



Successful Writing at Work

TENTH EDITION

PHILIP C. KOLIN

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Successful Writing at Work, Tenth Edition

Philip C. Kolin

*To Kristin, Erica, and Theresa
Evan Philip and Megan Elise
Julie and Loretta
Diane
and
MARY*

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CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

Writing and Your Career



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Writing—An Essential Job Skill

Writing is a part of every job, from your initial letter of application conveying first impressions to memos, emails, blogs, letters, websites, proposals, instructions, and reports. Writing keeps businesses moving. It allows employees to communicate with one another, with management, and with the customers, clients, and agencies a company must serve to stay in business.

How Writing Relates to Other Skills

Almost everything you do at work is related to your writing ability. Deborah Price, a human resource director with thirty years of experience, stresses that “without the ability to write clearly an employee cannot perform the other duties of the job, regardless of the company he or she works for.” Here is a list of the common tasks you will be expected to perform in the workplace and that require clear and concise writing to get them done well.

- Do computer programming and be familiar with recent software.
- Assess a situation, a condition, a job site, etc.
- Research and record the results accurately.
- Summarize information concisely and identify main points quickly.
- Work as part of a team to collect, to share, and to evaluate information.
- Exhibit cultural sensitivity in the workplace.
- Network with individuals in diverse fields outside your company and across the globe.
- Set priorities and stick to them.
- Tackle and solve problems and explain how and why you did.
- Meet customer or client needs and expectations for information.
- Prepare and test instructions and procedures.
- Justify financial, personnel, or other actions and decisions.
- Make persuasive presentations to co-workers, employers, and clients.
- Learn and apply new technologies in your field.

To perform each of these essential workplace tasks, you have to be an effective writer—clear, concise, accurate, ethical, and persuasive.

The High Cost of Effective Writing

Clearly, then, writing is an essential skill for employees and employers alike. According to Don Bagin, a communications consultant, most people need an hour or more to write a typical business letter. If an employer is paying someone \$30,000 a year, one letter costs \$14 of that employee's time; for someone who earns \$50,000 a year, the cost for the average letter jumps to \$24. Mistakes in letters are costly for workers as well as for employers. As David Noble cautions in his book *Gallery of Best Cover Letters*, “The cost of a cover letter (in applying for a job, for instance) might be as much as a third of a million dollars—even more if you figure the amount of income and benefits you don’t receive, say, in a 10-year period for a job you don’t get because of an error that got you screened out.”

Unfortunately, as the Associated Press (AP) reported in a recent survey, “Most American businesses say workers need to improve their writing . . . skills.” Yet that same report cited a survey of more than 400 companies that identified writing as “the most valuable skill employees can have.” In fact, the employers polled in that AP survey indicated that 80 percent of their workforce needed to improve their writing. Illustrating a company’s keen interest in employee writing, Figure 1.1 shows an email from a human resources director, Rowe Pinkerton, offering an incentive to employees to improve their writing abilities by taking a college writing course. Beyond a doubt, your success as an employee will depend on your success as a writer. The higher you advance in an organization, the more and better writing you will be expected to do. Promotions, and other types of job recognition, are often based on an employee’s writing skills.

How This Book Will Help You

This book will show you, step by step, how to write clearly and efficiently the job-related communications you need for success in the world of work. Chapter 1 gives you some basic information about writing in the global marketplace and raises major questions you need to ask yourself to make the writing process easier and the results more effective. It also describes the basic functions of on-the-job writing and introduces you to one of the most important requirements in the business world—writing ethically.

Writing for the Global Marketplace

The Internet, email, express delivery, teleconferencing, and e-commerce have shrunk the world into a global village. Accordingly, it is no longer feasible to think of business in exclusively regional or even national terms. Many companies are multinational corporations with offices throughout the world. In fact, many U.S. businesses are branches of international firms. A large, multinational corporation

FIGURE 1.1 An Employer's View of the Importance of Writing

The screenshot shows an email interface with the following details:

- From:** <rpinkerton@greer.com>
- To:** All Employees
- Subject:** New company incentive to improve workplace writing
- Attachment:** List of area colleges.pdf

The body of the email contains the following text:

Dear Greer Employees:

I am pleased to announce a new company incentive approved by the administration last week. In its continuing effort to improve writing in the workplace, Greer, Inc., will offer tuition reimbursement to any employee who takes a college-level course in business, technical, or occupational writing, starting this fall.

Three Requirements to Receive Tuition Reimbursement:
To qualify for this benefit, employees must do the following:

- (1) Submit a two-page proposal on how such a course will improve the employee's job performance here at Greer.
- (2) Take the class at one of the approved colleges or universities in the Cleveland area listed on the attachment to this email.
- (3) Provide proof (through a transcript or final grade report) that he or she has successfully completed the course.

To apply, please submit your proposal to Dawn Wagner-Lawlor in Human Resources (dwlawlor@greer.com) at least one month before you intend to enroll in the course.

Here's to productive writing!

Sincerely,

Rowe Pinkerton
Human Resources Director
781-555-3692
<rpinkerton@greer.com>

Stresses the importance of writing

Clearly explains how to take advantage of company offer

Closes on an upbeat note

may have its equipment designed in Japan; built in Bangladesh; and sold in Detroit, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Its stockholders may be in Mexico City as well as Saudi Arabia—in fact, anywhere. In this global economy, every country is affected by every other one, and all of them are connected by the Internet.

Tech Note

Know Your Computer at Work

A major part of any job is knowing your workplace technology, which can include PCs, smartphones, and tablet computers. You need to know not just how to use the applications installed on your computer or other device but also what to do if there is a computer emergency.

Given the kinds of security risks businesses face today, employees have to be especially careful. As Kim Becker cautions in *Nevada Business*, "With malware, spyware, adware, viruses, Trojans, worms, phishing, and server problems, it's time for every business to review its IT strategy and security before a loss occurs."^{*}

Here are some guidelines on how to use your computer effectively on the job:

- **Understand how to use the software programs required for your job.** Your office will most likely require employees to use Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect. But make sure you know how to use the entire software package—not just the word-processing application, but also the filing, formatting, spreadsheet, presentation, and tables/graphics programs.
- **Get training on how to use company-specific applications.** You will be expected to know how to use company-created databases, templates, and other customized applications on the job. If your company offers classes on how to use these programs, take them. Otherwise, ask for the advice of a co-worker or someone in your company's information technology (IT) department who knows the programs.
- **Learn how to back up your files.** You will save yourself, your boss, your co-workers, and your clients time and stress by backing up your essential files regularly to prevent losing them in the event that your computer crashes.
- **Set up an alternate email account.** If you cannot access your email on the job because a server is down, sign up for a free email account with a provider such as Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, or Gmail. You can use this alternate account until the server is up again.

^{*}Kim Becker, "Security in the Workplace: Technology Issues Threaten Business Prosperity," *Nevada Business*, July 2008.

Competing for International Business

Companies must compete for international sales to stay in business. Every business, whether large or small, has to appeal to diverse international markets to be competitive. Each year a larger share of the U.S. gross national product (GNP) depends on global markets. Some U.S. firms estimate that 40 to 50 percent of their business is conducted outside of the United States. Walmart, for example, has opened hundreds of stores in mainland China, and General Electric has plants in over fifty countries. In fact, estimates suggest that 75 percent of the global Internet population lives outside the United States. If your company, however small, has a website, then it is an international business.

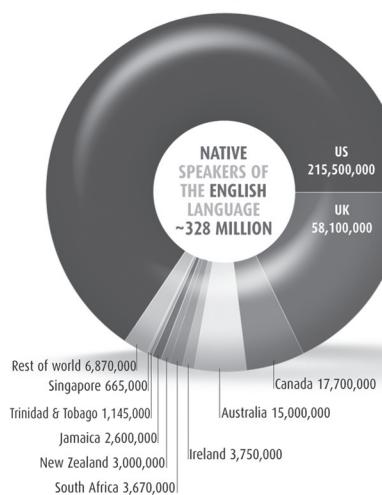
Communicating with Global Audiences

To be a successful employee in this highly competitive global market, you have to communicate clearly and diplomatically with a host of readers from different cultural backgrounds. Adopting a global perspective on business will help you communicate and build goodwill with the customers you write to, no matter where they live—across town, in another state, or on other continents, miles and time zones away. As a result, don’t presume that you will be writing only to native speakers of American English. As a part of your job, you may communicate with readers in Singapore, Jamaica, and South Africa, for example, who speak varieties of English quite different from American English, as illustrated in the first pie chart in Figure 1.2. You will also very likely be writing to readers for whom English is not their first (or native) language, as shown in the second pie chart in Figure 1.2. These international readers will have varying degrees of proficiency in English, from a fairly good command (as with many readers in India and the Philippines, where English is widely spoken), to little comprehension without the use of a foreign language dictionary and a grammar book to decode your message (as in countries where English is widely taught in schools and recommended for success in the business world but not spoken on a regular basis). Non-native speakers, who may reside either in the United States or in a foreign country, will constitute a large and important audience for your work.

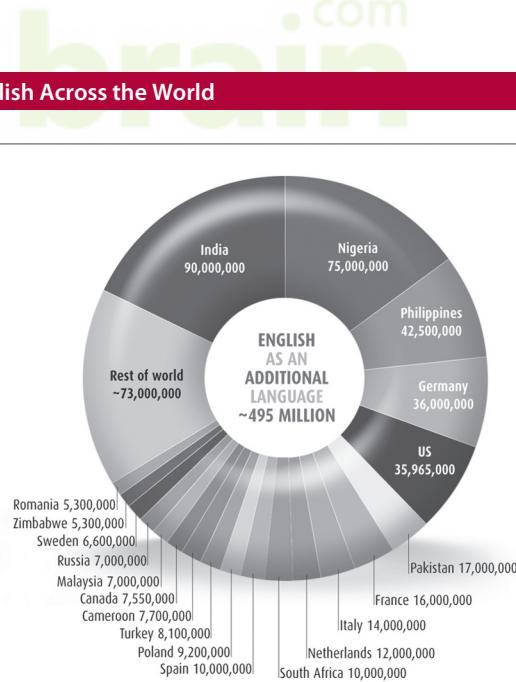
FIGURE 1.2 Native and Non-Native Speakers of English Across the World

THE ANGLOSHERE

For 60 per cent of proficient English speakers across the world it is not their first language



Source: New Scientist magazine.



Seeing the World Through the Eyes of Another Culture

Writing to international readers with proper business etiquette means first learning about their cultural values and assumptions—what they value and also what they regard as communication taboos. They may not conduct business exactly the way it is done in the United States, and to think they should is wrong. Your international audience is likely to have different expectations of how they want a letter addressed or written to them, how they prefer a proposal to be submitted, how they wish a business meeting to be conducted, or how they think questions should be asked and agreements reached. Their concepts of time, family, money, the world, the environment, managers, and communication itself may be nothing like those in the United States. Visuals, including icons, that are easily understood in the United States may be baffling elsewhere in the world. If you misunderstand your audience's culture and inadvertently write, create, or say something inappropriate, it can cost your company a contract and you your job.

Cultural Diversity at Home

Cultural diversity exists inside as well as outside the company you work for. Don't conclude that your boss or co-workers are all native speakers of English, either, or that they come from the same cultural background that you do. In the next decade, as much as 40 to 50 percent of the U.S. skilled workforce may be composed of recent immigrants who bring their own traditions and languages with them. These are highly educated, multicultural, and multinational individuals who have acquired English as a second or even a third language.

