, you avoid interrupting and try not to disagree with someone before he or she has fully expressed a point of view. An active listener asks open-ended questions.

When you collaborate, consider the following suggestions.

- Begin by discussing the project and coming to an agreement on its purpose.
- State the purpose clearly in writing and make sure everyone understands the purpose.
- Assign sections of the project or specific responsibilities to individuals in the group. Make use of people's individual talents, skills, and interests.
- Have the entire group evaluate each section, suggest revisions, and proofread the final document.

Activity: Work in a small group to develop an oral report on a topic selected by the group. Begin collaborating by brainstorming to make a list of possible topics. Afterward write a statement summarizing your experience with the collaboration process. State the group's areas of strength and areas where improvements could be made for a more rewarding collaboration experience.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Collaborating to Design a Product

Research and development teams generally rely upon the team approach to develop new ideas for a product. When all members of the team work well together, the collaboration process can result in the design of a first-class product. Collaboration is most effective and rewarding when individual team members listen actively to one another, cooperate, and contribute equally. A team that works effectively makes use of the strengths, skills, and interests of individual team members. For example, one member of the team may be a strong spokesperson, while another may be highly skilled at visually presenting concepts and ideas.

Keep the following suggestions for active listening in mind as your team collaborates to design a product. These suggestions will help your team work together in an effective and a rewarding way.

- Make sure everyone's point of view is heard and understood.
- Pay attention to what others say.
- Avoid interrupting when someone else is speaking.
- Ask open-ended questions.

When collaborating, establish specific tasks, goals, and schedules.

April 15, 2001

CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS, INC.

Responsibilities and tasks for development of BRAIN DRAIN, a board game.

Team members: Kevin Rodriguez, Kate Schmidt, Peggy Parker, Chet Wheeler

To be completed by June 20: rules, board design (mock-up), game parts

Rules: (Kevin) Coordinate with board design team to make sure rules and elements of the board are consistent. Complete first draft of rules by April 20. Prepare final draft for April 25.

Board Design: (Kate, Chet) Coordinate with Kevin. Share initial ideas with Peggy so she can consider ideas for game parts. Complete first color illustration of board by April 20. Meet with entire team on April 25 to review illustration. Prepare mock-up by May 1.

Game Parts: (Peggy) Coordinate with board design team. Complete first color illustrations of parts by April 20. Meet with entire team on April 25 to review board design and game parts. Prepare mock-up game parts by May 1.

Schedule: After May 1 meeting, have all revisions complete by May 10. Team presentation (spokesperson: Peggy) of board game to client on May 15. All client comments and additional changes addressed and completed by May 25. Team presentation of final game product to client for approval on May 28.

Activity: With a small group, collaborate to design a new game—a board game, a computer game, or any other type of game. As a team, discuss ideas for the product and decide which specific tasks to assign to individual group members. Work together to create a rules booklet for the game, game parts, and packaging.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Determining the Content of a Web Site

When you surf the Internet, you discover a vast number of Web sites containing wide variety of information. The content of a Web site is determined by many factors, such as the Webmaster's purpose in creating the site and the audience he or she hopes to reach.

Like the purpose of a piece of writing, the purpose of a Web site may be to entertain, inform, or persuade. The purpose of a Web site is probably the most influential factor in determining the site's content. The content of a Web site that has the purpose of persuading viewers in an entertaining way to practice good health habits, for example, would be enormously different from the content of a site that has the purpose to persuade people to donate money to a nonprofit health organization. The purpose of a Web site determines the site's content, approach, layout and graphics, images, sound and music effects, and hyperlinks.

View the following page from a fictitious Web site. What do you think the purpose of the site is? How did the purpose help determine the content?

How Healthy Are You?



How many times each week do you exercise for 20 minutes or more?



How many glasses of milk do you drink each day?



How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you eat each day?



Do you have a physical check-up each year?

Activity: Write a description of a Web site you would like to create. Describe the purpose of your site and the audience you hope to reach. Explain how the purpose and audience will affect the choices you make in determining the site's content, approach, layout and graphics, images, sound and music effects, and hyperlinks.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

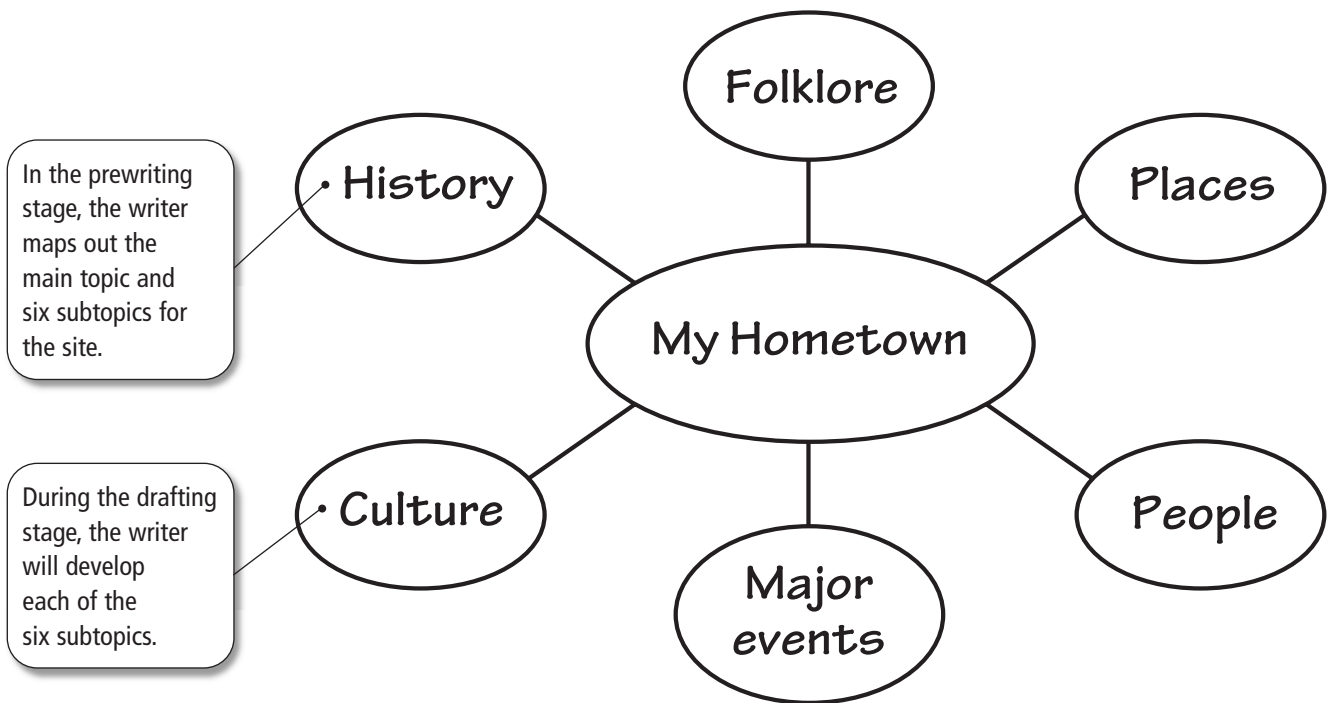
Name Class Date

Writing the Content for a Web Site

Once you have determined the content for a Web site, the time has come to begin writing. As with any writing assignment, you'll want to follow the five steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and publishing/presenting. When prewriting, you may wish to create a graphic organizer or list to help identify the topic and the subtopics of your site. A prewriting organizer or list will also help you as you develop each page in the site.

After prewriting, begin drafting the content for your Web site, using your graphic organizer as a working guide. Develop each subtopic and indicate ideas you have about visual enhancements, layout, graphics, sound, and hyperlinks. Remember—during the drafting stage you just want to get as much written down on paper as possible.

After drafting, have one or two friends look at your draft. They can suggest where you need to make your writing clearer. Incorporate suggestions that you think are valid and worthwhile. Then take another close look at the manuscript yourself and revise the text with the help of notes you have made about the layout, graphics, images, sound, and hyperlinks.



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Activity: Create a prewriting graphic, such as a web or cluster diagram, that identifies the main topic of your Web site as well as the subtopics. Then write one page of content for the Web site. Remember to check for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Designing the Layout of a Web Site

In developing the content for your Web site, you have already considered the purpose and audience intended for the site. Now you need to design a layout that will make the content you've developed easy to read and understand. The most important thing to remember when designing the layout for a Web site is simplicity. Simplicity and clarity will enable your readers to easily understand your content. An effective layout design establishes continuity between the pages and offers the viewer logical pathways to navigate through the site. As you design the layout for your Web site, keep your readers in mind.

The clear, simple design makes the Web site seem accessible and the content easy to read.

The logical pathways help the viewer navigate through the Web site.



Activity: Design a layout for a Web site you would like to create. Select one specific page in the site, such as the Home Page, or show the design elements you would use on two or three pages to establish continuity between the pages.

