Effective Business Communications

The author is not engaged by this text or any accompanying lecture or electronic media in the rendering of legal, tax, accounting, or similar professional services. While the legal, tax, and accounting issues discussed in this material have been reviewed with sources believed to be reliable, concepts discussed can be affected by changes in the law or in the interpretation of such laws since this text was printed. For that reason, the accuracy and completeness of this information and the author's opinions based thereon cannot be guaranteed. In addition, state or local tax laws and procedural rules may have a material impact on the general discussion. As a result, the strategies suggested may not be suitable for every individual. Before taking any action, all references and citations should be checked and updated accordingly.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert advice is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

—-From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers and Associations.

All numerical values in this course are examples subject to change. The current values may vary and may not be valid in the present economic environment.

Preface

Good communications, oral or written, is the key to success in business life. The course is intended to assist business people in gaining understanding of the communication process, writing and organization methods, and oral aspects of communication in business. Emphasis is also placed on new technology in business communications, including e-mails, blogs, social networking, and meeting systems. *Effective Business Communications* is intended for:

- People in business who have not studied business communications---particularly business writing--as part of their formal education.
- Students preparing for subject or credit examinations and practitioners in fields in which competence in communication skills is part of a certification program.
- Business, government, and educational organizations conducting in-service training programs.

The course is easy to use and should assist the user in gaining understanding of the communication process, writing and organization methods, and oral aspects of communication in business. At the same time, to develop skill in applying this understanding takes practice which can only be gained in day-to-day application.

Field of Study	Communications
Level of Knowledge	Overview
Prerequisite	None
Advanced Preparation	None

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:

Communication as a Process

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

1. Identify elements of the communication process.
2. Identify the influence of behavioral science on management and communication.

Business people who hope to be known as good communicators must be versed in several aspects of management and communication. They must, of course, know the field of management, be skillful in human relationships, and be informed about the development of policy and practice in business. Integrate with these concepts an adequate skill in the use of language, and the result should be a potentially successful executive.

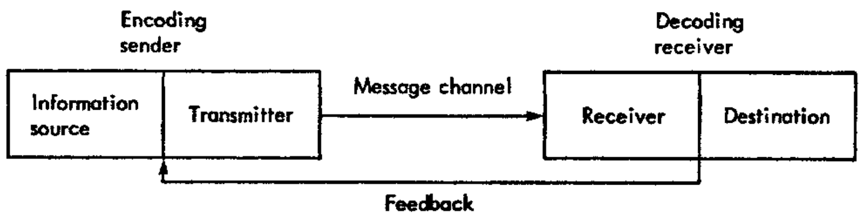
The Communication Process

Before becoming an excellent communicator, a person should understand just what goes on when people communicate and should possess a functional, personal definition of the term *communication*. Although information theorists, such as those concerned with computer developments, and human communication scientists from the social sciences work in different fields, both have similar conceptions of the communication process. For our purposes, process refers to a particular method of doing something in a number of steps or operations. These steps or operations in the communication process can be illustrated as shown in Figure 1.

All communication must involve both a sender and a receiver of messages simply because if someone is not available to receive a message, sending doesn't exist. When people communicate (engage in the act of message sending and receiving) the sender *encodes* the message. That is, the sender forms the message from available bits of information. When the message is received, the receiver must *decode* (develop meaning) from the message. This process goes on continuously when we are with others. At this point, let's define some of the terms used in Figure 1.

Encoding sender. The message originates with and is transmitted by the sender. Encoding is the process of putting bits of information into transmissible messages.

FIGURE 1
THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS



Information. Information is the property of a signal to convey something unpredictable and meaningful to a receiver. Information can also be described as the "inside interpretation of an outside event." As we experience different things, we develop vocabularies to describe those experiences. Perhaps the simplest example is the way we learn to associate names with people. Through repeated exposure to others, we eventually call people by their names when we see them. The act of seeing another is an outside event and provides the stimulus for our name recall. Observe little children who are in the process of building vocabularies. They have a tendency to point to objects and call them by name. *Train, plane, car, grandma*, and *candy* are examples. As the association between objects or acts and their word labels becomes firm, the information bits are stored in the human mind (the information source) just as the storage in a computer becomes its information source.

Before long, the little child begins to put bits of information into messages, such as "See the train." Thus, encoding occurs and complete messages are developed. The sight of the train served as the external stimulus for encoding and transmitting the message.

Transmitter. In human communication, the transmitter is whatever sensory organ must be used to place the message on the proper channel and to move it from the sender.

Channel. The channel is the route of a message over any of several media including electronic means, postal services, or the human sensory means of sight or sound.

Decoding receiver. The receiver is any device capable of accepting a message. Decoding is the process of interpreting the message. The *destination* of all human communication is the mind of the receiver. The destination is the place where decoding is actually completed. Because the bits of information stored in the receiver may not coincide with the bits of information available to the sender, decoding will always be done in terms of the receiver's needs, attitudes, and past experiences.

Communication is a process that remains incomplete until the message is decoded. The reaction of the receiver to the message is called "feedback." Feedback, then, becomes a message from the receiver to the sender; thus, in two-way communication, participants serve both as senders and receivers simultaneously. What is a message to one party is feedback to the other. This feedback function is the means by which misunderstanding (i.e., faulty decoding) can be corrected. In a sense, communication is feedback.

In the communication process shown in Figure 1, disruptions in the message requiring corrective feedback could occur at almost any point. Words, the symbols used in verbal communication, can be barriers to effective communication. If the sender used words such as *amanuensis* and *pusillanimous*, and the receiver did not understand that they meant *secretary* and *cowardly*, the words could not be decoded accurately. Additionally, noise or static can be a barrier in any form of communication. Just as static interferes with radio communication, unnecessary noise may interfere with person-to-person communication. Information sources and receiving equipment can handle only limited quantities. Thus, senders should attempt to keep message content within the quantity that can be handled by the system. In other words, don't overload the channel.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Communication is completed when it reaches the intended receiver.
2. _____ Feedback is a term used to describe the reaction of the recipient of a message.
3. _____ Encoding is the process of interpreting a message.
4. _____ Participants in face-to-face communication serve simultaneously as both sender and receiver.

Answers

1. False. Communication is not completed until a message has been received and decoded. Receiving is accomplished by sensory organs--eyes and ears. Decoding occurs in the mind only after the message has been received.
2. True. An important thing to remember is that feedback also constitutes a message from the original receiver to the original sender; the receiver becomes the sender.
3. False. Encoding is the process of composing a message for transmission. Decoding is a receiver function including interpretation.
4. True. Communication in face-to-face situations is a simultaneous, nonstop activity in which participants serve as both sender and receiver. When people receive messages, they then

engage in the decoding process. At the same time, however, they are also encoding the message they plan to transmit.

Some Behavioral Concepts

Although all people have some characteristics in common, the composite of our individual characteristics makes us unique. We react in individual ways to common messages. We want to be our own person. With the growing emphasis on behavioral aspects in management, new attention has been focused on understanding humans as dynamic beings with constantly changing needs and desires. As a result, business has adopted policies and practices that are more people oriented than thing oriented. Although it is often difficult to implement, the newer philosophy could perhaps be phrased like this: "The right person for the job" is a temporary solution because people change; rather "the right job for the person" is no doubt a more viable policy.

Douglas McGregor's familiar Theory X and Theory Y description of two styles of management helps clarify the influence of the behavioral sciences on management thinking.

> **Theory X**. The traditional style of management with strong control, concern for the job to the exclusion of concern for the individual; motivation derived primarily from external incentives.
>
> **Theory Y**. The newer and developing style of management with a balance between control and individual freedom. As the individual matures, the need for external motivation decreased; concern of management is for the individual first and the job second.

In essence, as management moves from Theory X styles to Theory Y styles, external control gives way to self-control. Theory Y advances the idea that if you treat adults as adults, permitting them to control their own destinies, they will act as adults and not as children. Such increased concern for the human element will inevitably lead to broad changes in our social and cultural structure.

To supplement the view of McGregor, we may review briefly the hierarchy of needs concept developed by Abraham H. Maslow as another approach to understanding the changing nature of man's desires. Maslow suggests a sequence of needs through which people successively move as they satisfy their wants and desires:

1. Physiological needs. The needs related to food, shelter, and protection from the elements.
2. Security and safety needs. The needs to be free from physical danger and to be secure in the feeling that physiological needs can be met.
3. Social needs. The needs to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong.
4. Ego needs. The needs such as those to be heard, to be appreciated, to be wanted. These needs deal with status.
5. Self-actualizing needs. The needs to achieve one's fullest potential through professional, philanthropic, political, educational, and artistic channels.

As people satisfy needs at the first level, they are then motivated by those at the second level. As second-level needs are satisfied, those at the third level prevail, and so on. Each need level is always with us, however. Lower needs simply diminish in importance as motivators as we satisfy them.

If we accept Maslow's theory about need levels, then we should agree that a business environment which assists the satisfaction of those needs is desirable. In America, most people have fairly well satisfied the lower-level needs and are actively pursuing the satisfaction of social and ego needs. Only a small portion would be at the self-actualization level.

The contributions of communication theorists coupled with the work of Maslow and McGregor, have led to greater understanding of the communication process and of human behavior. Both are critical to the effective planning and conduct of human communication.

Hierarchy of Communication Levels

In addition to the implications for effective communication drawn from the previous discussion in this chapter, we can establish a hierarchy for the effectiveness of communicative situations.

Level one. The most effective communication occurs in a two-way, face-to-face situation where both verbal and nonverbal symbols and languages are apparent to both parties and where instant feedback is possible. Person-to-person conversation is an example.

Level two. The second most effective communication occurs in a two-way but not face-to-face situation. Even though feedback is possible, as in a telephone conversation, nonverbal symbols are not apparent.

Level three. The least effective level of communication is one-way and usually takes written form in business. At this level, neither feedback nor nonverbal symbols are available.