For the common good of your company, you need to be respectful of your international colleagues. In fact, multinational employees can be tremendously important for your company in making contacts in their native country and in helping your firm understand and appreciate ethical and cultural differences among customers. The model long report in Chapter 15 (pages 702–718) describes some ways in which a company can both acknowledge and respect the different cultural traditions of its international employees. Businesses want to emphasize their international commitments. A large corporation such as Citibank, for instance, is eager to promote its image of helping customers worldwide, as Figure 1.3 on page 10 shows.

Using International English

Whether your international readers are customers or colleagues, you need to adapt your writing to respect their language needs and cultural protocols. To communicate with non-native speakers, use "international English," a way of writing that is easily understood, culturally appropriate, and diplomatic. International English is user friendly in terms of the words, sentences, formats, and visuals you choose.

To write international English means you re-examine your own writing. The words, idioms, phrases, and sentences you select instinctively for U.S. readers may not be appropriate for an audience for whom English is a second, or even a third,

FIGURE 1.3 A Company's Dedication to Globalization

How Citigroup Meets Banking Needs Around the World

WITH A BANKING EMPIRE that spans more than 100 countries, Citigroup is experienced at meeting the diverse financial services needs of businesses, individuals, customers, and governments. The bank is headquartered in New York City but has offices in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, as well as throughout North America. Live or work in Japan? You can open a checking account at Citigroup's Citibank branch in downtown Tokyo. How about Mexico? Visit a Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accival branch, owned by Citigroup. Citigroup owns European American Bank and has even bought a stake in a Shanghai-based bank with an eye toward attracting more of China's \$1 trillion in bank deposits. Between acquisitions and long-established branches, Citigroup covers the globe from the Atlantic to the Pacific and the Indian Oceans.



Individuals can use Citigroup for all the usual banking services. . . . Personalized service is the hallmark of . . . the bank, which can help prepare customized financial plans for . . . customers, manage their securities trading activities, provide trust services, and much more. What's more, Citigroup is active in communities around the world through . . . financial literacy seminars, volunteerism, and supplier diversity programs. This financial services giant strives for the best of both worlds, wielding its global presence and resources to meet banking needs locally, one customer at a time.

Source: From William M. Pride, Robert J. Hughes, and Jack R. Kapoor, *Business*, 8th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 587. Copyright © 2005 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Used by permission.

language. If you find the set of instructions accompanying your software package confusing, imagine how much more intimidating such a document would be for non-native speakers of English. You can eliminate such confusion by making your message clear, straightforward, and appropriately polite for readers who are not native speakers.

Here are some basic guidelines to help you write international English:

- Use clear, easy-to-understand sentences, not rambling, complex ones. That does not mean you write insultingly short and simple sentences but that you take into account that readers will find your message easier to translate if your sentences do not exceed fifteen to twenty words.
- Do not try to pack too much information into a single sentence; consider using two or more sentences instead. (See pages 67–72.)
- Avoid jargon, idioms (e.g., “to line one’s pockets”), and abbreviations (e.g., “FEMA”) that international readers may not know.
- Choose clear, commonly used words that unambiguously translate into the non-native speaker’s language. Avoid flowery or pretentious language (“amend” for “change”).
- Select visuals and icons that are free from cultural bias and that are not taboo in the non-native speaker’s country. (For more on this, see pages 503–507.)
- When in doubt, consult someone from the native speaker’s country—a co-worker or an instructor, for example.

Because it is so important, international English is discussed in greater detail on pages 183–189. Later chapters of this book will also give you additional practical guidelines on writing correspondence, instructions, proposals, reports, websites, PowerPoint presentations, and other work-related documents suitable for a global audience.

Four Keys to Effective Writing

Effective writing on the job is carefully planned, thoroughly researched, and clearly presented. Its purpose is always to accomplish a specific goal and to be as persuasive as possible. Whether you send a routine email to a co-worker in Cincinnati or Shanghai or a commissioned report to the president of the company, your writing will be more effective if you ask yourself these four questions:

1. Who will read what I write? (Identify your audience.)
2. Why should they read what I write? (Establish your purpose.)
3. What do I have to say to them? (Formulate your message.)
4. How can I best communicate? (Select an appropriate style and tone.)

The questions *who*, *why*, *what*, and *how* do not function independently; they are all related. You write (1) for a specific audience (2) with a clearly defined purpose in mind (3) about a topic your readers need to understand (4) in language appropriate for the occasion. Once you answer the first question, you are off to a good start toward answering the other three. Now let’s examine each of the four questions in detail.

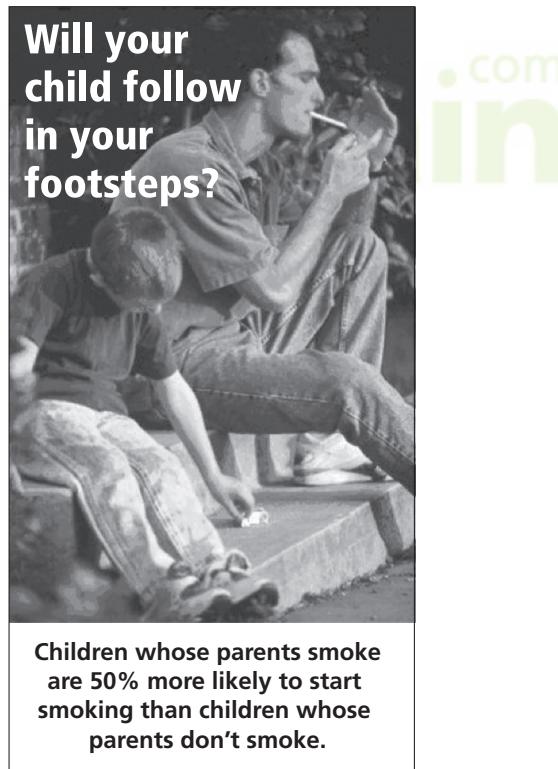
Identifying Your Audience

Knowing *who* makes up your audience is one of your most important responsibilities as a writer. Keep in mind that you are not writing for yourself but for a specific reader or group of readers. Expect to analyze your audience throughout the composing process.

Look at the advertisements in Figures 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6. The main purpose of all three documents is the same—to discourage people from smoking. The underlying message in each ad—smoking is dangerous to your health—is also the same. But note how the different details—words, photographs, situations—have been selected to appeal to three different audiences.

The advertisement in Figure 1.4 is aimed at fathers who smoke. As you can see, it shows an image of a father smoking next to his son, who is reaching for his pack of cigarettes. Note how the headline “Will your child follow in your footsteps?” plays on the fact that the father and son are both literally sitting on steps, but at the same time it implies that the son will imitate his father’s behavior as a smoker. The statistic at the bottom of the advertisement reinforces both the headline and the

FIGURE 1.4 No-Smoking Advertisement Aimed at Fathers Who Smoke



Peter Poulides/Getty Images.

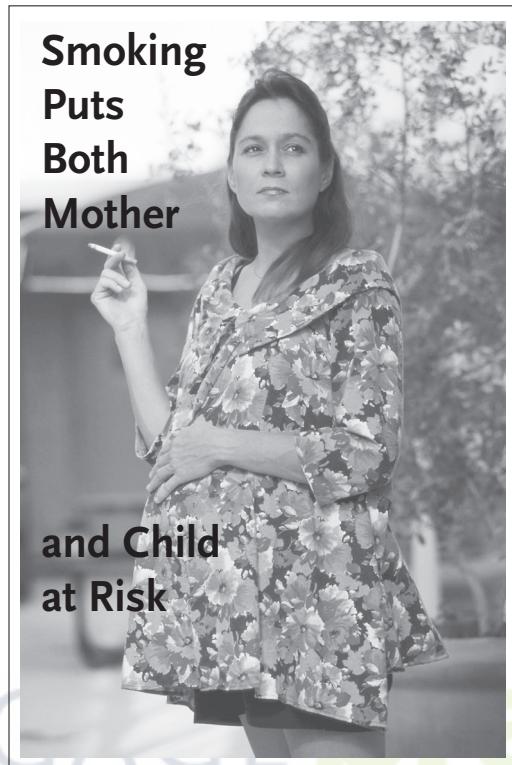
FIGURE 1.5 No-Smoking Advertisement Directed at Pregnant Women

Photo by Bill Crump/Brand X Pictures/Fotosearch/Royalty-Free Image

image, hitting home the point that parental behavior strongly influences children's behavior. The child in the photograph already is following his father by showing a clear interest in smoking, picking up his father's pack of cigarettes.

The advertisement in Figure 1.5, however, is aimed at an audience of pregnant women and shows a member of this audience with a lit cigarette. The words on the advertisement appeal to a mother's sense of responsibility, encouraging pregnant women to stop smoking to avoid harm to their unborn children.

Figure 1.6 is directed toward still another audience: young athletes. The word *smoke* in this advertisement is aimed directly at their game and their goal. The headline includes a pun. The writer aptly made the goal the same for the game as well as for the players' lives. Note, too, how this image with its four photos is suitable for an international audience.

The copywriters who created these advertisements have chosen appropriate details—words, pictures, captions, and so on—to persuade each audience not to smoke. With their careful choices, they successfully answered the question “How can we best communicate with each audience?” Note that details relevant for

FIGURE 1.6 No-Smoking Advertisement Appealing to Young Athletes

CDC, Tobacco Free Sports Initiative

one audience (athletes, for example) could not be used as effectively for another audience (such as fathers).

The three advertisements in Figures 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 illustrate some fundamental points you need to keep in mind when identifying your audience:

- Members of each audience differ in their backgrounds, experiences, and needs.
- How you picture your audience will determine what you say to them.
- Viewing something from the audience's perspective will help you to select the most relevant details for that audience.

Some Questions to Ask About Your Audience

You can form a fairly accurate picture of your audience by asking yourself key questions before you write. For each audience you need to reach, consider the following questions:

1. **Who is my audience?** What individual(s) will most likely be reading my work?

If you are writing for colleagues or managers at work:

- What is my reader's job title? Is he or she a co-worker? Immediate supervisor? Vice president?
- What kinds of job experience, education, and interests does my reader have?

If you are writing for clients or consumers (a very large, often diverse audience):

- How can I find out about their interest in my product or service?
- How much will this audience know about my company? About me?

2. How many people will make up my audience?

- Will just one individual read what I write (the nurse on the next shift, the production manager), or will many people read it (all the consumers of my company's product or service)?
- Will my boss want to see my work (say, a letter to a consumer in response to a complaint) to approve it?
- Will I be sending my message to a large group of people sharing a similar interest in my topic?

3. How well does my audience understand English?

- Are all my readers native speakers of English?
- Will I be communicating with people around the globe?
- Will some of my readers speak English as a second or even a third language and thereby require extra sensitivity on my part to their needs as non-native speakers of English?
- Will some of my readers speak no English and instead use an English grammar book, a foreign language dictionary, or perhaps an online translator, such as Google Translate, for email or webpages where you just copy and paste the text into the translate window?

4. How much does my audience already know about my topic?

- Will my readers know as much as I do about the particular problem or issue, or will they need to be briefed, be given background information, or be updated?
- Are my readers familiar with, and do they expect me to use, technical terms and descriptions, or will I have to provide definitions and easy-to-understand, nontechnical wording and visuals?