Rubrics for Activities

■ PAGE 1

Students' business letters should

- request information about an upcoming event
- include a statement of purpose
- be clear and brief
- be polite and conversational in tone
- follow the style conventions of business writing
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 2

Students' business letters should

- address a colleague regarding an unethical business practice
- persuade the colleague to change his/her point of view
- include supporting facts, reasons, and/or examples
- be polite, respectful, fair, and truthful
- follow the conventions of business writing
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 3

Students' letters of complaint should

- clearly state a complaint regarding a defective product or poor service
- explain what action the company should take in response to the complaint
- be written in a polite tone
- follow the conventions of a business letter
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 4

Students' cover letters should

- state the purpose for writing and the position that is being applied for
- highlight any experiences that specifically relate to the position
- be written in a polite, conversational tone
- be written in business-letter format
- express enthusiasm for the position
- express thanks for time and consideration
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 5

Students' letters to the editor should

- state a clear opinion on a local issue
- state the opposing position(s) clearly and correctly
- show an understanding of other point(s) of view
- be written in a polite, reasonable tone
- support opinions with accurate facts, statistics, and/or reasons
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 6

Students' letters of application should

- clearly state that they are applying for membership
- highlight experiences that specifically relate to the application for membership

- be written in a polite, conversational tone
- be written in business-letter format
- express enthusiasm for the organization
- express thanks for time and consideration
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 7

Students' letters of condolence should

- express sympathy with a colleague who has recently lost a beloved family member
- express sympathy with a brief and heartfelt statement
- be formal and considerate in tone
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 8

Students' memos should

- announce details about an upcoming club event
- include the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE
- include all important information such as date, time, and location in the first paragraph
- include any additional information in a second paragraph

■ PAGE 9

Students' memos should

- address a group of classmates, requesting that they take responsibility for a specific task related to an upcoming event
- include the headings TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE
- include all important information such as date, time, and location in the first paragraph
- include any additional information in a second paragraph

■ PAGE 10

Students should

- complete the award application, nominating themselves or another student for the award (Students may complete the form with fictitious information.)
- fill in the application as completely and accurately as possible
- write neatly and legibly in blue or black ink
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 11

Students' event applications should

- request necessary information, such as name, date, address, and phone number, at the top of the form
- include additional questions or categories relevant to the entry and event
- be easy to fill out

■ PAGE 12

Students' e-mail messages to work associates should

- inform them of an upcoming status meeting
- include a heading

Business and Technical Writing Activities

- state the main point in a paragraph following the heading
- use an appropriate tone
- be clear and concise
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 13

Students' e-mail messages to a Webmaster should

- include a heading that identifies the recipient, the sender, the date, and the subject
- compliment a specific feature of the site, or complain about a problem, or identify errors at the site
- state any specific action the sender wants the Webmaster to take
- use a respectful, polite tone
- be clear and concise
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 14

Students should choose

- a line graph
- a bar graph
- a pie chart or circle graph

■ PAGE 15

Students' tables should

- show the difference in cost between five different brands of the same product
- be organized in columns and rows
- show data in individual cells
- label clearly the subject of the table
- include necessary labels to identify data in columns and rows

■ PAGE 16

Students' flowcharts should

- outline the steps in a simple process
- include clearly marked labels
- include helpful graphics, such as arrows

■ PAGE 17

Students' instructions should

- provide step-by-step instructions for a process
- list necessary tools or equipment
- be clearly written
- organize the steps in chronological order
- include helpful visuals
- define unfamiliar terms

■ PAGE 18

Students' graphic aids should

- enhance readers' understanding of the defined scientific or mathematical concept or term
- illustrate some defining aspect of the concept or term
- help readers visualize the concept or term
- be clear and easy to understand

■ PAGE 19

Students' spreadsheets should

- identify food expenses for a class picnic
- be organized by category and show individual and total costs

■ PAGE 20

Students' abstracts should

- begin with a restatement of the question posed in the research paper or report
- summarize the important information included in a research paper or report for a science or history class
- be one paragraph in length
- be concisely written

■ PAGE 21

Students should

- collaborate in a small group to create an oral report on a topic selected by the group
- practice active listening skills while collaborating
- write a summary of their collaboration experience, identifying the group's areas of strength and areas where improvements could be made for a more rewarding collaboration experience

■ PAGE 22

Students should

- collaborate in a small group to create a new game
- use active listening skills as they brainstorm for ideas
- assign specific tasks to individual group members
- establish a schedule for evaluating progress and completing the campaign

■ PAGE 23

Students should

- describe a Web site they would like to create
- explain the purpose of the site and identify the intended audience
- explain how the purpose and audience will determine the site's content

■ PAGE 24

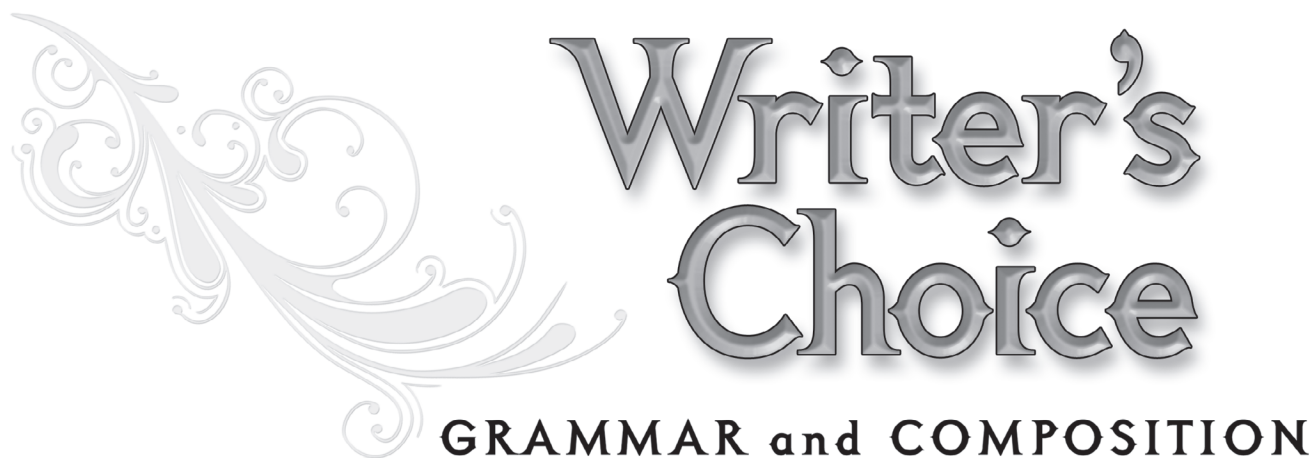
Students should

- create a prewriting graphic that illustrates the main topic and the subtopics of the Web site
- write one page of content for the Web site, developed from their diagrams
- create one page of content that uses correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

■ PAGE 25

Students' Web site layout designs should

- be simple, clear, and easy to follow
- show one specific page in the site, such as the Home Page, or the design elements that would establish continuity between two or three pages in the site



Business and Technical Writing Activities Grade 11



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Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Conventions of Business Writing

Business writing is one of the most common forms of communication. It is used by people every day to communicate between colleagues in a work setting, apply for jobs, make formal requests, express opinions, or make complaints. Despite the varied purposes, the many forms all share some common elements, including a conversational but formal tone, a focused purpose, an appropriate format, strict attention to the rules of grammar and punctuation, the inclusion of detailed information, clarity, and—as much as possible—brevity. Business writing should be done with a focus on the purpose and the audience, keeping in mind that clarity is the best way to ensure that a message is properly communicated.

A heading includes the date and the writer's return address.

23 Minna Avenue
San Francisco, California 94103
April 6, 2002

The writer states the purpose directly and immediately.

Janet Wellman, Director
Sunnytime Preschool
34 Laurel Street
San Anselmo, California 94960

Dear Ms. Wellman:

The tone is conversational, but formal and focused.

- I am the leader of a children's puppet show troupe in San Francisco and am interested in bringing one of our shows to your preschool. We have been performing high-quality puppet shows for children ages 3–11 since 1994. Our experience ranges from city-sponsored children's fairs to special private gatherings, but the majority of our puppet shows are performed for children at elementary schools and preschools such as yours. Our shows can be tailored to deal with specific themes or they can be performed purely for the children's entertainment.

The writer includes important pertinent information.

- Puppet shows provide a unique storytelling experience for children. I would like to speak to you further about the possibility of bringing this experience to your preschool. If you are interested in discussing how our troupe can bring the excitement of puppetry to your school, please contact me by phone at 555-7589 or by e-mail puppets@internet.com.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Michael Worth

Director
SF Puppets Galore

Activity: Select a sample business letter from the textbook or use a sample provided by your teacher. Identify within the letter five elements of business writing and define the elements. Explain how each element helps to communicate the letter's message.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Ethics and Business Writing

The term *ethics* means “a code of behavior.” In business, ethics address a key element of writing: consideration of your audience. Ignoring ethical considerations undermines effective business writing. To reflect proper ethics in business writing, avoid misleading your audience. Be honest throughout your letter (for example, don’t leave out key information), be polite and reasonable, avoid taking an aggressive tone or engaging in personal attacks, and never make assumptions about your audience for which you have no basis. Keep in mind that business writing should be conversational but formal in its tone and clear and direct about its purpose. State matters truthfully and include all relevant information.

34 Laurel Street
San Anselmo, California 94960
April 26, 2002

Michael Worth, Director
SF Puppets Galore
23 Minna Avenue
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Mr. Worth:

- I am writing to express my disappointment regarding your lateness for the puppet show performance last Friday, April 23, at our Sunnyside Preschool. Although the performance was wonderful and provided a unique experience for our children, the one-hour delay caused staff and parents many inconveniences. It not only disrupted our schedule for the day, but the delay forced many parents to spend extra time waiting to pick up their children.