Although it is important that one do so at all levels, the communicator must do everything possible to prepare third-level messages that will be effective enough to block out disruptions. The good writer and the popular radio commentator are examples of those who have succeeded at the third level. Because this level is the weakest, ample justification can be made to emphasize knowledge and skills in written communication. That is the aim of the following chapters.

Summary

Communication is a complex process, and any schematic presentation of it can only provide surface treatment. Although humans have some common characteristics, they are all different; and therein lies the communication problem. Perception, the process of interpreting sensory information, varies from person to person. We tend to see what we want to see, hear what we want to hear, and oddly enough behave as we think others expect us to behave. Thus, any message may be perceived differently by different people. The good communicator recognizes the value of feedback as a corrective tool. Feedback can be used effectively at both Levels One and Two of the hierarchy of effectiveness. At the third level—one-way communication-immediate feedback is not available. The sender of written message, then, must use everything in his or her arsenal of knowledge about and skill in human relations, language, and English usage. That is what the remainder of this course is all about.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____The role a person plays in a social situation is always equivalent to his or her status.
2. _____Nonverbal communication indicates communication without the use of words.
3. _____You would more likely find Theory X management style displayed in a business office than in the activities of a ditch digging crew.
4. _____The critical elements in determining the effectiveness of communicative situations are the availability of feedback possibilities and the presence of non-verbal aids.
5. _____Appeals to physiological or security needs would probably be more effective in communicating with the typical American than would appeals to social or ego needs.

Answer

1. False. A role arises from the behavior of a person in social situations, while status is a legal or quasi-legal designation. Thus, a person of lower status through aggressive behavior, for example, may assume a role higher than actual status.
2. True. Verbal means through the use of words, either oral or written.
3. False. The ditch digging crew is composed of a group of individuals doing a single task, and the foreman would very likely use Theory X methods, while the business office would probably be more receptive to employee participation in developing policy and practice.
4. True. The greater the feedback potential and the opportunity to observe nonverbal aids, the more effective the communication. These are the two critical elements that establish the levels of effectiveness.
5. False. Because most Americans have pretty well satisfied their physiological and security needs, they would be more receptive to appeals directed at the social and ego need levels.

Chapter 1 Review Questions

1. In the communication process the sender

   A. Decodes.
   B. Receives.
   C. Encodes.
   D. Channels.

2. The need to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong according to Maslow is the

   A. Self-actualization need.
   B. Ego-need.
   C. Social need.
   D. Physiological need.

3. The part of a communication that decodes the message is the:

   A. Sender.
   B. Transmitter.
   C. Receiver.
   D. Encoder.

4. The reaction of the receiver is called:

   A. The information source.
   B. Transmitter.
   C. Feedback.
   D. Destination.

5. Communication is completed when:

   A. A message reaches the intended receiver.
   B. A message has been received and decoded.
   C. It is informal.
   D. The sender originates the message.

6. Abraham Maslow is associated with all the following except:

   A. Physiological needs.
   B. Theory X and Theory Y.
   C. Social needs.
   D. Self-actualization.

7. The most effective level of communication is:

A. Face-to-face situations.
B. Telephone conversations.
C. Written communication.
D. Encrypted messages.

Chapter 1 Review Answers

1. In the communication process the sender

A. Incorrect. Decoding is when the message is received and converted into meaningful language.
B. Incorrect. Receiving is at the end of the process for transmitting a message.
C. **Correct**. When encoding the sender is in the process of putting bits of information into a transmissible message.
D. Incorrect. Channels are the route a message travels over any of several media including electronic means or postal services.

2. The need to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong according to Maslow is the

A. Incorrect. Self-actualization needs is the need to achieve one's fullest potential through professional, philanthropic, political, educational, and artistic channels.
B. Incorrect. Ego-needs deal with status such as the need to be wanted and appreciated. These needs deal with status.
C. **Correct**. Social needs are the need to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong.
D. Incorrect. Physiological needs are related to food, shelter and protection.

3. The part of a communication that decodes the message is the:

A. Incorrect. The sender prepares or encodes the message.
B. Incorrect. The transmitter is the message channel.
C. **Correct**. The receiver decodes the message.
D. Incorrect. The encoder is the sender of the communication.

4. The reaction of the receiver is called:

A. Incorrect. The information source is the sender.
B. Incorrect. The transmitter is the message channel.
C. **Correct**. The reaction of the receiver is called feedback.
D. Incorrect. The destination is the receiver's location.

5. Communication is completed when:

A. Incorrect. Communication is not completed until a message has been received and decoded. Receiving is accomplished by sensory organs--eyes and ears.
B. **Correct**. Communication is a process that remains incomplete until the message is decoded. Decoding occurs in the mind only after the message has been received.
C. Incorrect. Effective communication can be either formal or informal.
D. Incorrect. Effective communication requires feedback. The reaction of the receiver to the message is called "feedback." Feedback, then, becomes a message from the receiver to the sender; thus, in two-way communication, participants serve both as senders and receivers simultaneously.

6. Abraham Maslow is associated with all the following except:

A. Incorrect. Physiological needs are the needs related to food, shelter, and protection from the elements.
B. **Correct**. Theory X and Theory Y are associated with Douglas McGregor.
C. Incorrect. Social needs are one of the need levels of Maslow that refer to the need to be loved, accepted, and belong.
D. Incorrect. Self-actualization is the need to achieve ad fulfill one's fullest potential through professional, philanthropic, political, educational, and artistic channels.

7. The most effective level of communication is:

A. **Correct**. Face-to-face situations are the most effective method of communication as it offers two way communication, immediate feedback, and body language, and non-verbal communication.
B. Incorrect. Telephone conversation is the second most effective communication method, but lacks non-verbal cues and body language.
C. Incorrect. Written communication is the least effective method of communication because it is one way and lacks immediate feedback.
D. Incorrect. Encrypted messages require special codes and technology to translate them into meaningful messages.

Chapter 2:

Choosing Appropriate Words

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Define examples of kinesic communication.
- Identify examples of meta-communication.
- Recognize examples of effective word usage.

Although words are a primary tool of the communicator, remember that messages can be transmitted *without* words. Such messages are called “nonverbal” communications. They are divided into two categories -- kinesic communications and metacommunications.

Kinesic Communications

Kinesic messages are conveyed through actions. A wink, a frown, a smile, a sigh, a nod - they all convey messages. So do grooming, attire, posture, temper, punctuality, industry, gestures, and so forth. In recent years, the science of kinesics has sought to explain the impact of bodily movements on communication. Some examples of messages transmitted without the use of words are shown in Figure 1.

Such messages are being sent and received continually. And they are very important; they determine whether employees can work together harmoniously and whether a business can maintain good relationships with its customers.

Conclusions about businesses and about people are frequently based on kinesic messages. These conclusions determine whether relationships are to continue and be profitable or whether they are to be terminated. Typically, the message transmitted through action will have greater impact than the message transmitted through words. Therefore, business people have to be just as concerned about what they do as about what they say.

FIGURE 1

Action	***Possible kinesic message***
A clerk slams down the telephone receiver	“The message received was not a pleasant one.”
A representative arrives promptly for a 10:30 appointment but is forced to wait in the receptionist’s room until 10:55.	“The person being called upon is very busy, is experiencing an emergency, or wants to show disrespect.”
The president reads a report while a supervisor talks about a predicament.	“The president is not interested, already knows what is being told, or wants to demonstrate lack of concern.”
A firm answers all letters within 24 hours after their receipt.	“The firm is efficient and considerate.”

Metacommunications

Almost everyone who has read business letters can recall messages that were picked up “between the lines.” These messages are not literally expressed in words, but they accompany messages that are expressed in words. Examples are shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Worded message	***Possible metacommunication***
“I hope you will be prompt.”	“past experience has taught me to doubt your promptness.”

"Your complaint has been referred to me."	"Your request has been categorized as unjustified, or the problem is so delicate that it must be handled by a person of authority."
"Welcome to our growing list of satisfied customers."	"I want to say something that sounds complimentary but just can't think of anything that hasn't been said already."
"A new generator (to replace the one returned to us) is being shipped this morning."	"The company does guarantee its products."

These metacommunications are labeled "possible" metacommunications because not everyone would get the same between-the-line messages from the worded message on the left. Metacommunications and kinesic communications have several characteristics that communicators should keep in mind.

1. *They vary in meaning*. To one person, a smile may mean friendship. To another, self-esteem. To one, "Have a nice day" may mean "I like you and want good things for you." To another, the same words could mean "I say the same words to everyone and you are no one special."
2. *They are present in all messages*. All messages, whether written or spoken, convey ideas in addition to the ideas expressed in words. All actions, or even failure to act at all, have meaning.
3. *They may, or may not, be intended*. A woman who says to another "My mother bought a dress like that four years ago" may intend to be stating a fact. Or, she may deliberately intend (with the same words) to transmit the idea "Your dress is for the elderly and also out of style."
4. *They transmit clues about the sender*. Speakers or writers who appear to make deliberate use of a wide vocabulary may be transmitting information about their educational background or about their desire to impress.
5. *They may make a greater impression than does the worded message*. If a person hears words and sees a clinched fist at the same time, the message of anger and determination revealed through the clinched fist may be much stronger than the message contained in the words. The message conveyed because of a grammatical error may be so emphatic that the idea contained in the words goes unnoticed.
6. *They sometimes contradict the worded message*. "We appreciate your writing to us when things go wrong" may really convey the opposite meaning when nothing is done to correct the problem being discussed. Spoken with a frown, "I'm glad to make the adjustment" may mean "I'm not glad to make the adjustment."

7. *They are influenced by circumstances surrounding the communication*. Today, the smile that accompanies a “hello” may mean warm friendship. Tomorrow, the smile may mean something very different if it follows a bitter discussion in a committee meeting.
8. *They may have either positive or negative effects*. Just as any worded messages can be pleasant or unpleasant, so can non-worded messages be pleasant or unpleasant.