5. What is my audience's reason for reading my work?

- Is my communication part of their routine duties, or are they looking for information to solve a problem or make a decision?
- Am I writing to describe benefits that another writer or company cannot offer?
- Will my readers expect complete details, or will a short summary be enough?
- Are they looking at my work to make an important decision affecting a co-worker, a client, a community, or the environment?
- Are they reading something I write because they must (a legal notification or an incident report, for instance)?

Case Study**Writing to Different Audiences in a Large Corporation**

Jan Melius works in the Communication Department of GrandCo, a firm that manufactures large heavy-duty equipment. As a regular part of her job, Melius has to prepare documents for several different audiences, including the management and staff at GrandCo, current and potential customers, and the larger community of Fairfield where the company is located. Each group of her readers will have different requirements and expectations, and she has to understand those differences if she wants to meet their needs. She first has to do research, gathering the right type and amount of information from many sources, including engineers, accountants, and management at GrandCo, Web searches, government documents, etc., as well as consulting with clients and community officials. Often the documents that she prepares are a result of her collaborations with these various individuals. She also has to select the right type of document to send to her readers.

Below is a list of the audiences that Melius writes for or to, along with the kinds of documents they need with examples of appropriate information found in these documents. Note how Melius has successfully analyzed her audiences according to the guidelines on pages 12–17.

Audience	Types of Information/Documents to Supply
<i>Customer</i>	Proposals urging customers to buy a GrandCo model, stressing its state-of-the-art advantages over the competition's and emphasizing the specific benefits it offers (cost, service, quality, efficiency)
<i>Principal Executive</i>	Short reports on sales, cash flow, productivity, market trends; research about potential competition
<i>Production Engineer</i>	Detailed reports on design and manufacturing models, including spec sheets, diagrams, etc., on transmissions, strength of materials; status reports following Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines
<i>Production Supervisor</i>	Service reports about schedules, staffing needs, and employee activity reports; availability of parts from vendors
<i>Operator</i>	Instructions in manuals, including visuals on how to operate equipment safely and responsibly; warnings about any type of precautions; information on any special training necessary
<i>Maintenance Worker</i>	Reports and guidelines about maintenance procedures; schedules; checklists of items to be inspected; troubleshooting procedures on dealing with any problems
<i>Community Residents</i>	News releases about GrandCo contributions to Fairfield—sponsoring events, offering tours or demonstrations; blogs on how GrandCo is greening the workplace; articles on GrandCo's dedication to community environment and safety

As these examples show, to succeed in the world of work, give each reader the details he or she needs to accomplish a given job.

6. What are my audience's expectations about my written work?

- Do they want an email, or will they expect a formal letter?
- Will they expect me to follow a company format and style?
- Are they looking for a one-page memo or for a comprehensive report?
- Should I use a formal tone or a more relaxed and conversational style?

7. What is my audience's attitude toward me and my work?

- Will I be writing to a group of disgruntled and angry customers or vendors about a sensitive issue (a product recall, the discontinuation of a service, a refusal of credit, or a shipment delay)?
- Will I have to be sympathetic while at the same time give firm, convincing reasons for my company's (or my) decision?
- Will my readers be skeptical, indifferent, or accepting about what I write?
- Will my readers feel guilty that they have not answered an earlier message of mine, not paid a bill now overdue, or not kept a promise or commitment?

8. What do I want my audience to do after reading my work?

- Do I want my readers to purchase something from me, approve my plan, or send me additional documentation?
- Do I expect my readers to acknowledge my message, save it for future reference, or review and email it to another individual or office?
- Do my readers have to take immediate action, or do they have several days or weeks to respond?
- Do I simply want my readers to get my message and not respond at all?

As your answers to these questions will show, you may have to communicate with many different audiences on your job. Each group of readers will have different expectations and requirements; you need to understand those audience differences if you want to supply relevant information.

Establishing Your Purpose

By knowing *why* you are writing, you will communicate better and find the writing process itself to be easier. The reader's needs and your goal in communicating will help you to formulate your purpose. It will guide you in determining exactly what you can and must say.

Make sure you follow the most important rule in occupational writing: *Get to the point right away*. At the beginning of your message, state your goal clearly. Don't feel as if you have to entertain or impress your reader.

I want new employees to know how to log on to the computer.

Think over what you have written. Rewrite your purpose statement until it states precisely why you are writing and what you want your readers to do or to know.

I want to teach new employees the security code for logging on to the company computer.

Since your purpose controls the amount and order of information you include, state it clearly at the beginning of every email, memo, letter, and report.

This memo will acquaint new employees with the security measures they must take when logging on to the company computer.

In the opening purpose statement that follows, note how the author clearly informs the reader what the report will and will not cover.

As you requested at last month's organizational meeting, I have conducted a survey of how well our websites advertise our products. This survey describes users' responses but does not prioritize them.

The following preface to a publication on architectural casework details contains a model statement of purpose suited to a particular audience.

This publication has been prepared by the Architectural Woodwork Institute to provide a source book of conventional details and uniform detail terminology. For this purpose a series of casework detail drawings, . . . representative of the best industry-wide practice, has been prepared and is presented here. By supplying both architect and woodwork manufacturer with a common authoritative reference, this work will enable architects and woodworkers to communicate in a common technical language. . . . Besides serving as a basic reference for architects and architectural drafters, this guide will be an effective educational tool for the beginning drafter-architect-in-training. It should also be a valuable aid to the project manager in coordinating the work of many drafters on large projects.¹

After studying that preface, readers have a clear sense of why they should read the publication and what to do with the information they find in it.

Formulating Your Message

Your message is the sum of the facts, responses, and recommendations you put into writing. A message includes the scope and details of your communication.

- *Scope* refers to how much information you give readers about key details.
- *Details* are the key points you think readers need to know.

Some messages will consist of one or two phrases or sentences: "Do not touch; wet paint." "Order #756 was sent this afternoon by FedEx. It should arrive at your office on March 22." At the other extreme, messages may extend over many pages. Messages may carry good news or bad news. They may deal with routine matters, or they may handle changes in policy, special situations, or problems.

Keep in mind that you will need to adapt your message to fit your audience. For some audiences, such as engineers or technicians, you may have to supply a complete report with every detail noted or contained in an appendix. For other readers—busy executives, for example—include only a summary of financial or managerial significance. (See page 704 for an example of an abstract.)

¹Reprinted by permission of Architectural Woodwork Institute.

Selecting Your Style and Tone

Style

Style refers to *how* something is written rather than what is written. Style helps to determine how well you communicate with an audience and how well your readers understand and receive your message. It involves the choices you make about

- the construction of your paragraphs
- the length and patterns of your sentences
- your choice of words

You will have to adapt your style to take into account different messages, different purposes, and different audiences. Your words, for example, will certainly vary with your audience. If all your readers are specialists in your field, you may safely use the technical language and symbols of your profession. Nonspecialists, however, will be confused and annoyed if you write to them in the same way. The average consumer, for example, will not know what a potentiometer is; but if you write “volume control on a radio” instead, you will be using words that the general public can understand. And as we saw, when you write for an international audience you have to take into account their proficiency in English and choose your words and sentences with their needs in mind (see pages 8–11).

Tone

Tone in writing, like tone of voice, expresses your attitude toward a topic and toward your audience. Your tone can range from formal and impersonal (a scientific

Case Study

Adapting the Technical Details to Meet Your Audience's Needs

The excerpt in Figure 1.7 on page 20 comes from a section called “Technology in the Grocery Store” in a consumer handbook. The message provides factual information and a brief explanation of how a grocery store clerk scans an item, informing consumers about how and why they may have to wait longer in line. It also tells readers that the process is not as simple as it looks. This message is appropriate for consumers who do not need or desire more information.

Individuals responsible for entering data into the computer or doing inventory control, however, would need more detailed instructions on how to program the supermarket’s computer so that it automatically tells the point-of-sale (POS) terminal what price and product match each bar code.

The graphic designers responsible for product packaging, including affixing the bar codes at the manufacturing plant, would require much more detailed information than would consumers or store cashiers. These designers must be familiar with the Universal Product Code (UPC), which specifies bar codes worldwide. They would also have to know about the UPC binary code formulas and how they work—that is, the number of lines, the width of spacing, and the framework to indicate to the scanner when to start reading the code and when to stop. Such formulas, technical details, and functions of photoelectric scanners are necessary and appropriate for this audience.

FIGURE 1.7 An Appropriately Formulated Message for Consumers

Bar Code Readers

Every time you check out at a grocery or retail store, your purchases are scanned to record the price. An optical scanner uses a laser beam to read the bar codes, those zebra-striped lines imprinted on packages or canned goods. These codes are fed into the store's computer, which provides the price that matches the product code. The product and its price are then recorded on your receipt. Simultaneously, the information is fed into the store's computer to keep track of the inventory on hand.



Whether it is you or the store clerk that does the scanning, the process starts with lining up the bar code with the red light of the scanner. An electric beep sounds when the scan is successful. The scanner may be handheld for items too heavy to lift and line up.

Scanning an item requires more skill than you might think. To make sure that the scanner accurately reads bar codes, you or the clerk must pay attention to the following:

Readable bar codes: Make sure that the codes are clearly printed and are not faded, torn, or crumpled.

Scanner glass: Be sure that the glass plate is clean and clear; it should not be coated with anything sticky that would leave a film.

Speed: Pass the item across the scanner at a steady speed. If you move the item too slowly, the bars will look too long and too wide and the computer will reject them. If you move the item too quickly, the scanner will not be able to identify the code.

Angle: Hold the bar code at a right angle so that the item reflects as much of the laser as possible. If the angle is wrong, there will be an insufficient reflection of the laser beam back to the scanner.

Distance: It is best to hold the item 3 to 4 inches away from the glass. If you hold the object out much farther, say, 8 to 9 inches away from the glass, the code will be out of focus for the scanner to identify.

Rotation: Be sure the code faces the scanner so that the lines can be read correctly.

You can also scan bar codes with a camera-equipped mobile phone. Thanks to the software available through one of your apps, you can read the UPC bar code and access a manufacturer's database that will give you information about the item you may wish to purchase. For instance, if you are shopping for a coffeemaker, you would open the bar code reader app, scan the bar code using the camera on your mobile phone, and, after a few seconds, find out the price, the location of stores near you that sell the coffeemaker, and links to product reviews. A scan might also give you information about a nearby store that has the same model you want to purchase on sale at a lower price.

report) to informal and personal (an email to a friend or a how-to article for consumers). Your tone can be unprofessionally sarcastic or diplomatically agreeable.

Tone, like style, is indicated in part by the words you choose. For example, saying that someone is “interested in details” conveys a more positive tone than saying the person is a “nitpicker.” The word *economical* is more positive than *stingy* or *cheap*.

The tone of your writing is especially important in occupational writing because it reflects the image you project to your readers and thus determines how they will respond to you, your work, and your company. Depending on your tone, you can appear sincere and intelligent or angry and uninformed. Of course, in all your written work, you need to sound professional and knowledgeable. The wrong tone in a letter or a proposal might cost you a customer. Sarcastic or hostile language will alienate you from your readers, as the letters in Figures 5.5 and 5.7 demonstrate (see pages 180 and 184).