Because of the children’s response to your show, we would like to have you perform for us again in the future. However, due to the lateness of your first show, we would like to receive our next performance at a discounted rate. Please let me know if you will be able to accommodate this request. If a discounted show is possible, we would be happy to continue this relationship in the future.

Sincerely,

Janet Wellman

Director
Sunnyside Preschool

The writer states the purpose directly and immediately.

The tone is firm, but remains polite. The writer explains the problem in detail instead of simply expressing anger.

The writer provides a reasonable solution to the problem.

Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter to a company complaining about a service or a product. When writing a letter of complaint, a common error is to cross ethical boundaries by using an aggressive tone or making unreasonable demands; such style may negate the effectiveness of the letter. To avoid this pitfall, be sure to follow proper ethical guidelines when writing your letter.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Request

A letter of request is used when you need information, action, or assistance. When writing a letter of request, you should state exactly what you want in the first paragraph. Make certain that your needs are expressed as clearly and briefly as possible. Your letter should include related information, such as why you are making the request, when you need the request fulfilled, and how the requested information should be provided. (Include your return address, fax number, or e-mail address.) Pay attention to the conventions of business writing when composing a letter of request.

A heading includes the date and the writer's return address.

23 Minna Avenue
San Francisco, California 94103
July 20, 2002

The writer states the purpose directly and immediately.

JoJo Rain, Sales Director
Premier Puppet Fabric
300 Clay Street
Peoria, Illinois 61602

Dear Ms. Rain:

I am the director of a children's puppet show troupe in San Francisco and would like to request some samples of your highest quality puppet fabric. I am always interested in finding the best puppet materials that are available and have read that your puppet fabric is among the best in the country. We are planning on creating a new set of puppets beginning next month and need to decide on fabric within the next two weeks. The fabric samples should be mailed to the above address.

The writer states the way in which he would like the request to be fulfilled.

I look forward to receiving your samples and hope that we can do business together soon.

Sincerely,

Michael Worth

Director
SF Puppets Galore

Activity: Choose a place you might want to visit for a vacation. On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter of request to an actual or a fictional tourism bureau, resort, or travel agency. Ask for information you might need in order to plan your trip. Be sure to include information such as when you plan on making the trip, how long you intend to stay, and how many people will be traveling.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Opinion

Writing a letter of opinion can be an effective way to communicate a point of view and to persuade others to agree with your point of view. The first challenge in writing a letter of opinion is to organize your thoughts. Make sure that you clearly describe the situation as you see it and provide strong reasons in support of your position. Often your audience will have a different point of view than yours; therefore, in addition to clearly stating your own opinion, it is important to express the opposing view clearly and accurately. By demonstrating a strong understanding of both viewpoints, you will be more effective in persuading others.

This heading includes the proper title and address of the recipient.

72 Third Street
Aurora, Colorado 80014
August 1, 2002

The writer accurately expresses the opposing viewpoint.

• Dr. Gerald Popkin, Columnist
City Life magazine
510 Main Street
Denver, Colorado 80205

The writer provides good support for his point of view.

Dear Dr. Popkin:

• I am a seventeen-year-old junior at City High School and have been an avid skateboarder for almost ten years. Although I understand that careless, reckless skateboarding can be a serious danger to pedestrians throughout the city, I feel that it is unfair to categorize all skateboarding as dangerous. Most of the skateboarders that I have known consider safety to be one of their main concerns. Responsible skateboarders know that wearing the proper equipment and being aware of the people around them is important. None of the skateboarders that I know have ever been involved in an accident with a pedestrian.

The tone remains polite throughout.

• I would invite you to meet with some of my fellow skateboarders and me. After meeting some responsible skateboarders, I'm sure that you will agree that it is unfair to write about skateboarding without telling both sides of the story.

• Sincerely,

Jerry Spinner

Activity: Write a letter to a school official or a local community leader about an issue that currently affects your town or city. In your letter, express your opinion on the matter. Be sure that you discuss both your viewpoint and the opposing viewpoint.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Letter of Application

A letter of application can be used when applying for a job, an internship, or a scholarship. In most cases, the letter is intended to accompany another form such as a résumé or an application. Because other detailed information is usually included in the accompanying form, a letter of application should provide a general overview of your qualifications and the reasons you are submitting an application. In a letter of application, you should make a general point and then refer the recipient to the accompanying form for more details. For example, you may state, “As my résumé shows, I have significant experience in the area of Web-site design.” A letter of application should be brief and concise. You should clearly state what you are applying for and then explain why you are interested and what makes you qualified. Keep in mind that the accompanying material should speak for itself.

The optional subject line indicates the topic of the letter.

32 South Street
Austin, Texas 78746
May 6, 2002

Melissa Reyes
City Life magazine
2301 Davis Avenue
Austin, Texas 78764

Re: Internship

The writer states her purpose directly and immediately.

Dear Ms. Reyes:

The writer comments briefly on her qualifications.

I am a junior at City High School and editor of the *City High Herald*. I am writing to apply for your summer internship at *City Life* magazine. As a journalism student and a longtime fan of your magazine, I feel that an internship with your magazine would provide me with valuable experience in the field of journalism. I believe that my role with the *City High Herald* has given me the skills necessary to be a useful contributor to your magazine this summer. In addition, my enclosed application shows that I am also a diligent worker.

The writer makes reference to the accompanying material.

I thank you for considering my application for your summer internship, and I hope to be working with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Anne Moris

Anne Moris

Activity: Choose a local business where you might like to work. On a separate sheet of paper, write a letter of application for an internship at that business. State your interest and general qualifications. Assume that you will be submitting this letter along with a résumé or an internship application that lists your experience and qualifications in greater detail.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Thank-You Letter

A thank-you letter is one of the most basic types of business communications. Its simple purpose is to thank someone for a service provided, an effort made, or an opportunity offered. The letter should be direct and brief; one paragraph will often be sufficient. Simply state what you are thanking the recipient for and express your gratitude. Note special efforts that were made. If appropriate, you may want to mention possibilities for a continued relationship. The tone should be friendly, but remain formal and businesslike. Pay attention to the conventions of business writing when composing a thank-you letter.

14 Ninth Street
Pocatello, Idaho 83206
May 15, 2002

Anthony Agresta
A. A. Photography
514 Main Street
Pocatello, Idaho 83201

In the opening line,
the writer states
what he is thanking
the recipient for.

Dear Mr. Agresta:

The writer
states something
gained from
the experience.

- I would like to thank you for the opportunity to interview for the summer internship at A. A. Photography. After discussing the internship with you, I am even more excited about the possibility of working for your business this summer. I feel that my experience as yearbook photographer makes me a perfect match for the role that you described.

The letter remains
brief and direct.

- If there is anything further that I can do to help you with the decision process, please let me know. I hope that we will have the opportunity to work together this summer.

Sincerely,

Jason Taylor

Jason Taylor

Activity: You have organized a gathering to which you invited an accomplished athlete to give a motivational speech to a sports team or an athletic club at your school. On a separate sheet of paper, write a thank-you letter to the speaker expressing your gratitude for his or her efforts. Be sure to describe how the recipient contributed to the gathering's success. Keep your letter brief and direct.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Announce

A memo is a form of business writing that is intended for communication within a business, a school, or another type of organization. The purpose of most memos is to ensure that the appropriate people within an organization are kept aware of important information. Because the intended audience is usually very specific, efficiency of communication is one of the main qualities of a memo. One common type of memo announces something new or different within the organization. For example, if a new employee has been hired or a new policy has been implemented, a memo may be distributed announcing this event to the members of the organization. In the memo, describe clearly what is being announced and how it will affect members of the organization. Keep in mind that the form for a memo is different from the form of a business letter and that its tone may be slightly less formal. A memo is generally kept as brief as possible, formatted with all the text flush left, and written with only a minimum of header information.

The topic of the memo is stated clearly in the subject line.

The announcement is made in the first sentence.

All of the important information is included briefly in the memo.

TO: All Employees
FROM: Jordan Tyne, Human Resources Manager
SUBJECT: New Human Resources Assistant Director
DATE: November 3

Please join me in congratulating Leslie Daly on her appointment as assistant director in the Human Resources Department. Leslie comes to our company with a strong background in human resources and five years of experience in the field. Leslie begins work on Monday, November 10, and will become the main contact for employees who have human resource needs. All future general human resource inquiries should be directed to Leslie.

Please welcome Leslie when she arrives next week.

Activity: Choose an organization or a business that you are or would like to be a part of. On a separate sheet of paper, write a memo announcing the arrival of a new member to your organization or a new employee to your business. Be sure to include all important and relevant information about the individual and describe his or her new role. Keep the memo brief and use the appropriate format.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Remind

A memo is a form of business writing that is intended for communication within a business, a school, or another type of organization. Efficiency of communication is one of the main qualities of a memo. The general purpose of most memos is ensure that the appropriate people in an organization are kept aware of important information. A common type of memo reminds the readers about an upcoming event or a deadline. A memo can also remind recipients of a special policy or procedure—in which case, the memo's purpose is to ensure that ongoing processes continue to run smoothly and efficiently. When writing a memo to remind, be sure to include all relevant information, such as the topic, important related dates, and what is expected of the readers. Keep in mind that the form for a memo is different from the form of a business letter and that its tone is less formal. A memo is generally kept as brief as possible, formatted with all the text flush left, and written with only a minimum of header information.