No one can give a set of dependable rules on how to interpret metacommunication and kinesic messages. But everyone should be aware of their presence and their influence. Before transmitting a message, senders should check carefully to see whether the words could convey between-the-lines messages that are harmful. If they do, some rewriting may be required. While reading a message, receivers cannot ignore such nonverbal messages; but they should be aware of their presence and use good judgment in interpreting the total message. This awareness of non-worded messages and their presence will increase the likelihood that writers will choose the right words for their worded messages.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. Metacommunications are properly defined as “unintended messages.”
2. In business correspondence, metacommunications should be avoided.
3. A message transmitted through action will have greater impact than a message transmitted through words.
4. If two people read the same worded message, one may pick up a non-worded message that is undetected by the other.
5. Kinesic communications are more closely associated with written communication than with oral communication.

1. False. A metacommunication is a message that, although not expressed in words, accompanies a message that is expressed in words. Sometimes, a metacommunication is actually intended. At other times it is accidental.
2. False. Metacommunications accompany every worded message. They cannot be avoided. A writer should try hard to avoid using words that will cause the metacommunication to be negative or uncomplimentary. Since metacommunications can be positive, they can be helpful. They can assist a writer in an attempt to achieve a clear message that will promote harmony between writer and reader.
3. True. “Actions speak louder than words.” Research studies show that when a person’s actions are not congruent with the person’s words, the message communicated by actions is considered the more reliable.
4. True. Because of varying backgrounds and motives, two people may not get the same message.
5. False. Kinesic communications are conveyed through actions (body language). Smiles, winks, frowns, gestures, etc., are hardly associated with written communication.

Use Simple Words

Because a communicator's purpose is to be understood, the words chosen should be easy to understand. Long, complicated words should not be used as substitutes for simple words that have the same meanings. When readers encounter a word that is not in their own vocabularies, they may (1) be willing to pass on without knowing the meaning, (2) guess at the meaning and risk misunderstanding, (3) stop and find the word in a dictionary, or (4) wonder whether the words were used for the deliberate purpose of impressing. The metacommunication, "The writer is trying to impress by using sophisticated vocabulary" may get more attention than does the idea conveyed by the words chosen. If it does, the writer has not achieved the purpose of being understood. After picking up the "trying to impress me" message between the lines, a reader could experience a negative feeling that would interfere with the comprehension of subsequent sentences that are written in simple language.

Use of complicated words, then, can result in no meaning, distorted meaning, wasted time, and distraction from the intended message. Therefore, the expressions listed on the left are preferred to those on the right:

about – approximately	done - accomplished	improve - ameliorate
aware – cognizant	show - demonstrate	change - modification
publish – promulgate	chew - masticate	

Research shows that "social climbers" have a strong tendency to choose their words from the list on the right. They have a need to impress. Then, one who has the habit of using the complicated word instead of the simple word may be communicating "social climber, social climber" as a between-the-lines message.

However, a writer cannot be expected to use simple words to convey every message. If a word is commonly used in a reader's business, its use is acceptable even though it may not be understood by the general population. For example, one insurance agent talking or writing to another may use the word actuary. Its meaning is clear; and, since the word is common in the insurance business, it will not be identified as a word used deliberately to impress. But the same agent talking or writing to a client whose knowledge of insurance is limited may (instead of using actuary) use specialist in determining risks and rates. Which word (or combination of words) to use is determined by the writer's assessment of the reader's background. The goal is to convey the message clearly, efficiently, and without distraction. Normally, plain and simple words will achieve that goal. One who deliberately uses big words for the purpose of impressing will probably succeed; but the impression may be negative instead of positive.

Use Sincere Words

From between the lines (from metacommunications), readers get messages about writers' sincerity. Even though writers are absolutely sincere, poorly chosen words can convey an impression of insincerity. The chances of getting a message across clearly and promoting good human relations are greatly reduced if the metacommunication is "The writer is a phony." The credibility is questionable when writers use (1) words that suggest certain knowledge of future events, (2) too many adjectives and adverbs, (3) superlatives, (4) words that suggest surprise or shock about others' behavior, and (5) worn expressions.

Words of certainty. Consider such sentences as "I know you will want to order today" and "I am sure you have considered the cost." Even if the reader does want to order, could the writer really have known beforehand? If the reader does not want to order, the reader is aware of the writer's false statement. "Phony, phony" is the metacommunication. If the writer can be sure costs have been considered, saying so may be pointless. If the writer cannot be sure but professes sureness, the statement is false. The reader's awareness of (and negative reaction to) artificiality in one sentence may reduce confidence in sentences that follow.

Adjectives and adverbs. Adjectives and adverbs often add clarity and variety to a message. They are useful, but they should not be overused. And they should not be so strong as to seem like exaggerations. "Our campaign was a fantastic success, primarily because of our marvelously arranged displays" may (because of the words fantastic and marvelously) seem like an overstatement. "Our campaign was successful, primarily because of our unusual displays" is a less forceful statement, but it is more believable. A less forceful statement that can be believed appears to be more useful to a writer than a strong statement that will be doubted. Overuse of strong adjectives and adverbs in one part of a message can cause readers to doubt the objectivity of remaining parts.

Superlatives. Like adjectives and adverbs, superlatives are useful, but they should be used with caution. Superlatives (words that designate extreme units in series) are seldom objectionable when they are supported or at least supportable. Such expressions as "the newest machine," "the youngest employees," "the worst attendance record" are acceptable when their accuracy can be verified. Unsupported or unsupportable superlatives, however, can cause negative metacommunications about a writer's sincerity. For example, "This is the best price you can get anywhere" could be true only if its author has knowledge of all prices everywhere and if the product being discussed is exactly like those with which it is competing. Knowing the small likelihood that these conditions exist, a reader is inclined to doubt the statement. Between the lines, the unsupported or unsupportable superlative says something like "Caution, don't believe it, here's a truth stretcher."

Such a reaction can be avoided if a superlative is accompanied with facts or is sufficiently qualified: "Our price is the lowest of the stores surveyed: Our store, $141.50; store X, $149.50; store Y, $159.00; and store Z, $169.95." "Our price is the lowest I know of" is at least more believable than "Our price is the lowest" because the writer probably has the limited knowledge being professed. Again, a less forceful statement that can be believed is more useful than a strong statement that will be doubted.

Words of surprise. To one who reads such sentences as "We are surprised at your reaction" or "We cannot understand why you hesitate," the metacommunication is likely to be negative. It could be something like "We understand normal behavior, but yours is abnormal and therefore bad" or "We see you as most unreasonable." Having been exposed to that metamessage, a reader may be so distracted that the worded message fails to register as it should.

Words that are worn. Anyone who has read much business correspondence will recall many expressions that are used too frequently; such as, "at your earliest convenience," "under separate cover", "pursuant to your request," and so forth. Such expressions make communication monotonous, and their use is not particularly flattering to a reader. If a boss greets the secretary with "What a neat dress you're wearing," she may be pleased. But if before the day is over she has heard the same statement made in the same words to many others, the words are no longer pleasing. One who uses well-worn expressions runs the risk of conveying metacommunications that say "To me, you are just about like others I know; therefore, I'll use the same words in talking to you" or "You are not really anything special to me." Among the commonly used worn expressions in business:

- according to our records
- at an early date
- at this time
- attached please find
- permit me to say
- take this opportunity
- thank you in advance
- this letter is for the purpose of
- trusting you will
- we hope you will
- we trust
- we would like to
- as a matter of fact
- we regret to inform

The list could be greatly expanded.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ To gain a reader's respect, a writer should use complicated words instead of simple words.
2. _____ "I'm sure you have read instructions" is recommended as a good expression to use when the purpose is to remind the receiver that instructions should have been read.
3. _____ Liberal use of strong adjectives and adverbs is likely to result in metacommunications that are positive.
4. _____ One who employs unsupportable superlatives risks transmitting metacommunications that are negative.
5. _____ A writer who employs worn expressions risks an offense to the reader's ego.

Answer

1. False. Use of big words can cause loss of respect, especially if the receiver of the message suspects the big words are being used to impress. Even if big words would cause the receiver to think "I wish I had as much education as the writer," the result would be undesirable. Words employed should cause the receiver to think about the message conveyed instead of the sender's educational background.
2. False. If the receiver did read instructions, the statement would probably not be necessary. If the receiver did not read instruction, the statement is false. Having detected a falsehood, the receiver may have skepticism about the dependability of subsequent statements.
3. False. The metacommunication is more likely to be negative; such as, "subjectivity," "overstatement," or "exaggeration."
4. True. Such between-the-lines ideas as "No support is given because none exists" or "The sender wants me to accept without question" are negative.
5. True. One who reads such a worn expression as "I shall appreciate your consideration in this matter" can hardly do so without being aware that the sentence is a standard closing line-one that could be said to almost anyone. By using the same combination of words that has been used on many others, a writer risks conveying such a between-the-lines message as "You are nothing special to me. For routine people, I use routine words."

Use Words Concisely

Since time is so important to both writers and readers, a writer has an obligation to use words economically. If an idea would be obvious without expressing it, it need not be put into words at all. "I endorsed your check and deposited it" would be better expressed as "I deposited your check."

Redundancies (expressions in which one word unnecessarily repeats an idea contained in another word) have long been considered grammatical errors. They also waste time. In each of the following expressions, two words have meanings so similar that one should be omitted: the italicized words indicate correct usage.

• Basic fundamentals;	*fundamentals (basics)**
• consensus of opinion;	*consensus (opinion)**
• each and every;	*each (every)**
• full and complete;	*full (complete)**
• true facts;	*facts (truth)**
• exact same;	*same*
• exactly identical;	*identical*
• personal opinion;	*opinion*
• refer back to;	*refer to*
• whether or not;	*whether*

*Use either one but not both.