Case Study

Adapting a Description of Heparin for Two Different Audiences

In the workplace you will often be faced with the problem of presenting the same information to two completely different audiences. To better understand the impact that style and tone can have when you have to solve this problem, read the following two descriptions of heparin, a drug used to prevent blood clots. In both descriptions, the message is basically the same. Yet because the audiences differ, so do the style and the tone.

The first description of heparin appears in a reference work for physicians and other health care providers and is written in a highly technical style with an impersonal tone appropriate for the contexts in which this medicine is discussed.

The writer has made the appropriate stylistic choices for the audience, the purpose, and the message. Health care providers understand and expect the jargon and the scientific explanations, which enable them to prescribe or administer heparin correctly. The writer's authoritative, impersonal tone is coldly clinical, which, of course, is also appropriate because the purpose is to convey the accurate, complete scientific facts about this drug, not the writer's or reader's personal opinions or beliefs. The writer sounds both knowledgeable and objective.

Technical Description

Heparin Sodium Injection, USP Sterile Solution

Description: Heparin Sodium Injection, USP is a sterile solution of heparin sodium derived from bovine lung tissue, standardized for anticoagulant activity.

Each ml of the 1,000 and 5,000 USP units per ml preparations contains heparin sodium 1,000 or 5,000 USP units; 9 mg sodium chloride; 9.45 mg benzyl alcohol added as preservative. Each ml of the 10,000 USP units per ml preparations contains heparin sodium 10,000 units; 9.45 mg benzyl alcohol added as a preservative.

(Continued)

When necessary, the pH of Heparin Sodium Injection, USP was adjusted with hydrochloric acid and/or sodium hydroxide. The pH range is 5.0–7.5.

Clinical pharmacology: Heparin inhibits reactions that lead to the clotting of blood and the formation of fibrin clots both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Heparin acts at multiple sites in the normal coagulation system. Small amounts of heparin in combination with antithrombin III (heparin cofactor) can inhibit thrombosis by inactivating activated Factor X and inhibiting the conversion of prothrombin to thrombin.

Dosage and administration: Heparin sodium is not effective by oral administration and should be given by intermittent intravenous injection, intravenous infusion, or deep subcutaneous (intrafrat, i.e., above the iliac crest or abdominal fat layer) injection. **The intramuscular route of administration should be avoided because of the frequent occurrence of hematoma at the injection site.²**

The second description of heparin below, however, is written in a nontechnical style and with an informal, caring tone. This description is similar to those found on information sheets given to patients about the medications they are receiving in a hospital.

The writer of this patient-centered description has also made appropriate choices for nonspecialists, such as patients or their families, who do not need elaborate descriptions of the origin and composition of the drug. Using familiar words and adopting a personal, friendly tone help to win the patients' confidence and enable them to understand why and how they should take the drug.

Nontechnical Description

Your doctor has prescribed a drug called *heparin* for you. This drug will prevent any new blood clots from forming in your body. Since heparin cannot be absorbed from your stomach or intestines, you will not receive it in a capsule or tablet. Instead, it will be given into a vein or the fatty tissue of your abdomen. After several days, when the danger of clotting is past, your dosage of heparin will be gradually reduced. Then another medication you can take by mouth will be started.

²Copyright © *Physicians' Desk Reference®* 45th edition, 1991, published by Medical Economics, Montvale, NJ 07645. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Characteristics of Job-Related Writing

Job-related writing characteristically serves six basic functions: (1) to provide practical information, (2) to give facts rather than impressions, (3) to supply visuals to clarify and condense information, (4) to give accurate measurements, (5) to state responsibilities precisely, and (6) to persuade and offer recommendations. These six functions tell you what kind of writing you will produce after you successfully answer the *who*, *why*, *what*, and *how*.

1. Providing Practical Information

On-the-job writing requires a practical “here’s what you need to do or to know” approach. One such practical approach is *action oriented*. You instruct the reader to do something—assemble a ceiling fan, test for bacteria, perform an audit, or create a website. Another practical approach of job-related writing is *knowledge oriented*. You explain what you want the reader to understand—why a procedure was changed, what caused a problem or solved it, how much progress was made on a job site, or why a new piece of equipment should be purchased.

The following description of the Energy Efficiency Ratio combines both the action-oriented and knowledge-oriented approaches of practical writing.

Whether you are buying window air-conditioning units or a central air-conditioning system, consider the performance factors and efficiency of the various units on the market. Before you buy, determine the Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) of the units under consideration. The EER is found by dividing the BTUs (units of heat) that the unit removes from the area to be cooled by the watts (amount of electricity) the unit consumes. The result is usually a number between 5 and 12. The higher the number, the more efficiently the unit will use electricity.³

2. Giving Facts, Not Impressions

Occupational writing is concerned with what can be seen, heard, felt, tasted, or smelled. The writer uses *concrete language* and specific details. The emphasis is on facts rather than on the writer’s feelings or guesses.

The discussion below, addressed to a group of scientists about the sources of oil spills and their impact on the environment, is an example of writing with objectivity. It describes events and causes without anger or tears. Imagine how much emotion could have been packed into a paragraph by the residents of the coastal states who watched massive spills come ashore in 2010.

The most critical impact results from the escapement of oil into the ecosystem, both crude oil and refined fuel oils, the latter coming from sources such as marine traffic. Major oil spills occur as a result of accidents such as blowout, pipeline breakage, etc. Technological advances coupled with stringent regulations [can] reduce the chances of such major spills; however, there is [still] a chronic low-level discharge of oil associated with normal drilling and production operations. Waste oils discharged through the river systems and practices associated with tanker transports dump more significant quantities

³Reprinted by permission of New Orleans Public Services, Inc.

FIGURE 1.8 Use of a Visual to Convey Information

Using Your Computer Safely

By following the bulleted guidelines below, and illustrated in the photo to the right, you can avoid workplace injuries when using your computer.

- **To reduce the possibility of eye damage,** maintain a distance of 18 to 24 inches between your eyes and the computer screen and always make sure to keep your work area well lit.
- **To minimize neck strain,** position your computer screen so that the top of the screen is at or just below your eye level.
- **To avoid back and shoulder strain,** sit up straight at a right angle in your chair with your shoulders relaxed and your lower back firmly supported (with a cushion, if necessary).
- **To lessen leg and back strain,** adjust your chair height so that your upper body and your legs form a 90-degree angle and that your feet are either flat on the floor or on a footrest.



Courtesy of ErgoConcepts, LLC

CENGAGE brain

of oils into the ocean, compared to what is introduced by the offshore oil industry. All of this contributes to the chronic low-level discharge of oil into world oceans. The long-range cumulative effect of these discharges is possibly the most significant threat to the ecosystem.⁴

3. Supplying Visuals to Clarify and Condense Information

Visuals are indispensable partners of words in conveying information to your readers. On-the-job writing makes frequent use of visuals—such as tables, charts, photographs, flow charts, diagrams, and drawings—to clarify and condense information. Thanks to various software packages, you can easily create and insert visuals into your writing. The use of visuals is discussed in detail in Chapters 10 and 11, and PowerPoint presentations are covered in Chapter 16.

Visuals play an important role in the workplace. Note how the photograph in Figure 1.8 can help computer users to better understand and follow the accompanying written ergonomics guidelines. A visual like this, reproduced in an employee handbook or displayed on a website, can significantly reduce physical stress and increase a worker's productivity.

⁴Source: The Offshore Ecology Investigation. Reprinted by permission of Gulf Universities Research Consortium.

TABLE 1.1 Ten Most Populous Countries, 2010 and in 2050 (Projected)

2010		2050	
Country	Population (Millions)	Country	Population (Millions)
China	1,330	India	1,808
India	1,173	China	1,424
United States	310	United States	420
Indonesia	243	Nigeria	356
Brazil	201	Indonesia	313
Pakistan	177	Bangladesh	280
Bangladesh	158	Pakistan	278
Nigeria	152	Brazil	228
Russia	139	Kinshasa (Congo)	203
Japan	136	Mexico	148

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Jan. 2010.

Visuals are extremely useful in making detailed relationships clear to readers. The information in Table 1.1 on the world's ten most populous countries in 2010 and those projected for 2050 would be very difficult to discuss and follow if it were not in twin tables. When that information is presented in two tables, the writer makes it easy for the reader to see and understand relationships. If such information were just written in prose, it would be much harder to compare, contrast, and summarize.

In addition to the visuals already mentioned, the following graphic devices in your letters, reports, and websites can make your writing easier to read and follow:

- headings, such as “Four Keys to Effective Writing” or “Characteristics of Job-Related Writing”
- subheadings to divide major sections into parts, such as “Providing Practical Information” or “Giving Facts, Not Impressions”
- numbers within a paragraph, or even a line, such as (1) this, (2) this, and (3) also this
- different types of spacing
- CAPITALIZATION
- *italics* (easily made by a word processing command or indicated in typed copy by underscoring)
- boldface (darker print for emphasis)
- symbols (visual markers such as →)
- hypertext (Internet links, often presented underscored, in boldface, or in a different color)
- asterisks (*) to separate items or to note key information
- lists with bullets (like those before each entry in this list)

Keep in mind that graphic devices should be used carefully and in moderation, not to decorate a letter or report. When used properly, they can help you to

- organize, arrange, and emphasize your ideas
- make your work easier to read and to recall
- preview and summarize your ideas, for example, through boldface headings
- list related items to help readers distinguish, follow, compare, and recall them—as this bulleted list does

4. Giving Accurate Measurements

Much of your work will depend on measurements—acres, bytes, calories, kilometers, centimeters, degrees, dollars and cents, grams, percentages, pounds, square feet, and so on. Numbers are clear and convincing. However, you must be sensitive to which units of measurement you use when writing to international readers. Not every culture computes in dollars or records temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit. See pages 190–191.

The following discussion of mixing colored cement for a basement floor would be useless to readers if it did not supply accurate quantities:

Including permanent color in a basement floor is a good selling point. One way of doing this is by incorporating commercially pure mineral pigments in a topping mixture placed to a 1-inch depth over a normal base slab. The topping mix should range in volume between 1 part portland cement, 1½ parts sand, and 1½ parts gravel or crushed stone and 1 part portland cement, 2 parts sand, and 2 parts gravel or crushed stone. Maximum size gravel or crushed stone should be 3/8 inch.

Mix cement and pigment before aggregate and water are added and be very thorough to secure uniform dispersion and the full color value of the pigment. The proportion varies from 5 to 10 percent of pigment by weight of cement, depending on the shade desired. If carbon black is used as a pigment to obtain grays or black, a proportion of from ½ to 1 percent will be adequate. Manufacturers' instructions should be followed closely; care in cleanliness, placing, and finishing are also essential. Colored topping mixes are available from some suppliers of ready mixed concrete.⁵

5. Stating Responsibilities Precisely

Because it is directed to a specific audience, your job-related writing should make absolutely clear what it expects of, or can do for, that audience. Misunderstandings waste time, cost money, and can result in injuries. Directions on order forms, for example, should indicate how and where information is to be listed and how it is to be routed and acted on. The following directions show readers how to perform different tasks:

- Enter agency code numbers in the message box.
- Items 1 through 16 of this form should be completed by the injured employee or by someone acting on his or her behalf, whenever an injury is sustained on the job. The term *injury* includes occupational disease caused by the employment. The form should be given to the employee's official superior within 12–24 hours following the injury. The official superior is that individual having responsible supervision over the employee.