The writer identifies himself.

TO: All Employees
FROM: Jerome Wiley, Office Manager
SUBJECT: New Recycling Program
DATE: November 3

The writer indicates the date of the event.

This is a reminder that the office's new recycling program will begin next Monday, November 8. As per guidelines distributed last week, all glass, aluminum, plastic, and paper should be placed in the proper receptacles for recycling. Bins for aluminum, glass, and plastic waste will be located in the cafeteria and near the rear exit doors. Boxes for recycling paper will be located at the front of each department.

Previous information is succinctly summarized.

The success of our recycling program will depend on everyone's participation, so please make an effort to use the appropriate bins and boxes for your recyclable waste. If you have any questions, please feel free to drop by my office and pick up another copy of the guidelines.

Important details are briefly reviewed.

Activity: You are the manager for a business. On a separate sheet of paper, write a memo reminding employees about a company policy that is not being followed properly. For example, you could remind employees to follow the procedures for locking up the office when they leave. In such a memo, it is often effective to explain why the issue has come up at this particular time. Be sure to describe the policy accurately and remind the employees what is expected of them. Keep the memo brief and use the correct format.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Memo to Assign a Task

A memo is similar to a business letter, but the intended audience is usually within an organization such as a business, a school, or a club. Efficiency of communication is one of the main qualities of a memo. The general purpose of most memos is ensure that the appropriate people in an organization are kept aware of important information. Memos are often used to assign tasks. When composing such a memo, remember that the recipients need to understand the expectations that accompany their involvement in the project. Be sure to provide information regarding the scope and goals of the task or project and the exact details of each assigned role. Keep in mind that the form for a memo is different from the form of a business letter and that its tone is less formal. A memo is generally kept as brief as possible, formatted with all the text flush left, and written with a minimum of header information.

In the first sentence, the writer states the final goal.

The memo includes due dates for each task.

The writer clearly states the task.

TO: Marketing Department
FROM: Nancy Fitch, Marketing Manager
SUBJECT: New Ad Logo
DATE: November 5

- Here is the list of tasks that need to be accomplished in preparation for our new advertising campaign. Please check your assigned task and let me know immediately if you have a conflict or a question. We all need to coordinate our efforts to prepare for the upcoming season.

Name	Task	Due Date
Marie	Design three distinctly different logos that reflect the new company image: young, hip, and high-tech; be prepared to make appropriate changes as the campaign is finalized.	Nov. 10
Sharon & Jerry	Collaborate with Mary to develop two coordinating ad campaigns for each of the three logos.	Nov. 14
Max	Review demographics and work with Sharon and Jerry to refine three possible campaigns.	Nov. 17
Everyone	Meet to choose and finalize one campaign.	Nov. 21

Activity: Write a memo to assign a specific set of tasks to members of a club or an organization. The tasks should be related to an upcoming event, such as a music competition, drama auditions, or a school dance.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Completing a Job Application

When applying for a job, you generally need to fill out a job application to provide the employer with specific information. Fill out the application carefully and approach it with the same thoroughness that you would give to a business letter. Always read the instructions carefully and examine the entire form before beginning to fill it out. Write neatly and succinctly. Fill out the form completely, providing all information directly and honestly. If a question does not apply to you, indicate that by writing *n/a*. Keep in mind that you will have the opportunity to provide additional information either during the interview process, in your résumé, or as part of a letter of application.

The application provides specific instructions.

All of the information requested should be provided in its entirety.

The information should be provided neatly and succinctly.

Experience should be stated accurately and without embellishment.

- Please type or print neatly in blue or black ink.

Name: _____ Today's date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Birthdate _____ Sex: ____ Soc. Sec. #: _____

Job History (List each job held, starting with the most recent job.)

1. Employer: _____ Phone #: _____

Dates of employment: _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

2. Employer: _____ Phone #: _____

Dates of employment: _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

Education (List the most recent level of education completed.)

Personal References:

1. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Relationship: _____

Activity: Pick up a job application from a local business or use the sample application above. Complete the application thoroughly. Fill out the application as if you were actually applying for the job. Be sure to pay close attention to the guidelines mentioned above.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Completing a School Application

When applying to a special school or a college, you need to complete a school application. Some schools allow you to apply online, via their Web sites, but all schools have hard-copy applications that can be mailed to you. The application provides the school with the information that it needs to make its decision regarding admission. Applications frequently ask you to write an essay so that you have the opportunity to highlight your individual abilities and interests.

Although a school application often provides unexpected challenges, you can prepare yourself for these challenges by following some guidelines. First, allow yourself sufficient time to complete the application. Read the instructions carefully and review the entire form before beginning to fill it out. Address the questions directly and accurately. Fill out the form as neatly as possible and be sure to provide your answers in the manner requested. If essay questions are included in the application, first write a rough draft and then revise the draft before attaching the essay to the application. Finally, always make sure to proofread the completed form carefully, checking for errors and omissions.

The application provides specific instructions.

All of the information requested should be provided in its entirety.

An essay question should first be drafted and then revised, edited, and proofread.

City College Application

- Please type or print neatly in blue or black ink.

1. Full Name (Last, First, M.I.): _____

2. Social Security Number: _____

3. Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Country (if not USA): _____

4. Telephone (including area code): _____

5. Birthdate (mm/dd/year): _____

6. Academic Major: _____

☐ Check here if your major is undecided.

7. Indicate the date you took or plan to take either the ACT or the SAT:

ACT Date: _____ SAT Date: _____

8. Last high school attended: _____ City, State: _____

Graduation (or GED Completion) Date: _____

Answer the following question on a separate sheet of paper.

- 9. Your qualities as an individual are as important to us as your accomplishments as a student. What would you like us to know about you?

Activity: Pick up a school application from your guidance counselor's office or use the one above. Fill out the application in its entirety, completing it within whatever time is provided. Make sure to pay close attention to the guidelines mentioned above.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating a Résumé

When applying for a job, a letter of application or the application itself is often accompanied by a résumé. The purpose of a résumé is to provide the employer with a comprehensive record of your background information, related experience, and qualifications. Although a résumé is intended to provide a great deal of information, the format is designed to provide this information in the most efficient and concise way possible. A short résumé that provides all of the important information in a direct manner will impress an employer more than a lengthy résumé that is excessively wordy.

All résumés should include the following information: a heading that provides your name and contact information such as home address, phone number, and e-mail address; a job goal or a career objective; your education information; your work experience; other related experience; relevant activities, associations, organizations, or projects that you have participated in. You may also want to include honors that you have received and list individuals that the employer can contact for a reference. When listing work experience, you should be sure to give the name of the employer, your job title, and a few brief bulleted points describing your responsibilities. A résumé should be brief and concise; complete sentences are not necessary.

Header includes all important contact information.

All important education background is included.

Related dates are included for all listed activities.

Job title is included along with the place of employment.

Job responsibilities are briefly listed.

Jane Wiley
909 West Main Street, Apt. #1 • Urbana, Illinois 61802
(217) 555-0489 • jane@internet.edu

Goal Seeking position in television news production

Education
Junior standing in the College of Communications at the University of Illinois,
Urbana-Champaign
2000 Graduate of City High School

Honors
Member of National Honor Society

Activities
Member, Residence Hall Association: August 2001–May 2002
Floor President, Trelease Hall: August 2001–May 2002
Member, Asian-American Association: 2001–Present
Environmental Committee Chairperson, Asian-American Association: August 2002–May 2003
Member, Krannert Center Student Association: August 2002–Present

Work Experience
Radio Reporter, WPGU, 107.1 FM, Champaign, Illinois: May 2002–Present

- Rewrite and read stories for afternoon newscasts
- Serve as field reporter for general assignments
- Responsible for covering the cultural beat

Cashier, Del's Restaurant, Champaign, Illinois 60801: May 2002–August 2002

- Responsible for taking phone orders
- Cashier for pick-up orders

Assistant Secretary, Office of Dr. George Wright, Woodstock, Illinois:
May 2001–August 2001

- Answered phones
- Made appointments
- Acted as file clerk

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Activity: On a separate sheet of paper, create an outline that lists the information that you would want to include in a résumé. Use a word processor if possible.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing E-mail to Work Associates

E-mail is quickly becoming the most common form of business communication. In a typical workday, one might write several work-related e-mails on a variety of topics. Although e-mail is easily the least formal and most conversational method of business writing, it shouldn't be written carelessly or too casually. Keep in mind that the conventions of business writing—clarity, attention to your audience, proper grammar, and the inclusion of relevant information—apply to e-mail.

When writing e-mail to work associates, an accurate subject line is an important part of helping to communicate effectively. State your purpose briefly and directly. Make sure that you use concise language; be careful not to allow the conversational tone to lead to rambling sentences. If you are responding to an earlier message, include the portion of the message that you are responding to in order to provide the proper context.

Subject line clearly states the topic of the e-mail.

The purpose of the e-mail is stated immediately and in a conversational tone.

Important details are included in a brief direct fashion.