Additional expressions that employ too many words:

• as of this date;	*yet, still, or now*
• as of this writing;	*yet, now*
• at the present time;	*now*
• be kind enough;	*please*
• due to the fact that;	*because*
• during the time that;	*while*
• for the purpose;	*to*
• in order to;	*to*
• in reference to;	*after*
• subsequent to;	*after*
• until such time;	*when*
• with regard to;	*about*

Expressions that can be shortened by changing word form:

• a machinist who takes great care;	*a careful machinist*
• in an inpatient manner;	*impatiently*
• work that had not been finished;	*unfinished work*
• man who did most work;	*fastest worker*
• man with the most skill;	*most skilled man*
• tools for which we have no use;	*useless tools*
• material that can be used;	*usable material*
• account that could not be collected;	*uncollectible account*

- person with a lot of energy; *energetic person*
- according to the alphabet; *alphabetical*
- man of great industry; *industrious person*

The italicized expressions on the right have the advantage of conciseness. But, for reasons of emphasis (discussed later), some of the expressions on the left may at times be preferred. A writer should have the habit of avoiding long, wordy expressions when short ones will serve just as well. But even conciseness can be overdone. The primary purpose of conciseness is to save time. If a writer has to spend an extraordinary amount of time in finding a shorter way to express something, the advantage gained may not be worth the effort.

Compound adjectives can be used sometimes to achieve conciseness. The italicized and underscored expressions illustrate the technique:

- The clerk presented some figures that were hard to interpret.
- *The clerk presented some <u>hard-to-interpret</u> figures.*
- John gave a report that was first rate.
- *John gave a <u>first-rate</u> report.*
- John had an experience that would never be forgotten.
- *John had a <u>never-to-be-forgotten</u> experience.*

Observe that the italicized sentences are shorter than the original sentences. Observe, too, that the compound adjectives (words joined by hyphens and used as one-word modifiers) precede the nouns they describe.

Whether speaking or writing, a communicator has two objectives: (1) to give a clear message and (2) to promote harmony between sender and receiver. If they understand and respect each other, the business relationship can continue, it can be pleasant, and it can be profitable. This clarity and harmony can hardly be achieved without taking non-worded messages into account and without selecting the right words for worded messages.

Summary

In selecting the right words, keep the following principles in mind: (1) Rely primarily on simple words; at least, don’t use big, unusual words for the purpose of impressing others. (2) Avoid words that suggest certain knowledge of future events when such knowledge is not possessed or impossible to possess. (3) Use adjectives and adverbs sparingly. (4) Use superlatives only when they are supported or at least supportable. (5) Avoid words that suggest surprise or shock about the recipient's behavior. (6) Avoid worn expressions.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ "The auditor added the figures and discovered an error" exemplifies a sentence that includes more words than necessary.
2. _____ "In the event that" is an example of a redundancy.
3. _____ Conciseness is a more desirable quality than clarity.
4. _____ By employing compound adjectives, a writer can reduce the number of words required to express an idea.
5. _____ The primary purpose of conciseness is to save time.

Answer

1. True. A reader would almost surely know (without being told) that the auditor added the figures. "The auditor discovered an error" would be sufficient, unless for some reason the writer needed to reveal the method used in finding the error.
2. False. A redundancy contains two words each of which means about the same as the other. "In the event that" is just a long way to say "if."
3. False. Both qualities are desirable. An unclear message can cause wasted time, confusion, wrong actions, hurt feelings, additional correspondence, and so forth. A wordy message requires more time to process, a small problem compared with the consequences of a vague message.
4. True. "He gave an up-to-the-minute report" requires fewer words than "He gave a report that was up to the minute."
5. True. Writers, typists, readers-all can save time if messages are conveyed without excessive words.

Chapter 2 Review Questions

1. Meta-communication messages are expressed in words such as

A. A wink.
B. A frown.
C. Have a nice day.
D. A smile.

2. A complicated word can result in no meaning or distorted meaning, wasting time, and creating a distraction from the intended message such as

A. Aware.
B. Done.
C. Masticate.
D. Show.

3. An example of the least supported or objectionable superlative is:

A. This is the "best" price you can get anywhere.
B. He has the "worst" attendance record.
C. She is the "youngest" employee.
D. Our price is the “lowest” I know of.

4. Words of surprise used to express abnormal behavior to a reaction include all the following except:

A. Hesitation.
B. Distraction.
C. We trust.
D. Double take.

5. Words or expressions that are redundant include all the following except:

A. Basic fundamentals.
B. First rate.
C. Consensus of opinions.
D. Full and complete.

Chapter 2 Review Answers

1. Meta-communication messages are expressed in words such as

A. Incorrect. A wink is a kinesic message conveyed through action.
B. Incorrect. A frown is a kinesic message conveyed through action and not expressed through words.
C. **Correct**. Have a nice day is meta-communication because not everyone would get the same message from the worded message.
D. Incorrect. A smile is a kinesic message conveyed through action and not meta-communication which is expressed though words.

2. A complicated word can result in no meaning or distorted meaning, wasting time, and creating a distraction from the intended message such as

A. Incorrect. Aware is a simple not complicated word that conveys its meaning and conveys its message.
B. Incorrect. Done is a simple word that conveys its meaning and does not waste time or distract from the intended message.
C. **Correct**. Masticate is a complicated word that can mean a variety of meanings such as chew, gnash, or grind as opposed to chew which is simple.
D. Incorrect. Show is a simple word that conveys its meaning and is easily understood by the general population and does not interfere with the intended message's meaning.

3. An example of the least supported or objectionable superlative is:

A. **Correct.** "Best" price is unsupported by any potential documentation.
B. Incorrect. He has the "worst" attendance record is supported by the attendance record data.
C. Incorrect. She is the "youngest" employee can be supported by company birth records.
D. Incorrect. Our price is the "lowest" can be supported by canvassing the area.

4. Words of surprise used to express abnormal behavior to a reaction include all the following except:

A. Incorrect. Hesitation is a kinesic message expressed through body language.
B. Incorrect. Distraction is a kinesic message expressed through body language and conveying a message without the use of word .
C. **Correct.** We Trust is a worn and trite expression that does not convey any surprise.
D. Incorrect. Double take is a kinesic message expressed through body language and expresses a surprised reaction that is often more effective than a verbal message.

5. Words or expressions that are redundant include all the following except:

A. Incorrect. Fundamentals and basics are two words with the same meaning and are unnecessary since they are repetitious.
B. **Correct**. First-rate expresses the best rate as opposed to second or third rate.
C. Incorrect. Consensuses and opinions are two words with the same meaning and are unnecessary and considered to be a grammatical error.
D. Incorrect. Full and complete have the same meaning and are unnecessary since they distract from the intended message and waste time and clarity.

Chapter 3

Writing Effective Sentences

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify simple, compound and complex sentences.
- Differentiate between positive and negative sentences.
- Recognize several techniques for emphasizing an idea.

A writer or speaker chooses the type of sentence that will best serve the twofold purpose of (1) transmitting a clear message and (2) promoting harmonious relationships with the receiver. Sentences may be classified in many different ways.

Simple, Complex, or Compound

The following simple sentence contains one idea:

The secretary typed the minutes,
(subject) (verb) (object)

Because only one idea is included, clarity is easy to achieve. Within the sentence, the idea of who typed the minutes has no other idea with which to compete. Therefore, the thought stands out vividly in the reader's mind. When an idea is especially important, when it deserves emphasis, try placing it in a simple sentence.

The following complex sentence contains a primary idea and a secondary idea:

(secondary idea) (primary idea)
According to testimony, the secretary typed the minutes.
(dependent thought) (independent thought)

Because a reader encounters more than one thought, each thought is less vivid than it would be in a simple sentence. Each shares part of the limelight with the other. But the independent idea (the idea that would make sense if it stood alone in the sentence) is in the stronger light; it gets more attention.

When an idea is not particularly important, or when it is negative and should not be stressed, place it in the dependent portion of the sentence. In the sentence used for illustration, the dependent thought happens to be first; but it can come after the independent thought. Or it can be parenthetical, with part of the independent thought coming before and the rest after.

The following compound sentence contains two complete thoughts:

> *The secretary typed the minutes, but the committee chairperson wrote the rough draft.*

Whereas in the complex sentence one thought has more weight than the other, in a compound sentence the two parts have about equal weight. The relationship of the two parts is indicated by the conjunction that comes between. "*But"* indicates the second idea is in contrast with the first. "*And"* would have indicated that the second idea is in addition to the first. Coming between two complete thoughts, *therefore* or *consequently* would suggest that the second resulted from the first. "*Nevertheless"* would suggest that the second resulted in spite of the first.

When two ideas are of about the same importance (deserve about the same emphasis), this equality can be conveyed through use of a compound sentence. Sometimes a writer must convey a negative idea but (for human relations reasons) does not wish to emphasize it. One way to keep the thought from standing out so vividly in the reader's mind is to place the negative thought in one portion of a compound sentence and a positive thought in the other. For example:

> *John has a poor attendance record, but his production record is outstanding.*

The negative is counterbalanced by the positive. A complex sentence could further de-emphasize the negative:

> *Although John's attendance record is poor, his production record is outstanding.*

The production record (appearing in the independent portion) gets more attention than the attendance record (appearing in the dependent portion).

Positive or Negative

A "positive" sentence is one that places emphasis on the pleasant instead of the unpleasant, on the good instead of the bad, on what *can* be done instead of what *cannot* be done, on the favorable instead of the unfavorable. A "negative" sentence is the opposite.

Typically, positive sentences have two advantages over negative sentences: positive sentences (1) give more complete information and (2) seem more pleasing, thus promoting business harmony. The following statements in italics give more complete information:

> The job has not been finished.
> *The job will be finished tomorrow.*

The truck is not in its usual parking place.
The truck is parked in the president's space.

The following statements in italics seem more pleasing; they are less likely to annoy:

You failed to give sufficient information.
May we have the following information:

Your machine will not be ready until Thursday of next week.
Your machine will be ready on Thursday of next week.

Remember that, normally, a communicator seeks to achieve both clarity and harmony. Sometimes, however, circumstances require that clarity be given preference. For example, assume a supervisor has observed an operator's improper techniques and says "Let me show you how to get that machine to work perfectly." (The statement would seem more pleasant than "You don't know how to operate the machine.") If that and subsequent efforts result in no improvement, a negative statement might shock the operator into a realization of the need to conform: "You are still making mistakes," or "Improve or get out." But, *normally*, writers should employ positive terminology. Even when an idea is unpleasant, positive words can keep the negative impact from seeming so severe.