⁵Reprinted by permission of *Concrete Construction Magazine*, World of Concrete Center, 426 S. Westgate, Addison, IL 60101.

Other kinds of job-related writing deal with the writer's responsibilities rather than the reader's, for example, "Tomorrow I will meet with the district sales manager to discuss (1) July's sales, (2) the opportunities of expanding our market, and (3) next fall's production schedule. I will send a PDF of our discussion by August 3."

6. Persuading and Offering Recommendations

Persuasion is a crucial part of writing on the job. In fact, it is one of the most crucial skills you can learn in the business world. Persuasion means trying to convince your reader(s) to accept your ideas, approve your recommendations, or order your products. Convincing your reader to accept your interpretation or ideas is at the heart of the world of work, whether you are writing to someone outside or inside your company.

Writing Persuasively to Clients and Customers

Much of your writing in the business world will promote your company's image by persuading customers and clients (a) to buy a product or service, (b) to adopt a plan of action endorsed by your employer, or (c) to support a particular cause or campaign that affects a community. You will have to convince readers that you (and your company)—your products and services—can save them time and money, increase efficiency, reduce risks, or improve their image and that you can do this better than your competitors can.

Expect also to be called on to write convincingly about your company's image, as in the case of product recalls or discontinuances (see Figure 4.11, page 161), customer complaints, or damage control after a corporate mistake affecting the environment. You may also have to convince customers around the globe that your company respects cultural diversity and upholds specific ethnic values.

A large part of being a persuasive writer is supporting your claims with evidence. You will have to conduct research; provide logical arguments; supply appropriate facts, examples, and statistics; and identify the most relevant information for your particular audience(s). Notice how the advertisement in Figure 1.9 offers a bulleted list of persuasive reasons—based on cost, time, efficiency, safety, and convenience—to convince correctional officials that they should use General Medical's services rather than those of a hospital or clinic.

Writing Persuasively to In-House Personnel

As much as 70 percent of your writing may be directed to individuals you work with and for. In fact, your very first job-related writing will likely be a persuasive letter of application to obtain a job interview with a potential employer.

On the job, you may have to persuade a manager to buy a new technology or lobby for a change in your office or department. To be successful, you will have to evaluate various products or options by studying, analyzing, and deciding on the most relevant one(s) for your boss. Your reader will expect you to offer clear-cut, logical, and convincing reasons for your choice, backed up with persuasive facts.

FIGURE 1.9 An Advertisement Using Persuasive Arguments to Convince Potential Customers to Use a Service

Visual stresses the need for a more efficient way to transport prisoners for medical attention

Bulleted list conveniently and persuasively uses factual data to convince

GENERAL MEDICAL WILL STOP THE UNNECESSARY TRANSPORTING OF YOUR INMATES.

- We'll bring our X-ray services to your facility, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
- We can reduce your X-ray costs by a minimum of 28%. X-ray cost includes radiologist's interpretation and written report.
- Same-day service with immediate results telephoned to your facility.
- Save correctional officers' time, thereby saving your facility money.
- Avoid chance of prisoner's escape and possible danger to the public.
- Avoid long waits in overcrowded hospitals.
- Reduce your insurance liabilities.
- Other Services Available: Ultrasound, Two-Dimensional Echocardiogram, C.T. Scan, EKG, Blood Lab and Holter Monitor.

General Medical Is Your On-Site Medical Problem Solver

© Cengage Learning 2013

Visual stresses the need for a more efficient way to transport prisoners for medical attention

Bulleted list conveniently and persuasively uses factual data to convince

General Medical Services Corp.
A subsidiary of

Federal Medical Industries, Inc. O.T.C.
950 S.W. 12th Avenue, 2nd Floor Suite, Pompano, Florida 33069
(305) 942-1111 FL WATS: 1-800-654-8282

As part of your job, too, you will be asked to write convincing memos, emails, letters, blogs, and websites to boost the morale of employees, encourage them to be more productive, and compliment them on a job well done.

The following summary concludes that it is better for a company to lease a truck rather than to purchase one. Note how the writer uses a persuasive tone and presents information logically. You can also expect to write persuasively to explain and solve budget, safety, or marketing problems your company faces, as in Figure 4.2 (see page 135).

After studying the pros and cons of buying or leasing a company truck, I recommend that we lease it for the following five reasons.

1. We will not have to expend any of our funds for a down payment, which is being waived.
2. Our monthly payments for leasing the vehicle will be at least \$150 less than the payments we would have to make if we purchased the truck on a three-year contract.
3. All major and minor maintenance (up to 36,000 miles) is included as part of our monthly leasing payment.
4. Insurance (theft and damage) is also part of our monthly leasing payment.
5. We have the option of trading in the truck every sixteen months for a newer model or trading up for a more expensive model in the line every twelve months.

FIGURE 1.10 A Persuasive Email from an Employee to a Business Manager

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Word email window. The message header includes fields for From (<rburke@starinstruments.com> (R. Burke)), To (<lgriffin@starinstruments.com> (Lee Griffin)), Cc (<garrelo@starinstruments.com> (Gloria Arrelo)), and Subject (Shortage in my October paycheck). An attachment icon shows a PDF file named 'Timesheet for R. Burke.pdf'. The body of the email reads:

Dear Ms. Griffin,

My paycheck for the two-week period ending October 15 was \$75.00 short. For this period I should have been paid \$875.00. Instead, my check was for only \$800.00. I believe I know why there may have been a discrepancy. The \$75.00 additional pay for this period was the result of my having put in five hours of overtime on October 8 and October 12 (2½ hours each day @ \$15.00 per hour). This overtime was not reflected on my current pay stub.

I have double-checked with my supervisor, Gloria Arrelo, who assured me that she recorded my overtime on the timesheets she sent to your office. She has kindly given me a copy that I have scanned and have attached to this email to verify my hours.

Thank you for correcting your records and for crediting me with the additional \$75.00 for my overtime.

Sincerely,

Robbie Burke
Data Entry, Shift 2

Clearly explains and documents the problem

Offers further evidence in attachment

Closes politely with request

© Cengage Learning 2013

Figure 1.10 is a persuasive email from an employee to a manager reporting a payroll mistake and persuading the reader to correct it. The email contains many of the other characteristics of job-related writing we have discussed. Note how the writer provides factual, not subjective, information; attaches a time sheet (a type of visual); gives accurate details; and identifies her own and her immediate supervisor's responsibilities. The writer's tone is suitably polite yet direct.

Ethical Writing in the Workplace

One of your most important job responsibilities is to ensure that your writing and behavior are ethical. Writing ethically means choosing language that is right and fair, honest, and complete in all documents prepared for your employer, co-workers,

and customers. Your reputation and character plus your employer's corporate image will depend on your following an ethical course of action.

Many of the most significant phrases in the world of business reflect an ethical commitment to honesty and fairness: *accountability, public trust, equal opportunity employer, core values, global citizenship, good-faith effort, truth in lending, fair play, honest advertising, full disclosure, high professional standards, fair trade, community involvement, and corporate responsibility*.

Unethical business dealings, conversely, are stigmatized in *cover-ups, dodges, stonewalling, shady deals, spin-doctoring, foul play, bid rigging, employee raiding, misrepresentations, kickbacks, hostile takeovers, planned obsolescence, price gouging, bias, and unfair advantage*. Those are the activities that make customers angry and that the Better Business Bureau and local, state, and federal agencies may investigate.

Employers Insist on Ethical Behavior

Ethical behavior is crucial to your success in the workplace. Your employer will insist that you are honest, follow professional standards, show integrity, and exhibit loyalty in your professional relationships with clients, co-workers, supervisors, and vendors. These ethical values are stressed in orientation and training sessions and through every level of management in the business world. You will be expected to know and comply with your company policies and procedures, as outlined in the employee or agency handbook (see pages 577–596), and you will also have to follow the professional codes, regulations, and methods that affect your job. Operating with ethical behavior and sound judgment is necessary so that companies can

- adhere to all industry-specific rules and regulations
- follow all state, local, and federal requirements
- provide a safe, healthy, and productive workplace
- create strategic advantages for healthy competition
- champion change and innovation
- create customer loyalty
- promote global perspective of their “brand”

Employers Monitor Ethical Behavior

On the job, employers can legally monitor their employees' work—electronically, through cameras, or by personal visits. Some of these visits are not announced (such as the “secret shoppers” who report on the customer service they receive). How many times have you made a call to an organization and heard, “This call may be monitored for quality assurance”? According to a 2010 survey conducted by the American Management Association, the monitoring of employees has risen 45 percent in the past few years and extends to voice mail, email, instant messages (IMs), and Web use.

Employers monitor the behavior of their employees for several reasons:

- to determine if a worker is doing his or her job correctly
- to find out how well a worker is performing
- to identify employee wrongdoing
- to improve service, production, communication, or transportation
- to ensure compliance with federal, state, and municipal codes
- to limit liability
- to adhere to and even heighten security measures

Monitoring gives management solid facts about employee training, performance reviews, and promotions. But working with integrity means doing the right thing—even when no one is watching.

Know Your Company's Culture and Codes: A Letter from IBM's CEO

You need to know your company's history, mission, image, accomplishments, and ethical code of conduct—that is, what it expects of you in the workplace and in the marketplace.

Figure 1.11 on page 32 contains a letter from IBM's CEO introducing the company's Business Conduct Guidelines that employees are required to follow. The letter, and the list of guidelines, gives IBM employees a clear sense of how IBM defines its corporate identity through the high ethical standards it maintains. Knowing the core values that IBM fosters and understanding the actions it will not tolerate, employees can better perform their duties. In such a corporate culture, both IBM and its employees can successfully fulfill IBM's mission, uphold the company's image, and serve customers ethically around the globe.

Ethical Requirements on the Job

In the workplace, you will be expected to meet the highest ethical standards by fulfilling the following eight requirements:

1. Be professionally competent. Know your job. Your company will expect you to be well prepared through your education, internships, experience, in-house training, continuing education units (CEUs), professional conferences, discussions with co-workers, and reading. You need to use equipment safely and efficiently, produce high-quality products, deliver up-to-date and accurate service, and represent your company as a knowledgeable professional.

2. Be honest. Never misrepresent yourself on a résumé, at an interview, or on a networking site such as LinkedIn (see Figure 7.2, pages 266–267), by lying about your background, inflating a job title, or exaggerating your responsibilities at a previous job. The résumé (see pages 272–289) is just one place you must make decisions with honesty and candor. At work, honesty is equally crucial. You need to

FIGURE 1.11 A Letter from the CEO of IBM

Dear IBMer:

In 2003, we undertook a global, company-wide discussion about the values that define IBM. In addition to finding a common set of qualities that characterize “an IBMer,” we also learned something equally important: Almost every one of us thinks our work and choices should be determined by what we value.

This is particularly relevant to what we agree explicitly to do and not do as individuals when conducting IBM’s business. Each one of us makes decisions that could affect our company and its reputation—whether with one person or with millions of people.

At one level, the IBM Business Conduct Guidelines are a document of conduct we establish for ourselves to help us comply with laws and good ethical practices. We regularly review and update it as business and the world at large become more complex, and as the need for such guidelines becomes greater.

But this is not just about compliance with the law and general standards of ethics. By establishing these guidelines and giving them the weight of a governing document, we are acknowledging that our choices and actions help define IBM for others. We are ensuring that our relationships—with clients, investors, colleagues and the communities in which we live and work—are built on trust.