To: LiamS@internet.com
From: LisaB@internet.com
Date: January 7, 8:13 A.M.
Subject: New Product Conference Call

Liam,

I just wanted to make sure that arrangements have been made for next week's conference call to discuss our new product. The East Coast sales team has already scheduled three sales meetings at the end of the month with potential buyers, so it's important that our sales team is prepared to talk about the product. Please schedule the call when the manufacturing director is available, since he will have important information for the sales team.

I've already reserved the conference room, so as long as you take care of the call itself, everything should be ready. Let me know if you need any help, and I'll see what I can do.

Lisa

Activity: Write an e-mail to your coworkers. Inform them of a change in company procedure that will affect them. State the specific information that they need to know. Indicate to your coworkers whether action needs to be taken on their part.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing an E-mail to a Public Official

E-mail is quickly becoming one of the most common forms of communication. One of its emerging uses is to contact public officials. E-mail is a quick and direct way to provide a public official with your viewpoint on an important matter. Although e-mail is one of the least formal and most conversational methods of communication, it should not be written in a careless manner. Particularly when contacting a public official, you should give careful attention to the conventions of business writing—clarity, attention to your audience, proper grammar, and the inclusion of relevant information—so that your comments will be taken seriously. Because e-mail messages are not typically written in a standard business-letter or memo format, an accurate subject line is an important part of helping to communicate effectively.

When writing an e-mail to a public official, state your purpose briefly and directly. Make sure that you use concise language and be careful not to allow the conversational tone to lead to rambling sentences. Keep in mind that a public official is likely to receive many e-mails; therefore, the most effective messages are those that can be read quickly and understood easily.

Subject line clearly states the topic of the e-mail.

The purpose of the e-mail is stated immediately and in a conversational tone.

The writer provides clear reasons for his opinion.

Additional information is included briefly in the second paragraph.

To: DHuffman@city.gov
From: CMurphy@school.edu
Date: September 21, 1:27 P.M.
• Subject: New Student Center

Mr. Huffman:

- I want to thank you for proposing the construction of a new student center across from the high school. Students often feel that local officials don't make enough effort to address the needs of teens in the community. Your proposal lets us know that someone is working to help us. I think the center would be a fantastic addition to the city and would provide benefits for many years to come.

If you need help in building support for the new center, many students would be happy to contribute. I wish you the best of luck in helping to make the student center a reality. I hope you will contact me if there is any way that I can help.

Chris Murphy

Activity: Choose an article from a recent edition of a local newspaper that features comments from a public official. Read the article and decide if you agree or disagree with his or her comments. Then on a separate sheet of paper, draft an e-mail to the public official. Briefly state your opinion on the position that was presented in the article. Keep your comments concise and clear, but be sure to include reasons that explain your opinion. Include an appropriate subject line.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

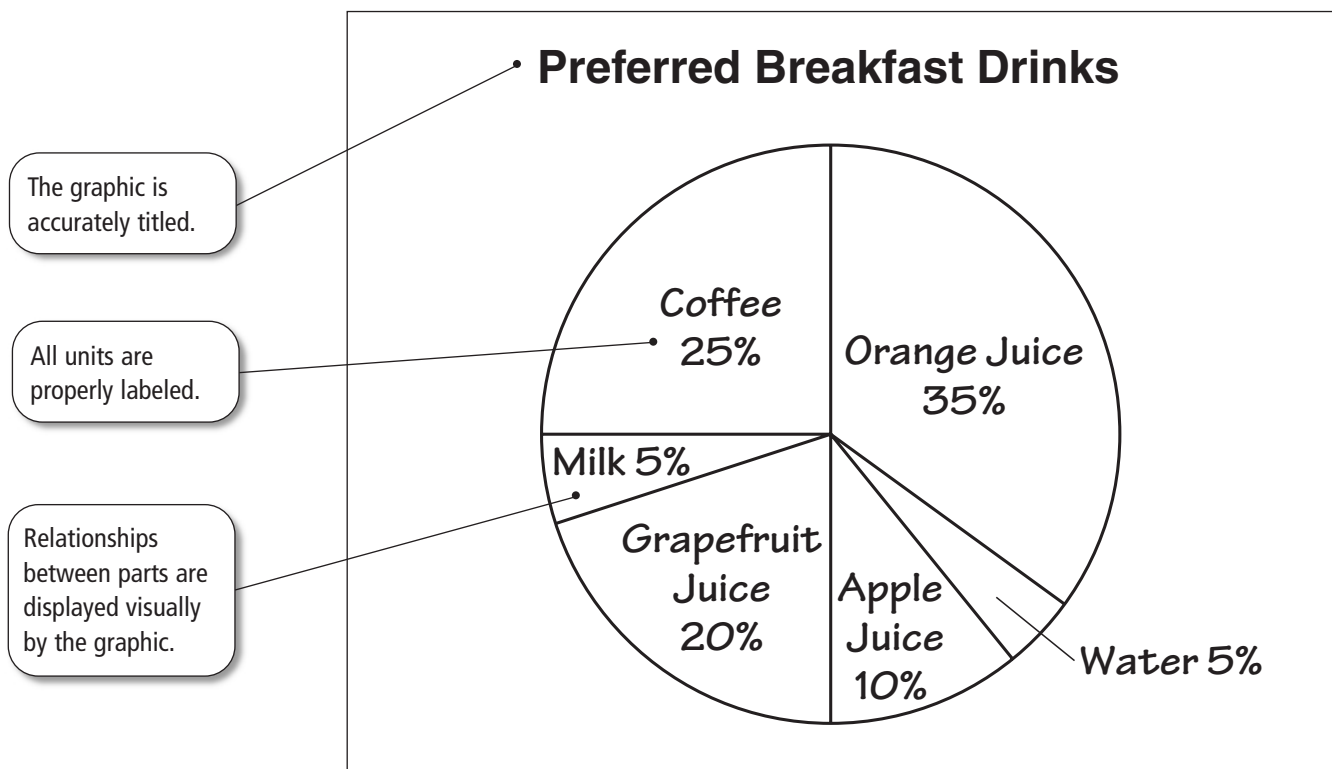
Name Class Date

Choosing an Appropriate Graphic Organizer

Because a graphic organizer presents information visually, it can be effective in making difficult or complex information easier for a reader to understand. There are many kinds of graphic organizers, including tables, charts, line graphs, bar graphs, and pie charts (or circle graphs). One kind of graphic organizer may be more appropriate or effective than another kind for presenting particular information. For example, if you want to track gas prices over the course of a year, you can set up a line graph in which the vertical axis represents the price and the horizontal axis represents the months. Keep in mind that the content of the material determines which organizer would be most effective.

Consider the following characteristics of various graphic organizers before deciding which organizer is most appropriate for presenting particular information.

- A table organizes information into columns and rows. Individual cells in a table contain data.
- A line graph shows changes in quantities over time.
- A bar graph shows how quantities compare to each other or how they change over time.
- A pie chart (or circle graph) shows the relationship of parts to a whole. Each part of the circle or pie represents a certain percentage of the whole, which is always 100%.



Activity: Choose which graphic organizer would be most effective for each of following:

1. The number of California condors returned to the wild each year over a twenty-year span of time (1980–2000)
2. The average number of hours students study each week for four subject areas
3. The forms of exercise favored by students at your school

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

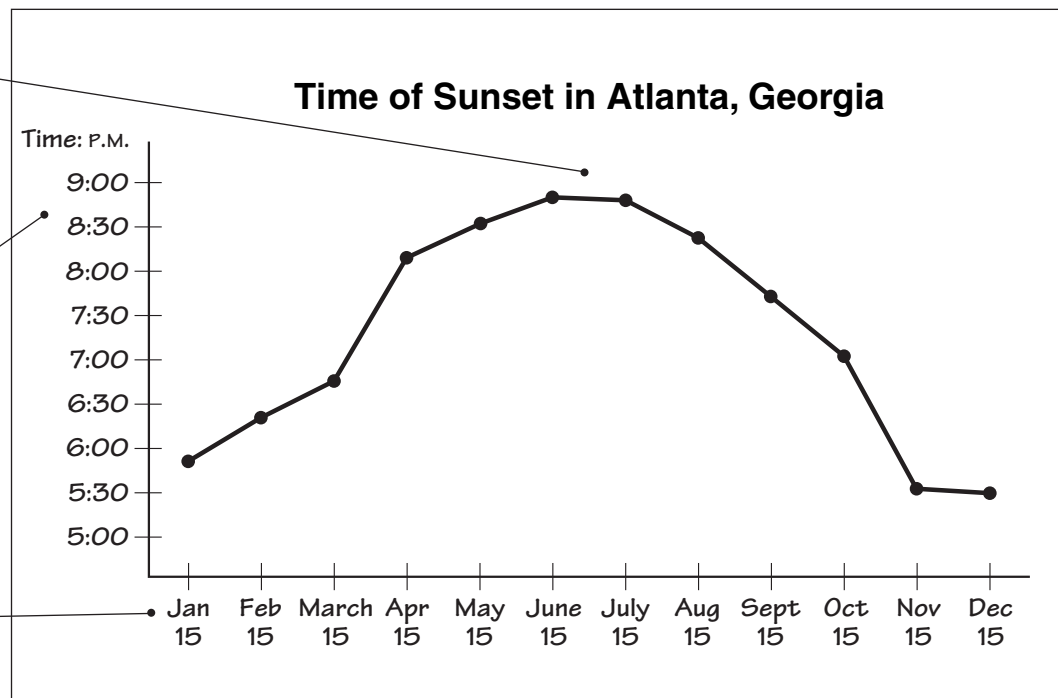
Using a Line Graph

A line graph is an excellent graphic organizer for representing changes of quantities over a period of time. When creating a line graph, use the vertical axis to measure the data that you are tracking and the horizontal axis to measure the passage of time. The movement and direction of the line allow you to see at a glance how the data changed over that period of time. The first step for creating a line graph is to decide the units that each axis will represent. For example, if you want to track the price of gasoline over a decade, you could make each mark along the vertical axis represent ten cents and each mark along the horizontal axis represent one year. This graph would then display how much gas prices changed year to year during the decade. Once you have selected the appropriate unit for each axis, you simply plot your data on the graph and then draw lines connecting the points. The movement of the lines shows how the price of gasoline rose or fell during the period of time that is represented on the graph.