Indicative, Imperative, or Subjunctive

A writer's attitude toward ideas being expressed is referred to as "mood." The indicative mood makes a statement of fact or asks a question. The imperative mood states a request or command. The subjunctive mood mentions conditions that do not necessarily exist. It suggests doubt, supposition, probability, wishfulness, or sorrow.

When writers' positions are such that they can issue commands, harmony between sender and receiver may seem less important than clarity. Nevertheless, commands sometimes sound more brutal or tactless than necessary. If a command is stated in question form, it is usually sufficiently clear; and it may arouse less resentment than would a direct command. "May I have the application before April 10" seems more considerate than "Send the application before April 10." "Will you please turn off the lights" should bring the same results as "Turn off the lights"; but the former seems a little more human relations oriented. (A period—instead of a question mark—is placed after a command stated in question form.)

The subjunctive mood can be employed to keep a negative thought from sounding overly unpleasant. In response to the question "Do you provide installation?" a writer could use "No, we do not." The negative answer could be stated in the subjunctive mood: "We wish we could" or "We would if we had the technicians." The subjunctive sentences go beyond revealing "We do not." They employ positive terms (which sound more pleasant), and they reveal a more considerate attitude. However, in the subjunctive sentences the statement is less direct. When writers are concerned about whether their subjunctive statements are sufficiently clear or about whether harmony is as important as clarity, they should use the indicative mood.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ If a writer wants an idea to stand out vividly in a reader's mind, the idea should be placed in a complex sentence instead of a simple sentence.
2. _____ An idea that appears in a dependent part of a sentence is more vivid than is an idea that appears in an independent part of the sentence.
3. _____ In a compound sentence, the first idea is considered to be more important than the last.
4. _____ Ordinarily, positive sentences are preferred over negative sentences.
5. _____ The subjunctive mood assists in keeping a negative thought from sounding overly unpleasant.

Answers

1. False. An idea will stand out more vividly if it is alone, if it has no other idea with which to complete for attention.
2. False. The independent thought will make sense alone, if the dependent part is omitted. Without the rest of the sentence, the dependent part will not make sense. That which constitutes a complete thought (makes sense) is more vivid than that which does not.
3. False. The ideas are of about equal importance. In a series, the beginning unit is emphatic; so is the ending unit.
4. True. Positive sentences present more complete information, and they sound more pleasant.
5. True. "You would have been hired if our contract had not been canceled" reveals that the receiver was not hired; but (because the words are positive) the sentence sounds better than "You were not hired." In addition, the subjunctive sentence reveals that the applicant was apparently qualified (a positive thought); and it gives a reason for not being hired.

Active or Passive

Voice is the word used to indicate whether a sentence subject acts or is acted upon. If the subject does something, the sentence is active; if the subject has something done to it, the sentence is passive. See figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Active	*Passive*
Bill drove the truck.	The truck was driven. The truck was driven by Bill.
The foreman brought the project to a conclusion.	The project was concluded. The project was brought to a conclusion by the foreman.
The boss will sign the papers.	The papers will be signed. The papers will be signed by the boss.

The passive sentences appear to have three disadvantages: (1) They contain less information (the first sentence in each passive pair does not reveal the doer). (2) If they reveal the doer, they are longer than the corresponding active sentences (compare the second sentence in each passive pair with the active sentence). (3) They are less vivid. When the working is active, readers can more easily visualize events. They can envision a man at the wheel of a truck, a foreman doing his job, or a boss signing papers. But, in the passive sentences, readers' attention is first directed to the truck, the project, and the papers. Then, after the show is concluded, they may or may not learn the name of the actor. Since passive sentences do not provide a reader with the vivid imagery provided by active sentences, active sentences are normally preferred. But, under certain conditions, passive sentences will do a better job of promoting harmony between sender and receiver.

Recall that one way to achieve harmony is to emphasize positive ideas and de-emphasize negative ideas. In the following sentences, observe that the pleasant ideas are stated in active voice for emphasis; unpleasant ideas are stated in passive voice for de-emphasis.

Active sentences for pleasant thoughts

> You completed the job in record time.
> John solved the problem.

"The job was completed in record time" and "The problem was solved by John" (passive statements) would be less vivid; they would not provide the emphasis these pleasant ideas deserve.

Passive sentences for unpleasant thoughts

> Several errors were made on page 13.
> The machine has not been adjusted correctly.

“You made several errors on this page” and “ George failed to adjust the machine correctly” (active statements) would be more vivid; they may provide more emphasis than these unpleasant ideas deserve. To the people involved, the passive sentences would seem more tactful.

Sometimes the doer of action is not particularly important. Sometimes a writer may not want to reveal who the doer is. In such instances, passive voice will serve the purpose:

> Lunch is now being served. (*Who* serves is not important.)
> I was given complete details. (The source is not to be revealed.)

In summary, rely mainly on active voice. It is vivid, it usually reveals more complete information, and it assists in emphasizing the positive. Use passive voice when the doer is not important or is best concealed. Since it is less vivid, it assists in de-emphasizing the negative. Yet, deviation from these suggestions is certainly justified if doing so best serves a writer’s purpose of clarity and harmony.

Abstract or Concrete

Since clarity is so important, writers should seldom employ abstract words as sentence subjects. People and things are easier for readers to visualize than are abstractions. For a moment, try imagining such nouns as feeling, situation, attitude, possibility, or consideration. Since such abstractions are hard to visualize, reading is more difficult when they appear as sentence subjects. Observe that the following original sentences are more difficult to comprehend than are the sentences in italics:

> *Expiration* of the contract is imminent.
> *The contract is about to expire.*
> *Analysis of the situation* indicates that costs can be cut.
> *I concluded costs could be cut.*
> *The figures indicate that costs can be cut.*

Using an abstraction as a sentence subject is not an error; but, especially when vivid writing is essential, abstractions should be used very sparingly.

Specific or General

Just as active voice is normally recommended, so is specific language. Specific sentences give a clearer picture than do general sentences. Observe the difference:

> The president showed some dissatisfaction as he acceded to their desires.
> *The president frowned as he signed the contract.*

Climatic conditions explain the rate of progress.
Heavy snows caused a three-week delay.

Since the sentences in italics are more specific, they communicate more vividly. But, in some situations, general language may be preferred. When specifics are not necessary, when they are already known to the reader, or when their presentation would provide too much emphasis on a negative idea, general words are preferred:

George received an acceptable rating. (When circumstances are such that "acceptable" or "unacceptable" is the only information required, more details would just consume time and space.)

We will be able to make the needed repairs. (The general words "needed repairs" are sufficient in this sentence of an itemized list is or has been provided.)

After your physical condition improves, please call us. (In place of "your physical condition," such specifics as "your slipped disc is repaired and your leg is removed from traction" would place too much emphasis on a very unpleasant thought.)

Just as active voice emphasizes, so do specific words. Just as passive voice de-emphasizes, so do general words.

Unequivocal or Weasel

A weasel sentence is one in which its author tried to escape responsibility for the idea being conveyed. For example:

Some would say that the data are valid.
It could be said that the attempt failed.

These weasel expressions convey such metacommunications as "I myself really don't know whether this idea is true," or "I'm willing to report others' thoughts but not willing to reveal my own." Changed to unequivocal statements, the sentences would read like this:

I conclude the data are valid, but others disagree.
The attempt failed, primarily because….

Readers have more confidence in writers who employ unequivocal statements.

Subject-Verb-Object

The normal order of words in the English language is subject, verb, and object. Seldom should a writer deviate from this sequence, as do the following sentences:

There are three reasons for this decision.
It is possible that we misunderstood each other.

In these sentences, a reader is exposed to the verb before learning what the true subject is. Revised, they are more conventional, easier to understand, and a little shorter:

Three reasons for this decision are….
The decision was made for three reasons:
We probably misunderstood each other.

By definition, an expletive is a word that has no meaning. Check the sentence that begins with "There are." What does "there" really mean? To increase the chances of being clear, avoid use of sentences in which a word is meaningless.

Short or Long

For clear, fast reading, short sentences are normally preferred. For business writing, average sentence length should be between 16 and 22 words. But variety is important. Two-word sentences are acceptable. So are 50-word sentences if they are clear. Best advice for writers: Stay mainly in short-sentenced gear.

Indicate whether each of the statements is true or false.

1. _____ An active sentence is one in which the subject is acted upon.
2. _____ Ordinarily, active sentences are recommended for positive ideas; and passive sentences are recommended for negative ideas.
3. _____ To emphasize an idea, place it in a sentence in which the subject is an abstract noun.
4. _____ To emphasize an idea, use general words instead of specific words.
5. _____ Readers react more favorably to an unequivocal expression than to a weasel expression.

Answers

1. False. An active sentence is one in which the subject does the acting.
2. True. Active sentences are more vivid, more emphatic; and (for business harmony) positive ideas should be emphasized. Passive sentences are less vivid, less emphatic; and (for business harmony) negative ideas should be de-emphasized.
3. False. Because abstract nouns are hard to visualize, the ideas conveyed by them do not stand out vividly in the reader's mind.
4. False. Because specifics are easy to visualize, the message conveyed by specific words is more emphatic.

5. True. If the expression is unequivocal, the writer's position on an issue is clearly evident. Between the lines, a weasel expression conveys such a message as "In case my point of view is challenged, I want to leave myself an out." Such a message invites an unfavorable reaction.

Emphasis

Preceding sections have illustrated various techniques for emphasis of an idea. Now, a suggestion will be given for phrasing a sentence in such a way as to place emphasis on a certain word. (The technique is employed in the two sentences that precede this one. Since the purpose is to contrast emphasis of ideas with emphasis of words, the words idea and word are critical-they need emphasis because they are being contrasted. Placing each word last in its sentence affords the desired emphasis.)