In other words, the Business Conduct Guidelines are a tangible example of our values and an expression of each IBMer’s personal responsibility to uphold them.

I hardly find it necessary to remind IBMers to “act ethically.” I know you feel as strongly as I that anyone doing otherwise does not belong at IBM. But I do ask you to read these Business Conduct Guidelines and commit yourself to them. In addition to establishing a baseline for behavior throughout IBM, they provide some excellent examples of how we live out our values as a company. They are an important part of what it means to be an IBMer.

Sam Palmisano
Chief Executive Officer

January 2009

Source: From IBM Business Conduct Guidelines, January 12, 2009. Reprint courtesy of International Business Machines Corporation, © 2009 International Business Machines Corporation.

acknowledge and correct all mistakes and make sure you submit complete, accurate, and truthful reports. Never falsify a document by padding an expense account, covering up a problem, or wrongly accusing a co-worker. Inventing or falsifying information is fraud. In your dealings with customers, honor all guarantees and warranties and respond to customer requests promptly and fairly. It would be neglectful and dishonest to allow an unsafe product to stay on the market just to spare your company the expense and embarrassment of a product recall.

3. Maintain confidentiality. Never share sensitive or confidential information with individuals who are not entitled to see or hear it. You violate your employer's trust by telling others about your company's research, financial business, marketing strategies, sales records, personnel decisions, or customer interactions. In fact, your employer may rightfully insist that you sign a binding confidentiality agreement when you are hired. You also have to respect an individual's right to privacy. For example, according to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines, health care professionals are not allowed to share a patient's records with unauthorized individuals. It is also unethical to divulge personal information that a co-worker or supervisor has asked you to keep confidential.

4. Be loyal. Observe all your employer's instructions to conform with company policies. Your employer has every right to expect you to be a team player striving for the good of the company; its products, service, and image; your department; and your co-workers. Cooperate fully with your collaborative team; do not neglect your responsibilities to contribute to the group effort (see pages 84–86, 92). Working secretly for a competitor is a clear conflict of interest. Also, criticizing a boss, product, service, or event, or engaging in malicious gossip at work are examples of disloyalty that companies will not tolerate.

5. Follow the chain of command. You need to know and follow your company's or department's chain of command—for example, whom you report to, who gets copies of your written work and who does not, how work is to be submitted and routed, and whom you need to go to with problems. Always direct your correspondence to the appropriate person(s) in the company. Nothing infuriates a manager more than having an employee go over his or her head without authorization. All businesses, large and small, operate according to protocols. To help you identify the proper chain of command at work, find or construct an organizational chart (see pages 482–485).

6. Respect your employer, co-workers, customers, and vendors. Avoid intimidation, bullying, spreading rumors, discrimination, defamation, or any other unfair, unprofessional action that would harm someone or tarnish his or her reputation. It is unethical and illegal to use language that excludes others on the basis of gender, national origin, religion, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation (see pages 73–77). Never use racial slurs or obscene language.

7. Research and document your work carefully. Your boss will expect you to do your homework to provide the hard evidence he or she needs. You do your homework by studying codes, specifications, agency handbooks, and websites;

by keeping up to date with professional literature found in journals and books in your field; by conferring with experts in your company; by interviewing clients; by making a site visit; by performing a test, and so on. (See pages 331–332 for a description of the different types of research you will be expected to do on the job.) You are also ethically obligated to admit when you did not do the work by yourself. Always give credit to your sources—whether print or Web sources or individuals whose discussions contributed to your work. Not documenting your sources makes you guilty of plagiarism (see pages 383–385).

8. Maintain accurate and up-to-date records. Remember, “If it isn’t written, it didn’t happen.” A vital part of your job may be writing about it. You have a responsibility to your employer to prepare and store documents, keep backup files, and submit your work by the deadline. Disregarding a deadline could jeopardize a group’s effort or prevent your company from receiving a key permit or license or a government contract. Moreover, not maintaining timely, accurate records may constitute a safety hazard according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Computer Ethics

Computer ethics are essential in the world of e-commerce. A good rule to follow is never to do anything online that you wouldn’t do offline. For instance, never use a company computer for any activity not directly related to your job. Moreover, it would be grossly unethical to erase a computer program intentionally, violate a software licensing agreement, or misrepresent (by fabrication or exaggeration) the scope of a database. Also, posting anything that attacks a competitor, a colleague, your boss, or your company is considered unethical. Follow the Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics prepared by the Computer Ethics Institute listed in Figure 1.12.

FIGURE 1.12 The Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics

1. Thou shalt not use a computer to harm other people.
2. Thou shalt not interfere with other people’s computer work.
3. Thou shalt not snoop around in other people’s computer files.
4. Thou shalt not use a computer to steal.
5. Thou shalt not use a computer to bear false witness.
6. Thou shalt not copy or use proprietary software for which you have not paid.
7. Thou shalt not use other people’s computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.
8. Thou shalt not appropriate other people’s intellectual output.
9. Thou shalt think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.
10. Thou shalt always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow humans beings.

Source: Computer Ethics Institute, London.

You are also ethically bound to protect your computer at work from security risks and possible system malfunctions. Never be afraid to ask for advice from a co-worker or someone in your firm's IT department who knows what to do if there is a computer emergency.

Here are some other specific guidelines to follow when using your computer at work:

- Protect passwords that allow access to your company's documents as well as its proprietary databases, templates, and other customized applications. Do not share your password, and never use a password belonging to someone else.
- Always save sensitive emails, IMs, blogs, memos, letters, and so on, that you or your employer may need to document actions or decisions.
- Protect your computer from viruses, spyware, and malware by checking with your IT department to make sure the most recent updates to your antivirus programs are installed on your computer. They will protect against spyware and malware but not against phishing schemes conducted by phone or email.
- Be especially careful in opening attachments or anything you suspect may be infected, such as spam. Never forward a document you think may have a virus.
- Do not use your work email account for personal emails (see pages 142–150). Instead, use an alternate email address; you can sign up for a free email account through Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, Gmail, and similar services. If you cannot access your email on the job because of a computer emergency, you can use this alternate email address until the problem is solved.

"Thinking Green": Making Ethical Choices About the Environment

Be respectful of the environment—whether at the office, at a work site, in the community, or in the global marketplace. Many companies are proud of their ethical commitments to the environment. Starbucks, for example, tells customers that its "10 percent post-consumer recycled . . . paper cups helped conserve enough energy to supply your homes for a year and save approximately 110,000 trees."

Like Starbucks, companies around the globe have adopted a green philosophy that they encourage their employees to support and put into practice. Note how in Figure 1.13 the Southern Company and its employees are proud of their ethical commitment to the environment, the community, and the country. The Southern Company thereby projects an image of itself as being concerned about pollution and dedicated to the highest ethical goal of preserving and protecting the environment.

You can "think green" in several ways. At your office, conserve energy by turning off all computers, copiers, and other machines when you leave work; replace incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient ones; recycle paper; copy and print your documents on both sides of paper; view documents on your computer screen instead of printing them; adjust thermostats when you are gone for the day

FIGURE 1.13 A Company's Commitment to Ethical Responsibility**Our Environmental Responsibility**

Emphasizes corporate commitment to ethical conduct

Links good business practices with good ethical behavior

Praises employees for their contributions to both the community and the company

Assures readers that corporate ethical behavior extends to the entire community

Southern Company is not only a leader in the energy market, but also a leader in protecting the environment. We believe our environmental initiatives and our strong compliance record will give us a competitive advantage.

The Southern Company's environmental policy spells out each company's commitment to protecting the environment. The first and foremost goal is to meet or exceed all regulatory requirements for domestic and international operations. To do that, we're using a combination of the best technologies and voluntary pollution-prevention programs. We also set aggressive environmental goals and make sure employees are aware of their individual environmental responsibilities. We are good citizens wherever we serve.

As an affiliate of Southern Company, Mississippi Power's environmental issues are business issues. In addition to regulatory obligations, our employees carry out a most active grassroots environmental program. It's this employee involvement and strong environmental commitment that gives our commitment life and promises future generations a healthy environment.

For example, one employee's concern that motor oil is properly discarded led to the founding of a countrywide annual household hazardous waste collection program. Thousands of tons of waste have been collected, including jars of DDT, mercury, paint, batteries, pesticides, and other poisons.

Scores of employees participate in island, beach, and river cleanups throughout Mississippi Power's 23-county service area. More than 30 employees compiled "The Wolf River Environmental Monitoring Program."

This report is the first-ever historical, biological assessment completed on the Wolf River by scientists and engineers. Employees volunteered countless hours to compile the statistical data. Today, Mississippi Power employees continue to support the Wolf River Project by producing photographs and slides as an educational and community awareness project.

Our commitment to the environment goes beyond our business. By sponsoring a variety of programs, we're helping to teach the public, students, and teachers about environmental responsibility.

Source: Reprinted by permission of Mississippi Power Company.

or weekend, and car pool to and from work. You can also reduce toxic chemicals in the atmosphere by using soy-based ink, by inspecting vehicles regularly, and by maintaining them properly to reduce or eliminate pollution.

International Readers and Ethics

Communicating in the world of multinational corporations places additional ethical demands on you as a writer. You have to make sure that you respect the ethics of all of the countries where your firm does business. Some behaviors regarded as normal or routine in the United States might be seen as highly unethical elsewhere, and vice versa. In many countries, accepting a gift to initiate or conclude a business

agreement is considered not only proper but also honorable. This is not the case in the United States, where a “bribe” is seen as bad business or may be illegal. Moreover, you should be on your ethical guard not to take advantage of a host country, such as allowing or encouraging poor environmental control because regulatory and inspection procedures are not as strict as those of the United States, or by using pesticides or conducting experiments outlawed in the United States. It would also be unethical to conceal something risky about a product from international clients that you would disclose to U.S. customers.

Some Guidelines to Help You Act Ethically

The workplace presents conflicts over who is right and who is wrong, what is best for the company and what is not, and whether a service or product should be changed and why. You will be asked to make decisions and justify them. Here are some guidelines to help you comply with the ethical requirements of your job:

- 1. Follow your conscience, and “to thine own self be true.”** Do not authorize something that you believe is wrong, dangerous, unfair, contradictory, or incomplete. But don’t be hasty. Leave plenty of room for diplomacy and for careful questioning. Recall the story of Chicken Little, who always cried that the sky was falling. Don’t blow a small matter out of proportion.
- 2. Be suspicious of convenient (and false) appeals that go against your beliefs.** Watch out for these red flags: “No one will ever know.” “It’s OK to cut corners every once in a while.” “We got away with it last time.” “Don’t rock the boat.” “No one’s looking.” “As long as the company makes money, who cares?” These excuses are traps you must avoid.
- 3. Take responsibility for your actions.** Saying “I don’t know” when you do know can constitute a serious ethical violation. Keep your records up-to-date and accurate, sign and date your work, and never backdate a document to delete information or to cover an error that you made. Always do what is expected in terms of documentation and notification. Failing to test a set of instructions thoroughly, for example, might endanger readers around the globe.
- 4. Keep others in the loop.** Confer regularly with your collaborative writing team (see Chapter 3) and any other co-workers affected by your job. Report to your boss as required to give progress reports, to alert him or her about problems, and to help you coordinate your duties with co-workers. If you experience a problem at work, don’t wait until it gets worse to tell your supervisor or co-workers. Prompt and honest notifications are essential to the safety, security, progress, and ultimate success of a company. Also, never keep a customer or vendor waiting; call in advance if you are going to be delayed.
- 5. Weigh all sides before you come to a conclusion.** You may think a particular course of action is right at the time, but don’t overlook the possibility that your decision may create a bigger problem in the future. For example, you hear that a co-worker is involved in wrongdoing; you report it to your boss, and a reprimand

is placed in that worker's file. Later you learn that what was reported to you was malicious gossip or only a small part of a much larger but very ethical picture. Give people the benefit of the doubt until you have sufficient facts to the contrary. Giving incomplete information on an incident report may temporarily protect you but may falsely incriminate someone else or unfairly increase your company's liability insurance rates.