The movement of the line indicates change over time.

The units on the axes are properly labeled.

This axis indicates the period of time over which the data was measured.



Activity: Estimate how much time you spent doing homework each day last week. You can report your findings in increments of minutes or hours, depending on how much time you spent on homework. After you have collected your data and determined your units of measurement, create a line graph that illustrates the amount of time you spent on homework last week. Make sure that you properly label the units that you are measuring on each axis of the graph.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Creating a Pie Chart

A pie chart (or circle graph) shows numeric results and demonstrates how each portion compares to the whole. When constructing a pie chart, the entire pie (or circle) represents 100% of the whole. The pie is then divided into sections that represent the different portions. Each separate section should be labeled with the percentage that corresponds to what that section represents. Make sure to label each section not only with a numeric value but also with an explanatory label.

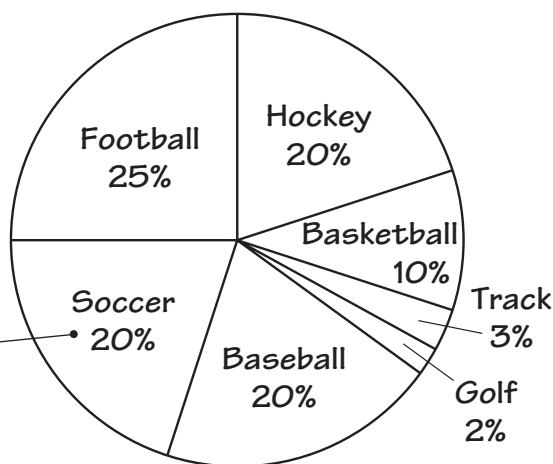
The pie chart is accurately titled.

The percentages are demonstrated visually with each section of the pie.

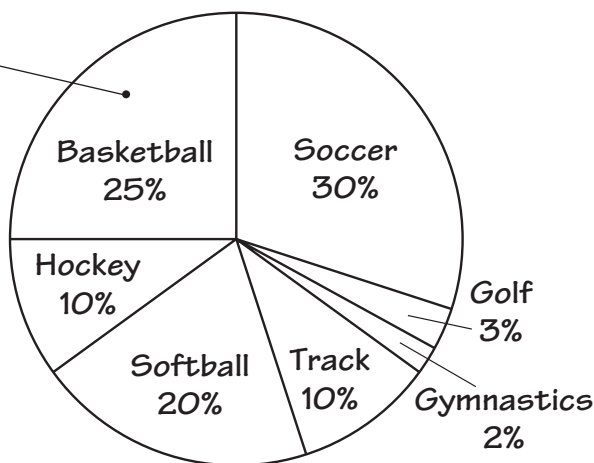
Each section of the chart is appropriately labeled.

Favorite Sports of Students at City High School

Male Students



Female Students



Activity: Make a list of what you did yesterday (for example, sleeping, school, homework, eating, watching TV, reading) and estimate how much time you spent on each activity. Be sure your estimates add up to twenty-four hours. Then on a separate sheet of paper, create a pie chart that represents the time you spent on each activity during the course of the entire day. Make sure you label your chart appropriately.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

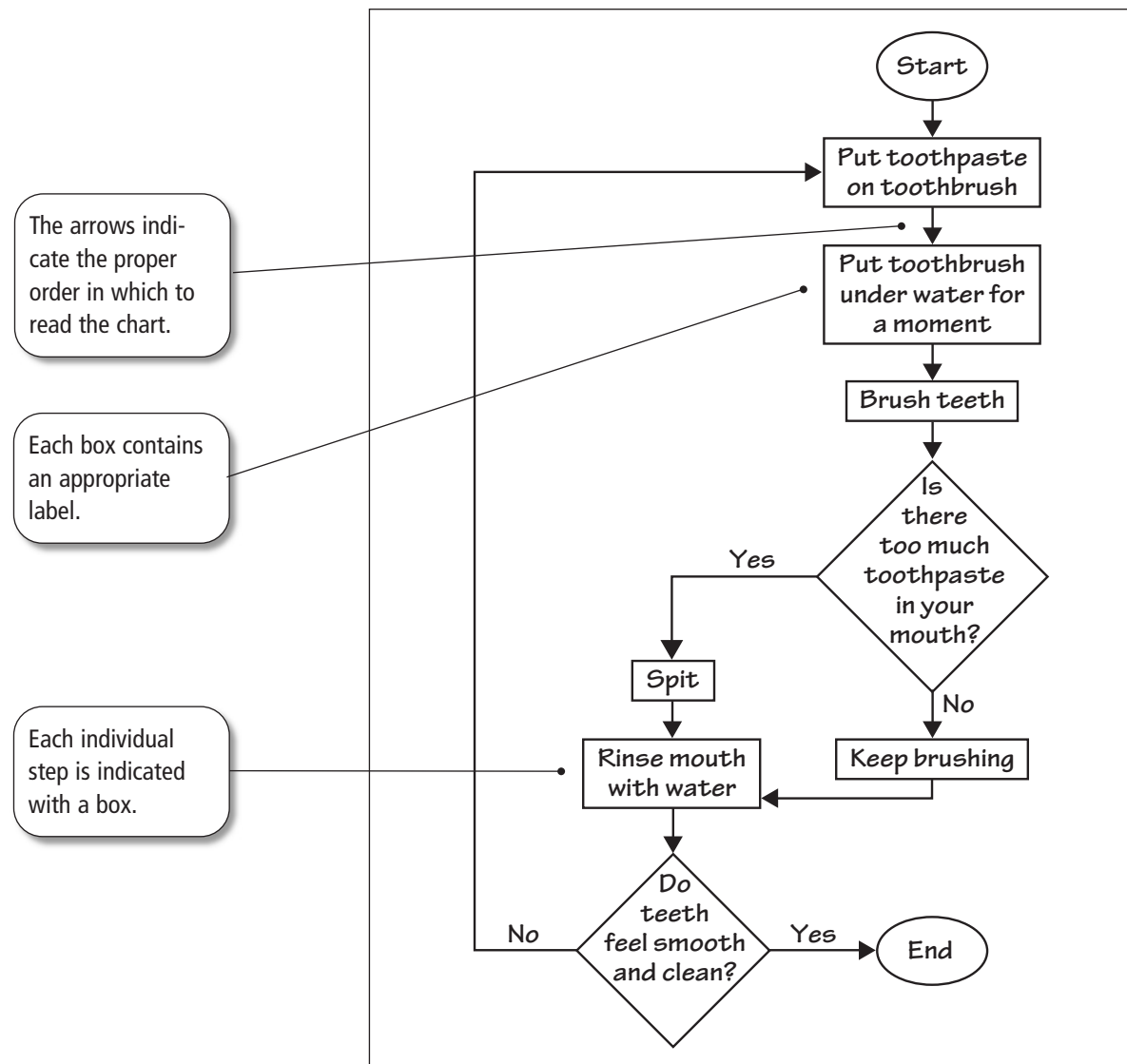
Name Class Date

Preparing a Flowchart

A flowchart illustrates a process or a procedure that occurs in a particular order. In a flowchart, labeled boxes are used to represent each stage in the process, and arrows are drawn between boxes to indicate the specific order in which the stages occur. Each stage should be labeled inside one box. Make sure that each significant step in the process is represented by a box so that the entire process is shown accurately and completely from start to finish.

Use these standard boxes to indicate each step:

- Start or end of the process
- Step in the process
- ◇ Point of decision
- Flow from one step to the next.