Since the purpose of the following sentences is to contrast temperatures, the words *hot* and *cold* come at the ends:

> While I was working on the accounting worksheet, the office became too hot. But, by the time I had completed the P and L statement, it was too cold.

Since the purpose of the following sentences is to contrast papers, the words *worksheet* and *balance sheet* come at the ends:

> The office became too hot while I was working on the worksheet. But it was too cold by the time I had completed the balance sheet.

The last word in a sentence is in an emphatic position. So is the first word. A word that should be de-emphasized can be placed somewhere near the middle of a sentence.

Parallel Construction

When a sentence contains a series, the units in the series should be expressed in the same way grammatically (construction should be parallel). Notice that the following sentence violates this principle:

> We have three objectives in mind for the coming year: (1) increasing production, (2) to raise wages, and (3) the training of office employees.

The three ideas appear in the same sentence only because they are related. They belong together. Since they are so closely related, they can be stated in a similar manner. The inconsistency in phrasing could cause such metacommunications as "Because they are stated differently, they don't belong together" or "The author is unorganized, careless, or uneducated." Restated, the sentence employs parallel construction:

We have three objectives in mind for the coming year: (1) increasing production, (2) raising wages, and (3) training office employees.

We have three objectives in mind for the coming year: (1) to increase production, (2) to raise wages, and (3) to train office employees.

People have a tendency toward commonality in the way they dress for certain social occasions. One dressed for a picnic would look out of place at a wedding. When a group of ideas are presented in the same sentence, they likewise should have some commonality in the way they are presented. Otherwise, some will appear to be out of place; and the author will appear to have used poor taste.

Dangling Participial Phrase

If a portion of a sentence is not properly attached to the rest of the sentence, it is said to "dangle." If complex sentences are written correctly, the dependent thoughts are attached to the subjects of independent thoughts that come immediately after them. Examine the sentence:

After wrecking the truck, the superintendent dismissed the driver.

Because *superintendent* comes immediately after the idea of wrecking, a reader assumes that the wrecking is associated with (attached to) the superintendent. Yet, circumstances are such that the driver was the one who wrecked the truck and the superintendent dismissed him for failure to do his job well. This confusing sentence can be corrected in one of the following ways:

After wrecking the truck, the driver was dismissed by the superintendent. (since driver comes immediately after the wrecking idea, a reader correctly associates the two.)

After the driver wrecked the truck, the superintendent dismissed him. (Since driver is placed in the dependent portion with the wrecking idea, the wrecking is correctly associated with the driver.)

When a complex sentence begins by talking about action without identifying the doer of it (after wrecking the truck), the doer is presumed to be the noun or pronoun (superintendent) that comes next in the sentence. If the sentence should be so worded that the action is attributed to the wrong person, clarity (the most essential quality of writing) suffers.

Summary

In composing effective sentences, employ the following principles: (1) If an idea is to be emphasized, present it in a simple sentence. (2) If an idea is to be de-emphasized, present it in the dependent clause of a complex sentence. (3) If two related ideas are of about equal significance, present them in a compound sentence. (4)Rely mainly on sentences that are positive; they give more complete information and sound more pleasing. (5) State commands tactfully, perhaps in question form. (6) Consider the subjunctive mood for conveying unpleasant thoughts. (7) Use active voice for presenting ideas vividly. (8) Consider using active voice for presenting pleasant ideas and passive voice for presenting unpleasant ideas. (9) If an idea is to be emphasized, use a concrete noun as the sentence subject. (10) For vivid writing, use specific words. (11) When specifics are not essential, already known, or unpleasant, use general words. (12) Avoid weasel expressions. (13) form sentences by placing words in subject-verb-object order. (14) To place emphasis on a certain word, either begin or end the sentence with that word. (15) When a sentence contains a series of items, express all items in the same way grammatically. (16) Make sure the doer of action is clearly identified (avoid dangling participial phrases).

Knowledge of the preceding principles is useful in constructing sentences that are clear and tactful. The art of combining sentences into paragraphs and compositions is discussed in Chapter 4.

Indicate whether each statement is true or false.

1. _____ When a sentence contains a series of items, all items should be stated in a similar way grammatically.
2. _____ If a series contains four items, one of which is stated in question form, the writer has violated the principle of parallel construction.
3. _____ A word that comes in the middle of a sentence gets more emphasis than does a word that comes at the end.
4. _____ The primary reason for avoiding dangling participial phrases is that they lead to confusion about who is responsible for what.
5. _____ “While crossing the street, the light changed” is a good example of a dangling participial phrase.

Answers

1. True. If the items are not stated in a similar way, they will appear not to belong together; and the author will appear to be inconsistent.
2. True. If one is a question and the others are not, the grammatical construction is not the same. If the items belong together, all should be stated as questions or none should be.
3. False. That which comes last is most easily remembered. To emphasize a word, put it in a position where it will be easily remembered at the beginning (where it competes for attention only with words that follow it) or at the end (where it competes for attention only with words that precede it).
4. True. Because the wrong noun is placed close to the action, the wrong noun is associated with the action. That arrangement strips a sentence of its clarity, the most essential quality of a sentence.
5. True. Because light comes immediately after the crossing idea, the suggestion is that the light was doing the crossing.

Chapter 3 Review Questions

1. A sentence that contains a primary and a secondary idea is a:

   A. Compound sentence.
   B. Simple sentence.
   C. Complex sentence.
   D. Phrase.

2. A writer’s attitude toward ideas being expressed is referred to as mood. For example, the indicative mood:

   A. Suggests probability, doubt, or sorrow.
   B. Suggests doubt or supposition.
   C. States a command.
   D. Makes a statement or asks a question.

3. A sentence that contains two complete thoughts is a:

   A. Simple sentence.
   B. Compound sentence.
   C. Complex sentence.
   D. None of the above.

4. If a subject does something then it is in active voice, if the subject has something done to it then it is passive voice. An example of active voice is:

   A. The truck was driven by Bill.
   B. Bill drove the truck.
   C. The project was concluded.
   D. The papers will be signed.

5. Examples of parallel construction that expresses three objectives in the same way include:

   A. Our objectives are: (1) increase production (2) to raise wages, and (3) training of the employees.
   B. Our three objectives are: (1) increasing production, (2) raise wages, and (3) training office employees.

C. Our objectives are: (1) to increase production, (2) to raise wages, and (3) to train office employees.
D. Our objectives are: (1) increase production (2) to raise wages, and (3) train the employees.

6. All of the following statements about effective sentences are correct EXCEPT:

A. When a sentence contains a series of items, all items should be stated in a similar way grammatically.
B. A word that comes in the middle of a sentence gets more emphasis than does a word that comes at the end.
C. If a series contains four items, one of which is stated in question form, the writer has violated the principle of parallel construction.
D. The primary reason for avoiding dangling participial phrases is that they lead to confusion about who is responsible for what.

Chapter 3 Review Answers

1. A sentence that contains a primary and a secondary idea is a:

A. Incorrect. A compound sentence contains two complete thoughts not a primary and secondary thought.
B. Incorrect. A simple sentence contains only one idea.
C. **Correct**. A complex sentence contains a primary idea and a secondary idea.
D. Incorrect. A phrase is an incomplete sentence not containing a primary and secondary idea.

2. A writer's attitude toward ideas being expressed is referred to as mood. For example, the indicative mood:

A. Incorrect. The subjunctive mood suggests doubt or supposition in order to keep a negative thought from sounding overly unpleasant.
B. Incorrect. The subjunctive mood mentions conditions that do not necessarily exist such as probability or wishes.
C. Incorrect. The imperative mood states a request or command.
D. **Correct**. The indicative mood makes a statement of facts or asks a question.

3. A sentence that contains two complete thoughts is a:

A. Incorrect. Simple sentences contain only one thought.
B. **Correct**. A sentence that contains two complete thoughts is a compound sentence.
C. Incorrect. Complex sentences contain one primary thought and a secondary idea.
D. Incorrect. The compound sentence contains two complete thoughts where each of the parts have equal weight and the relationship of the two parts is indicated by the conjunction that comes between.

4. If a subject does something then it is in active voice, if the subject has something done to it then it is passive voice. An example of active voice is:

A. Incorrect. The truck was driven by Bill is passive voice and the truck is the subject being acted on.
B. **Correct**. Bill drove the truck (the subject Bill is doing the action).
C. Incorrect. The project was concluded is passive voice since the doer of the action is not particularly important and the source is not revealed.

D. Incorrect. The papers will be signed is passive voice and the papers are the subject being acted on.

5. Examples of parallel construction that expresses three objectives in the same way include:

A. Incorrect. Our objectives are: (1) increase production (2) to raise wages, and (3) training of the employees. The three objectives are not in parallel construction.
B. Incorrect. Our three objectives are: (1) increasing production, (2) raising wages, and (3) training office employees. The three objectives are not in parallel construction since they are not being expressed the same way grammatically.
C. **Correct**. When a sentence contains a series, the units in the series should be expressed in the same way grammatically (construction should be parallel). Our objectives are: (1) to increase production, (2) to raise wages, and (3) to train office employees. The three objectives are in parallel construction and expressed in the same way grammatically.
D. Incorrect. The objectives are: (1) increase production (2) to raise wages, and (3) to train the employees are not in parallel construction or expressed in the same way grammatically.

6. All of the following statements about effective sentences are correct EXCEPT:

A. Incorrect. If the items are not stated in a similar way, they will appear not to belong together; and the author will appear to be inconsistent.
B. **Correct**. To emphasize a word, put it in a position where it will be easily remembered at the beginning or at the end.
C. Incorrect. If one is a question and the others are not, the grammatical construction is not the same. If the items belong together, all should be stated as questions or none should be.
D. Incorrect. Because the wrong noun is placed close to the action, the wrong noun is associated with the action. That arrangement strips a sentence of its clarity, the most essential quality of a sentence.

Chapter 4:

Writing Paragraphs and Compositions

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify correct effective use of paragraphs for different written reports.