6. Treat company property respectfully. Use company supplies, computer and other equipment, networks, and vehicles responsibly and only for work-related business. Taking supplies home, making personal long-distance calls on a company cell phone, charging non-work-related expenses (meals, clothes, travel) on a company credit card, surfing the Internet when you are at work—these are just a few examples of unethical behavior. Being wasteful (of paper, supplies, and ink) also disrespects your company's resources.

And never take company property (equipment or supplies) with you when you leave a job.

Ethical Dilemmas

Sometimes in the workplace you will face situations where there is no clear-cut right or wrong choice. Here are a few scenarios that cover gray areas, ethically speaking, along with some possible solutions:

- You work with an office bully who often intimidates co-workers, including you, by talking down to them, interrupting them, or insulting their suggestions. At times, this bully has even sent sarcastic emails and IMs. You are upset that this behavior has not been reported to management, but you are concerned that if the bully finds out that you have reported the situation, the entire office may suffer. How should you handle the problem?

You cannot allow such rude, insulting behavior to go unreported. But first you need to provide documentation about where, when, and how often the bullying has occurred. You may want to speak directly to the bully, but if you feel uncomfortable doing this, go directly to your boss, report how the bully's actions have negatively affected the workplace, and ask for assistance. You may also get help from your company's employee assistance program or from someone in human resources. In accordance with state and federal laws, companies must provide a safe work environment, free from intimidation, harassment, or threats of dismissal for reporting bullying.

- You work very closely with an individual who takes frequent extended lunch breaks, often comes in late and leaves early, and even misses deadlines. As a result, you are put in an awkward position. Sometimes you cover for him when he is not at the office to answer questions, and often you take on additional work he should be doing to keep your department running smoothly and efficiently. Your department is under minimal supervision from an off-site manager, so there is no boss looking over your colleague's shoulder. You like your co-worker and do not want him to be reprimanded or, worse yet,

fired, but he is taking advantage of your friendship and unfairly expecting you to cover for him. What should you do?

The best route is to take your co-worker aside and speak with him before informing management. Let him know you value working with him, but firmly explain that you no longer will cover for him or take on his workload. If he does not agree with you, let him know that you will be forced to discuss the problem with your manager. If the problem persists, and you go to your boss, bring documentation—dates, duties not performed, and so on—with you.

- You see an opening for a job in your area, but the employer wants someone with a minimum of two years of field experience. You have just completed an internship and had one summer's experience, which together total almost seven months. Should you apply for the job, describing yourself as "experienced"?

Yes, but honestly state the type and the extent of your field experience and the conditions under which you obtained it.

- You work for a company that usually assigns commissions to the salesperson for whom the customer asks. One afternoon a customer asks for a salesperson who happens to have the day off. You assist the customer all afternoon and even arrange to have an item shipped overnight so that she can have it in the morning. When you ring up the sale, should you list your employee number for the commission or the off-duty employee's?

You probably should defer crediting the sale to either of you until you speak to the absent employee and suggest a compromise—splitting the commission, for instance.

- You are passed over for a promotion to assistant manager in favor of a co-worker whom you often see flirting with the manager. You have seniority over this co-worker and have received more commendations from the central office for your sales record and contributions to team efforts. Should you be a whistle-blower and write to the head of your human resources department to report the co-worker for unprofessional behavior in the workplace?

This is a tricky and complex workplace issue. Promotions can intensify personal rivalries, leading to low morale and even legal problems. Before you write an accusing letter about your co-worker, be sure of the facts. What you see as flirting may not be characterized that way by other co-workers or the manager. Unless you have clear evidence of favoritism, corroborated by other workers with specific instances, times, places, and violations of company policy, it would be more prudent to inquire about why you were passed over, citing reasons why your qualifications (education, experience, track record with the company) entitled you to the position.

- A piece of computer equipment, scheduled for delivery to your customer the next day, arrives with a damaged part. You decide to replace it at your store before the customer receives it. Should you inform the customer?

Yes, but assure the customer that the equipment is still under the same warranty and that the replacement part is new and also under the same warranty. If the customer protests, agree to let him or her use the computer until a new unit arrives.

As these brief scenarios suggest, sometimes you have to make concessions and compromises to be ethical in the world of work.

Writing Ethically on the Job

Your writing as well as your behavior must be ethical. Words, like actions, have implications and consequences. If you slant your words to conceal the truth or to gain an unfair advantage, you are not being ethical. False reporting and advertising are unethical. Bias and omission of facts are wrong. Strive to be fair, reliable, and accurate in reporting products, services, events, environmental issues, statistics, and trends.

Unethical writers are usually guilty of one or more of the following faults, which can conveniently be listed as the three *M*'s: misquotation, misrepresentation, and manipulation. Here are nine examples:

1. Plagiarism is stealing someone else's words and claiming them as your own without documenting the source. Do not think that by changing a few words of someone else's writing here and there you are not plagiarizing. Give proper credit to your source, whether in print, in person (through an interview), or online. The penalties for plagiarism are severe—a reprimand or even the loss of your job. See pages 383–385 for further advice on how to avoid plagiarism.

2. Selective misquoting deliberately omits damaging or unflattering comments to paint a better (but untruthful) picture of you or your company. By picking and choosing only a few words from a quotation, you unethically misrepresent what the speaker or writer originally intended.

Selective Misquotation: I've enjoyed . . . our firm's association with Technology, Inc. The quality of their service was . . . excellent.

Full Quotation: I've enjoyed at times our firm's association with Technology, Inc., although I was troubled by the uneven quality of their service. At times, it was excellent while at others it was far less so.

The dots, called *ellipses*, unethically suggest that only extraneous or unimportant details were omitted.

3. The arbitrary embellishment of numbers unethically misrepresents, by increasing or decreasing percentages or other numbers, statistical or other information. It is unethical to stretch the differences between competing plans or proposals to gain an unfair advantage or to express accurate figures in an inaccurate way.

Embellishment: An overwhelming majority of residents voted for the new plan.

Ethical: The new plan was passed by a vote of 53 to 49.

Embellishment: Our competitor's sales volume increased by only 10 percent in the preceding year, while ours doubled.

Ethical: Our competitor controls 90 percent of the market, yet we increased our share of that market from 5 percent to 10 percent last year.

4. Omitting key information about a product, service, or location intentionally deprives readers of the facts they need to reach a decision.

Omitting Information: You will save thousands of dollars when buying the Model 2400T, the least expensive four-wheeler on the market.

Key Information Supplied: Although the model 2400T is the least expensive four-wheeler you can purchase, it is the most expensive four-wheeler to operate and to repair, making it the most costly model to choose.

5. The manipulation of information or context, which is closely related to the embellishment of numbers, is the misrepresentation of events, usually to put a good face on a bad situation. The writer here unethically uses slanted language and intentionally misleading euphemisms to misinterpret events for readers.

Manipulation: Looking ahead to 2014, the United Funds Group is exceptionally optimistic about its long-term prospects in an expanding global market. We are happy to report steady to moderate activity in an expanding sales environment last year. The United Funds Group seeks to build on sustaining investment opportunities beneficial to all subscribers.

Ethical: Looking ahead to 2014, the United Funds Group is optimistic about its long-term prospects in an expanding global market. Though the market suffered from inflation this year, the United Funds Group hopes to recoup its losses in the year ahead.

The writer who manipulates information minimizes the negative effects of inflation by calling it "an expanding sales environment."

6. Using fictitious benefits to promote a product or service seemingly promises customers advantages but delivers none.

False Benefit: Our bottled water is naturally hydrogenated from clear underground springs.

Truth: All water is hydrogenated because it contains hydrogen.

False Benefit: All our homes come with construction-grade fixtures.

Truth: Construction-grade fixtures are the least expensive and least durable a builder can use.

7. Unfairly exaggerating or minimizing hiring or firing conditions is unethical.

Unethical: One of the benefits of working for Spelco is the double pay you earn for overtime.

Truth: Overtime is assigned on the basis of seniority.

Unethical: Our corporate restructuring will create a more efficient and streamlined company, benefiting management and workers alike.

Truth: Downsizing has led to 150 layoffs this quarter.

Companies faced with laying off employees want to protect their corporate image and maintain their stockholders' good faith, so they often put the best face on such an action.

8. Manipulating international readers by adopting a condescending view of their culture and economy is unethical.

Unethical: Since our product has appealed to U.S. customers for the last sixteen months, there's no doubt that it will be popular in your country as well.

Fair: Please let us know if any changes in product design or construction may be necessary for customers in your country.

9. Misrepresenting through distorted or slanted visuals is one of the most common types of unethical writing. Making a visual appear bigger, smaller, or more or less favorable is all too easy with graphics software. Making warning or caution statements the same size and type font as ingredients or directions or enlarging advertising hype ("Double Your Money Back") is unethical if major points are then reduced to small print. (See pages 496–503 in Chapter 10 for guidelines on how to prepare ethical visuals.)

Ethical writing is clear, accurate, fair, and honest. These are among the most important goals of any workplace communication. Because ethics is such an important topic in writing for the business world, it will be emphasized throughout this book.

Successful Employees Are Successful Writers

As this chapter has stressed, being a successful employee means being a successful writer at work. The following guidelines, which summarize the key points of this chapter, will help you to be both:

1. Know your job—assignments, roles, responsibilities, goals, what you need to write, and what you *shouldn't*.
2. Be prepared to give and to receive feedback from co-workers, managers, vendors, and customers.
3. Work toward and meet all deadlines.
4. Analyze your audience's needs and what they will expect to find in your written work.
5. Make sure your written work is accurate, relevant, and practical, and include culturally appropriate visuals to help readers understand your message.
6. Document, document, document. Submit everything you write with clear-cut evidence based on factual details and persuasive, logical interpretations.
7. Use your computer only for company business. Never share your password, and keep your computer safe from viruses.
8. Follow your company's policy, and promote your company's image, culture, and traditions.
9. Be ethical in what you say, write, illustrate, and do.



Revision Checklist

At the end of each chapter is a checklist you should review before you submit the final copy of your work, either to your instructor or to your boss. The checklists specify the types of research, planning, drafting, editing, and revising you should do to ensure the success of your work. Regard each checklist as a summary of the main ideas in the chapter as well as a handy guide to quality control. You may find it helpful to check each box as you verify that you have performed the necessary revision and review. Effective writers are also careful editors.