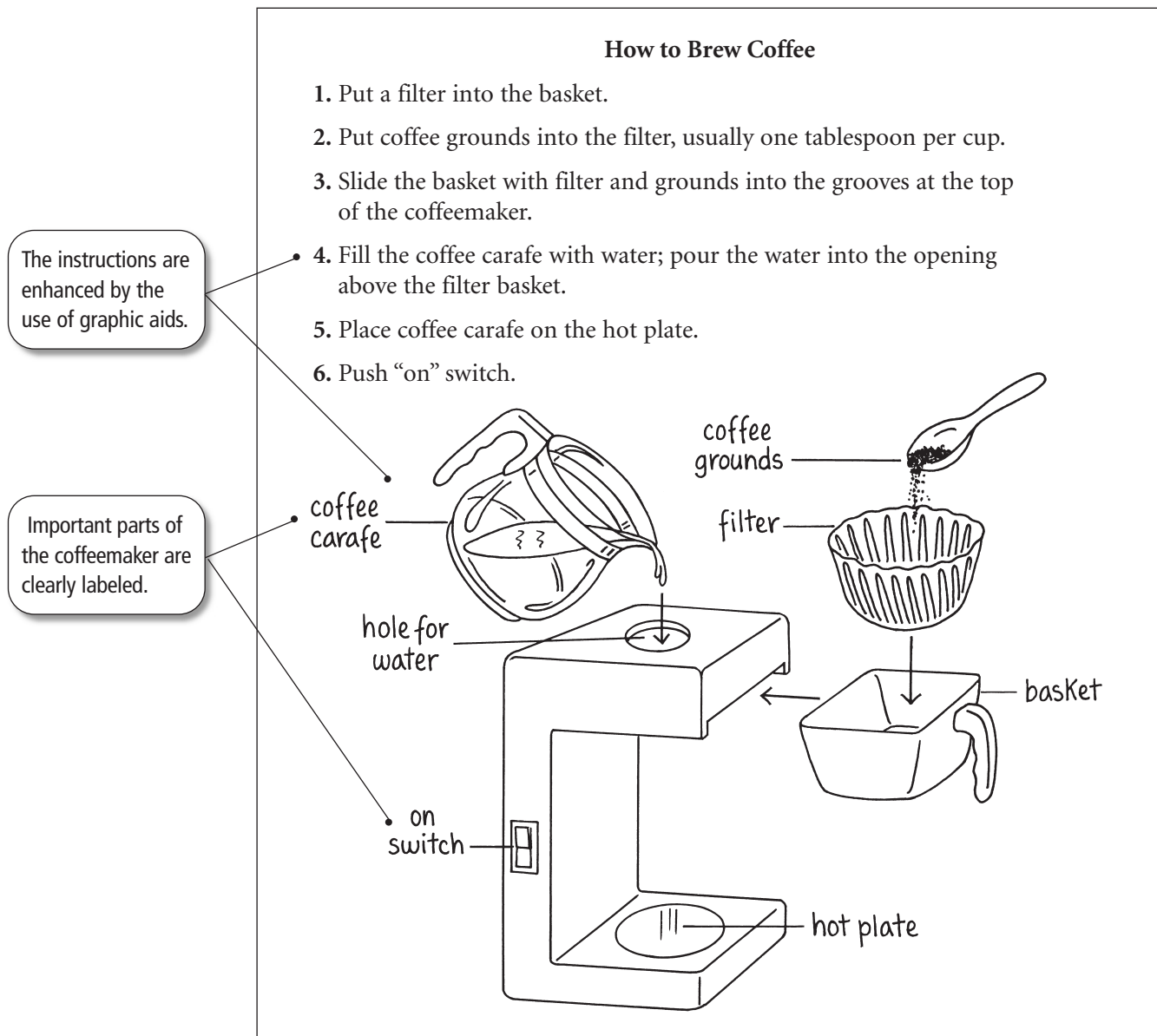
Activity: Create a flowchart that outlines the steps in a process with which you are familiar, such as changing the oil in a car or studying for an exam. Be sure to cover each step in the process with a labeled box.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Using Graphic Aids in Technical Writing

In technical writing, graphic aids can help readers better understand or more quickly grasp the material that is being presented. A flowchart, for example, could illustrate the steps in a procedure and help readers visualize the process. A diagram in an instruction booklet could help readers understand how to assemble something. A group of line drawings could help readers identify the tools needed to complete a task. One well-prepared graphic aid enhances even the most fluent writing, making clear in one picture the material explained in a whole page of writing.



Activity: Write a paragraph describing a technical process similar to the example above of brewing coffee. Use a graphic aid to supplement the technical paragraph and to help readers understand the process.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing Instructions

Written instructions for making a product (such as a kite) or following a process (such as programming your VCR) must be comprehensive and easy to follow. Before beginning to write, be sure you have a thorough understanding of the process that you are describing. Then put yourself in the shoes of someone who has no previous experience using the process. Divide the process into simple, easily understood steps and carefully consider the most logical order for the steps. Once you have completed your preparation, you must make sure that the writing itself is perfectly clear and as brief and uncomplicated as possible. Begin writing by stating the final goal of the instructions, that is, a finished kite or a VCR programmed to record a sporting match. Next, list all of the items or tools that will be required. Then list each step (even the most simple or obvious) as an imperative sentence. When you are done, review your instructions carefully to ensure that there are no errors and that no necessary steps have been omitted.

The required materials are listed prior to beginning the instructions.

Each step is brief and direct.

The steps are listed in chronological order.

Instructions For Installing an Answering Machine

After you have completed this process, your answering machine will be able to record messages.

- Equipment: Answering Machine, Phone, Two (2) Phone Cords, AC Adapter
 - 1) Locate the cord that connects your phone to the phone plug in the wall.
 - 2) Unplug the cord from the phone.
 - 3) Locate the "Phone Line In" plug on the answering machine.
 - 4) Plug the cord from the wall into the "Phone Line In" plug on the answering machine.
 - 5) Locate the "Phone Line Out" plug on the answering machine.
 - 6) Take the phone cord provided with the answering machine and plug one end into the "Phone Line Out" plug on the answering machine.
 - 7) Plug the other end of the phone cord into your phone.
 - 8) Take the AC adapter provided with the answering machine and connect the proper end to the answering machine.
 - 9) Plug the AC adapter into an electrical outlet near the answering machine.
 - 10) Turn on the answering machine and follow the instructions for recording an outgoing message.

Activity: Choose a process or a procedure with which you are very familiar and write a detailed set of instructions. Keep in mind that your audience has no previous experience with the process. If time permits, exchange instructions with a classmate and review each other's instructions to check for comprehensiveness and clarity.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing an Abstract

An abstract is a summary of the the results and conclusions detailed in a scientific report. An abstract may be a brief preface to a complete scientific report or a self-contained piece of writing that serves as a brief but comprehensive overview of an experiment or project. Begin an abstract by stating the overall or most general conclusion of the project. Then state all of the major results or discoveries that the project or experiment produced. As a whole, an abstract should represent a succinct analysis of the data that were collected during the experiment or project. As with all technical writing, the writing in an abstract should be accurate, clear, consistent, and brief.

A general conclusion is stated in the first line.

Detailed results are provided in the body of the abstract.

The complete abstract is brief and states the results succinctly and directly.

Abstract

- This report demonstrates that all students surveyed at City High School spend at least ten hours a week on the Internet. Although all students surveyed spend a significant portion of their time online for entertainment purposes, juniors and seniors typically spend 25% more time using the Internet for schoolwork and information gathering than do freshmen and sophomores. Few students spend more than 5% of their online time shopping. On average, students with grade point averages above 3.5 spent more than 50% of their time online using the Internet for schoolwork.

Activity: In a recent edition of a local newspaper, find a detailed weather forecast that predicts the weather for the next several days. For the purposes of this activity, assume that the information is not a forecast but a report of data collected in a project intended to analyze the weather. On a separate sheet of paper, write an abstract, using the forecast information as your data. Consider information such as rainfall, temperature, cloud cover, and wind speed.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing a Scientific Report

Scientific reports are a staple of the science and social science fields. Although many scientific projects require a specific form for the report, most reports contain some common elements. A scientific report is generally divided into sections that focus on different elements of the project or experiment. The first section should be an introduction that includes the purpose, relevant background information, and the hypothesis. The second section should cover the materials and methods that were used. The third section should provide the results of the experiment or project, and many include graphical aids to further illustrate the results. Finally, the fourth section should include a discussion of the results and draw conclusions from the data that were gathered. Following the final section, appendices containing raw data or references may be attached. Before finishing your report, prepare a title page and an abstract; these items will appear at the beginning of your paper. Remember—as with all technical writing—the writing in a scientific report should be accurate, clear, consistent, and brief.

The purpose of the report is clearly stated in the introduction.

Introduction

- The purpose of this report is to determine how often students use the Internet and the purpose for which they use it most often: schoolwork, entertainment, information, or shopping.

Each section is appropriately titled.

Materials and Methods

A 20-item questionnaire was given to 100 City High students. The sample was evenly divided between freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. All 100 questionnaires were returned.

Results of the survey are summarized briefly.

Results

As the accompanying graph indicates, freshmen and sophomores spent less time using the Internet than juniors and seniors. Freshmen and sophomores most frequently used the Internet for entertainment purposes. Juniors and seniors were most likely to use the Internet for schoolwork and for information. Overall, only a small percentage of students made use of the Internet for shopping.

The data is analyzed and a general conclusion stated.

Conclusions

In general, students spend a large amount of their free time using the Internet; as they become more involved with school and are preparing for college, they tend to use the Internet for more practical applications.