Chapters 2 and 3 discuss problems encountered in selecting words and putting them together in sentences; Chapter 4 discusses problems encountered in combining sentences into paragraphs and making the paragraphs into complete compositions.

Paragraphs

When paragraphing is done carelessly, readers may have difficulty in understanding the material and also may draw uncomplimentary conclusions about the author's ability to organize and express himself clearly.

Imagine the difficulty in reading a long composition that is not divided into paragraphs. The pages would all look the same. Until getting into the next sentence a reader would not know whether it is about a new topic or just further discussion of a preceding topic, and major ideas would not stand out any more vividly than minor ideas.

The typical letter, report, or speech contains a limited number of major ideas. Each major idea requires supporting details. The typical paragraph has one sentence that conveys the major idea and enough additional sentences to complete the discussion of that idea.

The major idea can be first in the paragraph or it can be last. Either position is acceptable. Naturally, the major idea deserves more emphasis than do the supporting details. Just as the first and last words in a sentence are in emphatic position, so are the first and last sentences in a paragraph.

When the major idea appears in the first sentence of a paragraph, a reader gets a preliminary idea of what to expect in remaining sentences—support for the point just made. Since this arrangement has the effect of letting a reader know what to expect, the reading is fast and easy. To review the major points, a reader has but to re-read the first sentences of paragraphs.

When the major idea appears in the last sentence of a paragraph, it is not likely to come as a surprise. As a result of exposure to the details that precede, a reader may see the major idea as logical. It may come as confirmation of a generalization of details already generated in the reader's mind. To review major points, a reader has but to re-read the last sentences of paragraphs.

A writer should choose the pattern that best serves the purpose of the message. The deductive arrangement (major sentence first) has the advantage of quickly revealing the subject of the paragraph and making reading easy. The inductive arrangement (major sentence last) is more useful when persuasion is necessary or when (without preliminary justification) major ideas might be rejected. For example, assume upon reading the first sentence of a paragraph that the reader's reaction is "I disagree," "The author is illogical," or "I don't see why." From that point on, the reader may (instead of trying to understand the supporting details) try harder to seek rebuttal, to find support for the initial negative reaction. If the same major idea had been written after the details, a negative reaction could have been avoided. Clarity and writer-reader harmony might have been achieved.

The major idea in a paragraph can be in some position other than first or last. If for some reason a writer wants to precede, (and then follow) a major thought with detail, the technique is justified. Two suggestions, however: (1) First and last positions afford the emphasis a major idea deserves. (2) Readers appreciate consistency on the part of writers. After a few paragraphs, a reader becomes familiar with the writer's pattern and feels more comfortable if it is followed fairly consistently.

Paragraph length is determined by the amount of detail necessary to complete the discussion of a general idea. The more involved an idea, the more supporting detail required and the longer the paragraph. Some paragraphs, then, will be much shorter than others. This variety in length is natural and welcomed. If supporting details are not necessary, one-sentence paragraphs are acceptable. Among longer paragraphs, a one-sentence paragraph stands out vividly.

Compared with short paragraphs, long paragraphs look less inviting to read. For a reader, the end of a paragraph is a resting point-a stopping place for some clinching or reflecting upon the points just made. If the upcoming paragraph is extraordinarily long, the reading task may look formidable.

In business reports, paragraphs are usually longer than in business letters. Reports are about more complicated subjects and require more details. In report paragraphs, an idea that requires more than eight or ten lines of support can be profitably broken into two separate ideas each of which can be supported in fewer lines. In letters, a paragraph is on the verge of being too long if it has more than five or six lines. To give first and last sentences the emphasis they deserve, and to make letters look inviting to read, first and last paragraphs are kept short-from one to no more than three or four lines.

Within paragraphs, the sentences should lead a reader naturally from one to the next. If they do not, the reader may be lost or clarity may be reduced. To avoid these possibilities, writers need to be especially careful in applying their techniques of coherence.

Coherence (the quality of cohesiveness in which one sentence leads naturally into the next) is fairly easy to achieve when the writing is narrative. Just telling next what happened next is not difficult. But coherence is more difficult to achieve when the writing is expository (presents and explains ideas). Since business letters and reports are expository, one who writes them needs to have a good command of various coherence techniques.

Lincoln employed those techniques masterfully in the Gettysburg Address. (See Figure 1.) The same technique he used can be applied in business writing. Observe how the underlined words serve to tie each sentence to the next. Read each numbered sentence on the left, and then read the commentary on the right. Although the Address is known primarily for its noble thoughts, it is a masterpiece of coherence. Business writers can employ the same techniques Lincoln used:

1. Have good ideas and arrange them in logical order.
2. Repeat nouns introduced in previous sentences.
3. Use a pronoun in one sentence to stand for a noun introduced in an earlier sentence.
4. Give a word signal when the topic is about to change.

Such joining words as and, but, for, because, therefore, however, thus, and consequently, are especially useful in leading the reader naturally from one sentence to the next sentence and from one paragraph to the next paragraph.

FIGURE 1

(1)	Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.		
(2)	Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can be created equal.	(2)	Grows naturally out of sentence (1). "That nation" can only refer to the "new nation" of the previous sentence. "So conceived" and "so dedicated" are emphatic repetitions of words introduced in the first

			sentence.
(3)	We are met on a great battlefield of that war.	(3)	“That war” refers to the “great civil war” mentioned in sentence (2).
(4)	We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live	(4)	“That field” refers to the “great battlefield” in sentence (3). “That nation” refers to the “new Nation” spoken of in the first sentence.
(5)	It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.	(5)	“This” refers to “dedicate a portion” in Sentence (4).
(6)	But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate-we cannot consecrate-we cannot hallow…	(6)	The “but” beginning ties this sentence to preceding sentence; at the same time, it suggests we have approached a turn in the discourse. For now “we cannot” do the dedication mentioned earlier.

Indicate where each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ A topic sentence (major idea of a paragraph) is preferably placed about the middle of the paragraph.
2. _____ When a paragraph is written to persuade, the arrangement should be deductive.
3. _____ In reports, the paragraphs should contain no more than ten lines and no fewer than eight.
4. _____ In letters, paragraphs are normally shorter than in reports.
5. _____ A good writer seeks to avoid abrupt changes in thought.

Answers

1. False. Major ideas deserve emphasis, and greater emphasis is afforded by first and last positions in paragraphs.
2. False. If the deductive arrangement is used to persuade, a receiver is told what to do (or invited to agree) before seeing any justification for doing so. Having rejected the idea contained in the

first sentence, the receiver may stubbornly hold to the initial reaction while being exposed to the supporting details.

3. False. Paragraphs cannot be expected to be so uniform in length. Some topic sentences require more supporting details than others. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence. Ten lines is not an absolute maximum for paragraph length.
4. True. Typical reports are longer, more complicated, and require more supporting detail than do letters, In letters, short paragraphs give a better appearance on the page; and they look more inviting to read.
5. True. If good coherence techniques have been used, a reader will stay right on track. Abrupt changes in thought can cause a reader to miss the point, to be distracted by wondering why the next topic is being presented without warning, or to pick up uncomplimentary thoughts about the writer's techniques and abilities.

Compositions

Preceding discussions have been limited to smaller units of a composition-words, sentences, and paragraphs. But high standards in these elements alone do not assure successful writing of an entire composition. Before, during, and after the composition of sentences and paragraphs, a writer needs to keep some broader problems in mind: the thesis statement, unity, emphasis, sequence, readability, grammar, and mechanics.

The thesis statement.

In the typical letter, report, or speech, the communicator has a central idea to convey. Whether it is called "thesis," "theme," or "central idea," it is the one broad thought that is to be transmitted. All sentences and paragraphs contribute to that thought. When writers find themselves composing sentences that do not contribute to the primary thought, the sentences should be cut.

One of the best ways to reduce the probability of getting off the main subject is to *write down a statement of the thesis before beginning the composition*. In a letter, the thesis statement may be "For good reason, your request must be denied." In a report, it may be "A formal merit-rating system should be instituted." In a prepared speech, it may be "Let's revise our marketing strategy." By putting such thesis statements *on paper* before beginning to write, one who prepares a message decreases the likelihood of straying from the main topic.

Unity.

The main topic, the general idea of a message, should be evident from the beginning. All sentences should be related to it. The finished message should seem like a completed unit. In a report or speech, unity is achieved by introducing the central idea, presenting the related details, and returning to the central idea in the closing sentences. In a letter, unity is achieved by making sure the first sentence sounds like an appropriate beginning and that the last sentence sounds like an appropriate ending. If the last sentence is in some way related to the first, the unit will seem to have been completed. Otherwise, the closing will seem abrupt-as if the writer just quit before reaching the end.

Emphasis.

The closing sentence of a composition is in an emphatic position. So is the beginning sentence. In reports, nothing deserves more emphasis than does the thesis. Placing it at the beginning and at the end provides emphasis as well as unity. Another way to emphasize the thesis is by making repeated references to it. Those references are necessary and expected. By definition, a thesis is an idea that permeates an entire message.

To emphasize a certain point in a message, a writer can (1) devote considerably more space to it than to other points; (2) put it in first or last position among other points; (3) label it as being more significant than other points; (4) underscore it or type in capital letters; or (5) employ emphasis techniques that appear in preceding discussions of words, sentences, and paragraphs.

Sequence.

As pointed out in preceding pages, writers can achieve their purposes by placing a word in its proper position within a sentence and by placing a sentence in its proper position within a paragraph. Likewise, paragraphs need to be arranged in the most appropriate sequence within the entire composition. In letters, the sequence can be readily determined by anticipating the probable reader reaction (see next chapter). In reports, a writer may select from the following sequences:

Space order moves from that which is near to that which is far. A report about branch offices could begin with the office nearest and end with the office farthest from the main office.

Chronological order relates a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. A discussion on legislative enactments could begin with the first one passed and end with the last one.