- Showed respect for and appropriately shaped my message for a global audience.
- Identified my audience—background, knowledge of English, reason for reading my work, and likely response to my work and me.
- Tailored my message to my audience's needs and background, giving them neither too little nor too much information.
- Pushed to the main point right away; did not waste my readers' time.
- Selected the most appropriate language, technical level, tone, and level of formality.
- Did not waste my readers' time with unsupported generalizations or opinions; instead gave them accurate measurements, facts, and carefully researched material.
- Selected appropriate visuals to make my work easier for my audience to follow.
- Used persuasive reasons and data to convince my readers to accept my plan or work.
- Ensured that my writing and visuals are ethical—accurate, fair, honest, a true reflection of the situation or condition I am explaining or describing, for U.S. as well as global audiences.
- Followed the Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics.
- Adhered to the ethical codes of my profession as well as the policies and regulations set down by my employer.
- Gave full and complete credit to any sources I used, including resource people.
- Avoided plagiarism and unfair or dishonest use of copyrighted materials, both written and visual, including all electronic media.

Exercises

1. Write a memo (see pages 133–141 for format) addressed to a prospective supervisor to introduce yourself. Your memo should have four headings: **Education**—including goals and accomplishments; **Job Information**—where you have worked and your responsibilities; **Community Service**—volunteer work, church

work, youth groups; and **Writing Experience**—your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, the types of writing you have done, and the audiences for whom you have written.

2. Write a memo responding to Rowe Pinkerton's email in Figure 1.1. Explain how you will use the skills you learn in the tuition-reimbursed writing course on the job.
3. Bring to class a set of printed instructions, a memo, a sales letter, a brochure, or the printout of a home page. Comment on how well the example answers the following questions:
 - a. Who is the audience?
 - b. Why was the material written?
 - c. What is the message?
 - d. Are the style and tone appropriate for the audience, the purpose, and the message? Explain.
 - e. Discuss the use of any visuals and color in the document. For instance, how does color (or the lack of it) affect an audience's response to the message?
4. Find an advertisement in a print source or online that contains a drawing or photograph. Bring the ad to class along with a paragraph of your own (75–100 words) describing how the message of the ad is directed to a particular audience and commenting on how the drawing or photo is appropriate for that audience.
5. Select one of the following topics, and write two descriptions of it. In the first description, use technical details and vocabulary. In the second, use language and details suitable for the general public.
 - a. iPad
 - b. blood pressure cuff
 - c. flash drive
 - d. computer chip
 - e. Bluetooth headset
 - f. legal contract
 - g. electric sander
 - h. cyberspace
 - i. muscle
 - j. protein
 - k. smartphone
 - l. social networking
 - m. bread
 - n. money
 - o. iPod
 - p. soap
 - q. blogging
 - r. computer virus
 - s. swine flu
 - t. thermostat
 - u. trees

- v. food processor
 - w. earthquake
 - x. recycling
6. Select another topic from Exercise 5, and write two more descriptions as a collaborative writing project.
7. Select one article from a newspaper and one article from a professional journal in your major field or from one of the following journals: *Advertising Age, American Journal of Nursing, Business Marketing, Businessweek, Computer, Computer Design, Construction Equipment, Criminal Justice Review, E-Commerce, Food Service Marketing, Journal of Forestry, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, National Safety News, Nutrition Action, Office Machines, Park Maintenance, Scientific American*. State how the two articles you selected differ in terms of audience, purpose, message, style, and tone.
8. Assume that you work for Appliance Rentals, Inc., a company that rents TVs, microwave ovens, stereo components, and the like. Write a persuasive letter to the members of a campus organization or civic club urging them to rent an appropriate appliance or appliances. Include details in your letter that might have special relevance to members of this specific organization.
9. Read the article, "Microwaves," on pages 47–49, and identify its audience (technical or general), purpose, message, style, and tone.
10. How do the visuals and the text of the Digital World Technologies advertisement on page 46 stress to current (and potential) employees, customers, and stockholders that the company is committed to diversity in the workplace? Also explain how the ad illustrates the functions of on-the-job writing as defined on pages 23–29.
11. Write a letter to a phone company that has mistakenly billed you for caller ID equipment that you never ordered, received, or needed.
12. The following statements contain embellishments, selected misquotations, false benefits, omitted key information, and other types of unethical tactics. Revise each statement to eliminate the unethical aspects. Make up details as needed.
 - a. Storm damage done to water filtration plant #3 was minimal. While we had to shut down temporarily, service resumed to meet residents' needs.
 - b. All customers qualify for the maximum discount available.
 - c. "The service contract . . . on the whole . . . applied to upgrades."
 - d. We followed the protocols precisely with test results yielding further opportunities for experimentation.
 - e. All our costs were within fair-use guidelines.
 - f. Customers' complaints have been held to a minimum.
 - g. All the lots we are selling offer relatively easy access to the lake.
 - h. Factory-trained technicians respond to all our calls.
13. You work for a large international company, and a co-worker tells you that he has no plans to return to his job after he takes his annual two-week vacation. You

Advertisement for Exercise 10

WE ARE**Digital World
TECHNOLOGIES**

Accountability



Excellence



Teamwork

**digitalworldtx.com****800-555-0120****CENGAGE**
Integrity

WE ARE committed to providing our clients worldwide with superior service. Our diverse, talented workforce shares our vision to offer you the latest and most effective solutions for all your digital security needs. We have helped thousands of companies like yours with our innovative technical assistance and our broad knowledge of what it takes to do business around the globe.

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know that your department cannot meet its deadlines shorthanded and that your company will need at least two or three weeks to recruit and hire a qualified replacement. You also know that it is your company's policy not to give paid vacations to employees who do not agree to work for at least three months following

their return. What should you do? What points would you make in a confidential email to your boss? What points would you raise to your co-worker?

14. Your company is regulated and inspected by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 90 days, the EPA will relax a regulation about dumping occupational waste. Your company's management is considering cutting costs by relaxing the standard now, before the new, less demanding regulation is in place. You know that the EPA inspector probably will not return before the 90-day period elapses. What do you recommend to management?
15. You and your co-workers have been intimidated by an office bully, a twelve-year employee who has seniority. As a collaborative writing project (see pages 88–91), draft a letter to the head of your human resources department documenting instances of the bully's actions and asking for advice on how to proceed.
16. Write a memo to your boss about being passed over for promotion. Diplomatically and ethically compare your work with that of the individual who did receive the promotion.
17. Write a memo to your boss about one of the following unethical activities you have witnessed in your workplace. Your memo must be carefully documented, fair, and persuasive—in short, ethical.
 - a. bullying
 - b. surfing pornography websites
 - c. using workplace technology for personal matters (shopping, dating, buying stocks)
 - d. falsifying compensatory or travel time
 - e. telling sexist, off-color jokes
 - f. concealing the use of company funds for personal gifts for fellow employees
 - g. misdating or backdating company records
 - h. sharing privileged information with individuals outside your department or company
 - i. fudging the number of hours worked
 - j. lying about family illnesses
 - k. exaggerating a workplace-related injury
 - l. not reporting a second job to avoid scheduled weekend work
 - m. misrepresenting, by minimizing, a client's complaint

Microwaves

Much of the world around us is in motion. A wave-like motion. Some waves are big like tidal waves and some are small like the almost unseen footprints of a waterspider on a quiet pond. Other waves can't be seen at all, such as an idling truck sending out vibrations our bodies can feel. Among these are electromagnetic waves. They range from very low frequency sound waves to very high frequency X-rays, gamma rays, and even cosmic rays.

Energy behaves differently as its frequency changes. The start of audible sound—somewhere around 20 cycles per second—covers a segment at the low end of the

electromagnetic spectrum. Household electricity operates at 60 hertz (cycles per second). At a somewhat higher frequency we have radio, ranging from shortwave and marine beacons, through the familiar AM broadcast band that lies between 500 and 1600 kilohertz, then to citizen's band, FM, television, and up to the higher frequency police and aviation bands.

Even higher up the scale lies visible light with its array of colors best seen when light is scattered by raindrops to create a rainbow.

Lying between radio waves and visible light is the microwave region—from roughly one gigahertz (a billion cycles per second) up to 3000 gigahertz. In this region the electromagnetic energy behaves in special ways.

Microwaves travel in straight lines, so they can be aimed in a given direction. They can be *reflected* by dense objects so that they send back echoes—this is the basis for radar. They can be *absorbed*, with their energy being converted into heat—the principle behind microwave ovens. Or they can pass *through* some substances that are transparent to the energy—this enables food to be cooked on a paper plate in a microwave oven.

Microwaves for Radar

World War II provided the impetus to harness microwave energy as a means of detecting enemy planes. Early radars were mounted on the Cliffs of Dover to bounce their microwave signals off Nazi bombers that threatened England. The word *radar* itself is an acronym for *RADio Detection And Ranging*.

Radars grew more sophisticated. Special-purpose systems were developed to detect airplanes, to scan the horizon for enemy ships, to paint finely detailed electronic pictures of harbors to guide ships, and to measure the speeds of targets. These were installed on land and aboard warships. Radar—especially shipboard radar—was surely one of the most significant technological achievements to tip the scales toward an Allied victory in World War II.

Today, few mariners can recall what it was like before radar. It is such an important aid that it was embraced universally as soon as hostilities ended. Now, virtually every commercial vessel in the world has one, and most larger vessels have two radars: one for use on the open sea and one, operating at a higher frequency, to “paint” a more finely detailed picture, for use near shore.

Microwaves are also beamed across the skies to fix the positions of aircraft in flight, obviously an essential aid to controlling the movement of aircraft from city to city across the nation. These radars have also been linked to computers to tell air traffic controllers the altitude of planes in the area and to label them on their screens.

A new kind of radar, phased array, is now being used to search the skies thousands of miles out over the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Although these advanced radars use microwave energy just as ordinary radars do, they do not depend upon a rotating antenna. Instead, a fixed antenna array, comprising thousands of elements like those of a fly’s eye, looks everywhere. It has been said that these radars roll their eyes instead of turning their heads.

High-Speed Cooking

During World War II Raytheon had been selected to work with M.I.T. and British scientists to accelerate the production of magnetrons, the electron tubes that generate microwave energy, in order to speed up the production of radars. While testing some new, higher-powered tubes in a laboratory at Raytheon’s Waltham, Massachusetts, plant, Percy L. Spencer and several of his staff engineers observed an interesting phenomenon. If you placed your hand in a beam of microwave energy, your hand would grow pleasantly warm. It was not like putting your hand in a heated oven that might sear the skin. The warmth was deep-heating and uniform.

Spencer and his engineers sent out for some popcorn and some food, then piped the energy into a metal wastebasket. The microwave oven was born.

From these discoveries, some 35 years ago, a new industry was born. In millions of homes around the world, meals are prepared in minutes using microwave ovens. In many processing industries, microwaves are being used to perform difficult heating or drying jobs. Even printing presses use microwaves to speed the drying of ink on paper.

In hospitals, doctors' offices, and athletic training rooms, that deep heat that Percy Spencer noticed is now used in diathermy equipment to ease the discomfort of muscle aches and pains.

Telephones Without Cable

The third characteristic of microwaves—that they pass undistorted through the air—makes them good messengers to carry telephone conversations as well as live television signals—without telephone poles or cables—across town or across the country. The microwave signals are beamed via satellite or by dish reflectors mounted atop buildings and mountain-top towers.

Microwaves take their name from the Greek *mikro* meaning very small. While the waves themselves may be very small, they play an important role in our world today: in defense; in communications; in air, sea, and highway safety; in industrial processing; and in cooking. At Raytheon the applications expand every day.

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