Activity: Design a student survey. Plan how you would conduct the survey and determine the fictional results of the survey. Then create an outline that divides the report of your survey into the four main sections of a scientific report. In each of the four sections of the outline, list subheads that give examples of the actual content that you might include in a final report. Include at least three subheads in each section of the outline.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Determining the Content of a Web Site

By simply browsing the Internet, you will quickly notice that a Web site can cover virtually any topic in which people are interested. Regardless of the topic, the most important aspect of a Web site is its content. Without content that is valuable to the intended audience and is organized in such a way that it can be easily used, users will have little reason to return to the site. The following are important steps to take when determining the content of your Web site:

- Define your Web site's purpose and audience.
- Determine what information will be important and useful to your audience.
- Divide the important information into appropriate major categories.
- Prioritize the categories, making the most important information the most easily accessible.
- Find related Web sites that can be linked to your site.

When determining the content of your Web site, you may need to consider using outside sources of information. Before using materials that you have found in reference sources, you must obtain permission from the original source.

The audience is clearly defined.

The Atoms Hockey Team

- **Audience:** Anyone interested in junior hockey, especially communities that want to start a league of their own

About Us

- History
- Home rink
- Funding
- Coaches and players
- Schedule

Useful information is provided for the intended audience.

Hockey rules and regulations

Links are included so the viewer can find additional related information.

Links

- Link to NHL site
- Link to IHL site
- Links to other junior league sites

Activity: Create a plan for a Web site about a topic that you have some knowledge of and interest in. On a separate sheet of paper, write an outline that lists the major categories of information you want to include on the site. Organize your outline so that the categories are listed in order of priority, highest priority being first. Be sure to include information relevant to each category as subheads within your outline. List other Web sites that may be useful links to your site.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Writing the Content for a Web Site

After determining the purpose of your Web site and outlining its content, the next step is to write the content. With so much information on the Web, users are drawn to sites that are well written and concise. In most cases, you have limited space at your disposal and your audience has limited time to spend searching the Web. Therefore, it is important to avoid including unnecessary or frivolous language and to provide content that directly addresses your audience's needs. Your tone may range from light to serious—as long as your tone is consistent with the purpose of your site. Keep the following elements in mind when writing for a Web site: concise and direct language, clarity, focus, and brevity. There are no set rules for writing for the Internet, but a well-planned Web site will display a balance between functionality and elegance.

The text is brief and direct in its tone.

The text clearly indicates the purpose of the site.

The content of the text focuses on how the user can use the Web site.

The Atoms

- We are the Atoms, a River County hockey group for boys and girls ages 6 to 18. Our organization began in 1989 with one team. There were 9 boys, ages 14 to 17, on the first Atoms team. Over the years, we have grown—we now have a total of 8 teams and over 100 boys and girls playing!
- We started this site so that other communities can learn from our adventures, mistakes, and successes.
- On this site, you can learn more about us and our teams, including a full history of our organization.

See these links for information on NHL, IHL, and other junior leagues around the country!

We hope you enjoy hockey as much as we do and that you will find our Web site enjoyable and useful.

Please e-mail comments to the webmaster@internet.org

Activity: Write a paragraph or two that you would post on the home page of a Web site you would like to create. The text should welcome the user, briefly explain what can be found on the site, and provide some ideas for making good use of the site. Feel free to include other information that you think may entice your audience, but remember that concise, brief material usually produces the best results.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Name Class Date

Designing the Layout of a Web Site

After creating the content for a Web site, the Webmaster must address another important issue: the layout of the Web page. Because Web sites rely on visual elements for navigation through the pages, the layout should be simple and efficient. The content area, featuring the main text and related graphics, should be the centerpiece of your Web site. Typically a toolbar located above or beside the main content area provides “buttons” to link the user to various content areas within the site.

Each page should include a header and one or more subheads. The header, which names the Web site, should be consistent on every page. The subheads should label the individual page’s content and will typically correspond to one of the main content areas listed on the buttons. There are no set rules for designing Web pages. Often creativity and experimentation lead to new and effective ways to construct a site.

The page provides a clear heading that indicates the name of the Web site.

The Web page includes a main area where content can be placed.

The links to the main areas of the site are grouped together on a toolbar.

The overall design presents the important information clearly and efficiently.

The Atoms

We are the Atoms, a River County hockey group for boys and girls ages 6 to 18. Our organization began in 1989 with one team. There were 9 boys, ages 14 to 17, on the first Atoms team. Over the years, we have grown—we now have a total of 8 teams and over 100 boys and girls playing!

We started this site so that other communities can learn from our adventures, mistakes, and successes.

On this site, you can learn more about us and our teams, including a full history of our organization.

See these links for information on NHL, IHL, and other junior leagues around the country!

We hope you enjoy hockey as much as we do and that you will find our Web site enjoyable and useful.

Please e-mail comments to the webmaster@internet.org

Our
History

Our
Teams

Our
Conference

Links

Activity: Design a layout for a Web site you would like to create. Select one specific page in the site, such as the home page, or show the design elements you would use on two or three pages to establish continuity between the pages.

Business and Technical Writing Activities

Answers

■ PAGE 1

Students should identify five of the following elements and explain how each element helps to convey the letter's message:

- Tone—conversational, but formal
- Focused purpose—stated directly in the beginning of the letter
- Form—proper headers, salutation, letter format
- Grammar/Mechanics—following the formal rules of grammar and punctuation
- Detail—inclusion of important, relevant information
- Clarity—straightforward, concise language
- Brevity—only necessary content

■ PAGE 2

Students' letters should

- have a clear and direct purpose
- use a polite and formal tone
- use truthful and straightforward language
- demonstrate an overall consideration of the audience

■ PAGE 3

Students' letters should

- state the request in the beginning of the letter
- include related details
- be brief
- use clear and direct language

■ PAGE 4

Students' letters should

- be clear and well-organized
- describe opposing points of view
- be written in a direct and focused manner
- use concise language

■ PAGE 5

Students' letters should

- state what the writer is applying for in the beginning of the letter
- include a brief overview of qualifications
- refer to accompanying materials
- be brief
- use direct, concise language

■ PAGE 6

Students' letters should

- state what the writer is thanking the recipient for in the beginning of the letter
- express gratitude and describe how the recipient contributed to the event
- be brief
- use direct, concise language

■ PAGE 7

Students' memos should

- state the purpose of the announcement in the beginning of the memo
- include important details about the employee and his or her new role
- be brief
- use direct, concise language
- use proper memo format

■ PAGE 8

Students' memos should

- describe the relevant policy in the beginning of the memo
- include important details about the policy
- explain what is expected of the employees
- be brief
- use direct, concise language
- use proper memo format

■ PAGE 9

Students' memos should

- describe the assigned task in the beginning of the memo
- include important details about the task
- explain what is expected of the recipient
- use direct, concise language
- use proper memo format

■ PAGE 10

Students' applications should

- be complete
- be filled out neatly
- be truthful and accurate in the responses

■ PAGE 11

Students' applications should

- be complete
- be filled out neatly
- be truthful and accurate in the responses
- demonstrate clear, well-organized thoughts in essay responses that are included

■ PAGE 12

Students' résumé outlines should include

- name and contact information
- job goal
- educational background
- work experience (dates and job title included)
- activities, organizations, or associations, if applicable (dates and role included)
- honors, if applicable
- references
- proper résumé format (if a word processor has been used to create the résumé)

Business and Technical Writing Activities

■ PAGE 13

Students' e-mails should

- have an appropriate subject line
- state the purpose in the beginning of the e-mail
- include relevant details about the project
- be brief
- use direct, concise language

■ PAGE 14

Students' e-mails should

- have an appropriate subject line
- state the purpose in the beginning of the e-mail
- explain an opinion and offer clear reasons of support
- be brief
- use direct, concise language

■ PAGE 15

Answers:

- line graph
- bar graph
- pie chart (or circle graph)

■ PAGE 16

Students' graphs should

- be properly labeled
- use each axis appropriately (vertical: time spent; horizontal: period of time over which the data was measured)
- show an accurate portrayal of the data

■ PAGE 17

Students' charts should

- be properly labeled
- show accurate division of the pie into sections representing the various activities
- represent 24 hours (100% of the day)

■ PAGE 18

Students' flowcharts should

- be properly labeled
- use boxes appropriately to represent each step in the process
- use arrows to represent the correct order of the process
- illustrate the complete process from start to finish

■ PAGE 19

Students' answers should include

- accurate written instructions for the process
- a graphic aid that is well labeled and easy to understand

■ PAGE 20

Students' instructions should

- state the final goal at the beginning of the instructions
- list items or tools required
- use chronological order for the instructions
- explain all necessary steps
- use direct, imperative sentences

■ PAGE 21

Students' outlines should

- use the main topic heads (introduction, methods and materials, results, and conclusions)
- include three appropriate content examples as subheads

■ PAGE 22

Students' abstracts should

- state a general conclusion in the beginning of the abstract
- include detailed results
- describe conclusions related to the detailed results
- be brief
- use direct, concise language

■ PAGE 23

Students' outlines should

- describe the overall topic for the Web site
- list major categories that are related to the topic
- prioritize categories (highest priority should be listed first)
- include related information as subheads
- provide a list of possible Web-site link

■ PAGE 24

Students' work should

- describe the purpose of the Web site in the beginning of the text
- describe how to use the Web site
- include the important information about the Web site
- be brief
- use concise but creative language

■ PAGE 25

Students' sketches should

- include headers that identify the Web site and the specific page
- describe the content area for the Web page
- describe a toolbar or similar device that provides access to important areas
- demonstrate efficient use of space
- include the creative use of design elements on the Web page