Familiar-to-unfamiliar order begins with those points about which readers may know most and proceeds to those about which they know least. A set of instructions on how to operate a new machine could begin by first reviewing the operation of a machine with which the reader is familiar, and then proceed to point out basic similarities of the steps in operating the unfamiliar one.

Deductive and inductive order applies to the sequence of paragraphs as well as to the sequence of sentences within paragraphs. A major conclusion could be presented in one paragraph and supported in subsequent paragraphs (deductive sequence), the supporting paragraphs could be presented first (inductive sequence).

Closeness in relationship justifies putting ideas close together. Since cost of upkeep is related to initial cost, and since durability and upkeep are related, the sequence of paragraphs could be initial cost, cost of upkeep, and durability.

Order of importance begins with the most important ideas and ends with the least important ones, or begins with the least important ideas and ends with the most important ones. The arrangement assists in placing emphasis where it is most desired.

If the sequence of paragraphs and major units of a composition have been well planned, the next topic to be taken up will seem to the reader as a logical next topic. To bridge the gap that sometimes seems to occur between major units of a composition, good writers employ transition sentences. In addition to providing a summary of the major unit from which the writer is emerging, transition sentences subtly lead the reader to expect the next major unit. They confirm the logic of the sequence and add to coherence within the whole composition.

Whatever the arrangement of paragraphs, it should be decided upon before the composition is begun. If not, the writer will have a sense of insecurity as the writing progresses; the reader will have a difficult chore.

Readability. In preceding pages, short sentences and simple words have been recommended. If they are employed, fast reading and clear understanding are possible. Normally, a suitable level for business people is somewhere between the 8th and 11th grade levels. Even though they may have a college or graduate-level education, they appreciate a message that is quickly and easily understood.

Although writers have been encouraged to rely primarily on simple words, a good vocabulary is still useful. It not only improves the chances of finding just the right word when writing, it also improves the chances of understanding when reading.

Grammar. Since writing is a complicated activity, success is more likely if it is undertaken a part at a time. First, decide what to say and the sequence. Second, say it (not deliberately neglecting grammar, but concentrating primarily on getting the message on paper). Third, proofread and correct grammatical errors before the final draft is typed. Errors in grammar can cause (1) misunderstanding, (2) loss of time, (3) distraction from the ideas presented, and (4) negative metacommunications about the writer.

Mechanics. Before releasing a letter or the final draft of a report, a writer should likewise check carefully for errors in spelling, punctuation, and typing. The consequences of mechanical errors are about the same as the consequences of grammatical errors. They interfere with clarity and harmony—the twin goals of a writer.

Summary

The typical paragraph contains a major idea and a limited number of supporting ideas. Although the major idea is sometimes preceded and followed by supporting ideas, the typical paragraph either begins or ends with the major idea. Deductive paragraphs begin with the major idea; inductive paragraphs end with the major ideas. Unless a writer has some reason for changing, consistency is recommended. When a message is persuasive, inductive paragraphs are recommended.

Because the amount of support for major ideas varies, paragraphs cannot be expected to have uniform length. In reports, paragraphs seldom should be more than 8 to 10 lines long; in letters, a paragraph of more than five or six lines is approaching maximum length.

If paragraphs are coherent, one sentence leads naturally to the next; abrupt changes in thought will not occur. Some specific coherence techniques: (1) Arrange ideas in logical order. (2) Repeat nouns introduced in preceding sentences. (3) Use pronouns with antecedents in preceding sentences. (4) Use connecting words (such as *and*, *but,* and *therefore*) when the topic is about to change.

Just as sentences form a paragraph, paragraphs form a composition. Some important considerations for building paragraphs into an entire composition: (1) Before composing, write down the thesis statement; include only sentences and paragraphs that contribute to its support. (2) Develop unity by introducing the central idea at the beginning, following with related details, and restating the central idea in closing sentences. (3) Emphasize the central idea by making frequent references to it; for other points that deserve emphasis, devote more space, label as being significant, underscore or type in capital letters, or employ other emphasis techniques that appear in preceding discussions of sentences and paragraphs. (4) Before composing, choose the most desirable sequence of paragraphs (space order, chronological order, familiar-to-unfamiliar order, deductive or inductive order, closeness in relationship, or order of importance). (5) Relying mainly on short sentences and commonly used words, strive normally for a readability level between grades 8 and 11. (6) Strive for perfection in grammar and mechanics; if errors occur the result is misunderstanding, loss of time, distraction from the ideas being conveyed, and a negative impression of the writer.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ "Write the thesis statement down on paper" is good advice for one who is getting ready to write a report or letter.
2. _____ Introducing the thesis statement at the beginning and returning to it at the end assures unity.
3. _____ In a deductively written report, the major idea (conclusion) appears at the beginning.
4. _____ The primary purpose of the transition sentences is to achieve emphasis.
5. _____ Normally, a suitable readability level for business writing is between the 12th and 14th grade levels.
6. _____ Metacommunications generated by grammatical and mechanical errors are likely to be positive.

Answers

1. True. Writing the thesis statement on paper will help to clarify it in the mind of the writer and thus give it the emphasis it deserves. Having written the statement down, a writer is less likely to stray from the central subject.

2. False. The thesis should permeate the entire composition. Beginning and ending references alone are insufficient.
3. True. Like deductive paragraphs that present the topic sentence first, deductive compositions present the thesis first.
4. False. Transition sentences serve to achieve coherence among the major parts of a composition. They also assist by providing a summary of a preceding discussion.
5. False. The 12th grade is a little too high. The desirable range is 8 to 11.
6. False. Such errors generate such negative metacommunications as carelessness, haste, ignorance, or disrespect.

Chapter 4 Review Questions

1. In the best example of a sentence with a deductive arrangement the major idea will appear in:

   A. First sentence or paragraph.
   B. The second paragraph.
   C. The second to last paragraph.
   D. The middle paragraph.

2. A thesis statement refers to:

   A. The placing of events in their chronological order.
   B. Placing a sentence at the beginning and the end of the paragraph to provide emphasis as well as unity.
   C. The general idea of a message that is evident from the beginning and all sentences relate to it.
   D. A broad thought which all sentences and paragraphs contribute to.

3. An inductive arrangement will reveal the major sentence in the:

   A. Middle of the paragraph.
   B. The first sentence.
   C. The last sentence.
   D. Anywhere in the paragraph.

4. ___________________ are not joining words that lead readers from one sentence to the next sentence and from one paragraph to the next paragraph..

   A. And, but.
   B. Because, therefore.
   C. Thus, consequently.
   D. Into, above, below.

5. _______________________ is not an example of a sequence arrangement within a paragraph.

   A. Chronological order.
   B. Familiar to unfamiliar.
   C. Order of importance.

D. Emphasis.

6. _______________________ justifies putting ideas close together.

A. Deductive and inductive order.
B. Closeness in relationship.
C. Familiar-to-unfamiliar order.
D. Space order.

Chapter 4 Review Answers

1. In the best example of a sentence with a deductive arrangement the major idea will appear in:

A. **Correct.** The deductive sentence's major idea will appear in the first sentence to reveal the subject of the paragraph and make reading easy.
B. Incorrect. The second paragraph buries the main idea and downplays the meaning which is usually reserved for bad news.
C. Incorrect. The second to last paragraph buries the main idea and downplays the meaning, usually reserved to convey bad news.
D. Incorrect. The first and last paragraph positions afford the emphasis a major idea deserves.

2. A thesis statement refers to:

A. Incorrect. Chronological order relates a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. A discussion on legislative enactments could begin with the first one passed and end with the last one.
B. Incorrect. Placing a sentence at the beginning and the end of the paragraph is used to provide emphasis as well as unity and is also used to achieve consistency and clarity for the reader.
C. Incorrect. The general idea of a message is evident from the beginning and all sentences relate to it contribute to the central idea or broad thoughts that support the main idea.
D. **Correct**. A thesis is the one broad thought that is to be transmitted. All sentences and paragraphs contribute to that thought.

3. An inductive arrangement will reveal the major sentence in the:

A. Incorrect. Middle of the paragraph is a method to bury bad news or negative concepts.
B. Incorrect. The first sentence is a deductive arrangement that introduces the main idea.
C. **Correct.** The last sentence is where all supporting evidence is presented before the major topic is revealed.
D. Incorrect. An inductive arrangement introduces the main topic in the last sentence where it is not likely to come as a surprise or as a result of exposure to details that proceeded.

4. ___________________ are not joining words that lead readers from one sentence to the next sentence and from one paragraph to the next paragraph..

A. Incorrect. "And, but" are joining words that are also useful in leading the reader naturally from one sentence to another.

B. Incorrect. “Because, therefore” are linking words also used to join one sentence to another and one paragraph to another in a logical order.
C. Incorrect. “Thus, consequently” are linking words useful in taking a reader from one topic to another in a coherent and logical sequence.
D. **Correct**. These are prepositions and used to give direction.

5. ______________________ is not an example of a sequence arrangement within a paragraph.

A. Incorrect. Chronological order relates a sequence of events in the order in which they happened. A discussion on legislative enactments could begin with the first one passed and end with the last one. It is one type of example of a sequence arrangement.
B. Incorrect. Familiar-to-unfamiliar order begins with those points about which readers may know most and proceeds to those about which they know least. Familiar to unfamiliar is an example of a sequence arrangement.
C. Incorrect. Order of importance is an example of a sequence arrangement that achieves its purpose by pacing a sentence in its proper position within a paragraph and the paragraph within the most appropriate sequence within the entire composition.
D. **Correct**. The closing sentence of a composition is in an emphatic position. Emphasis does not need to have sequence arrangement.

6. ______________________ justifies putting ideas close together.

A. Incorrect. Deductive and inductive order applies to the sequence of paragraphs as well as to the sequence of sentences within paragraphs.
B. **Correct.** Closeness in relationship justifies putting ideas close together. Since cost of upkeep is related to initial cost, and since durability and upkeep are related, the sequence of paragraphs could be initial cost, cost of upkeep, and durability.
C. Incorrect. Familiar-to-unfamiliar order begins with those points about which readers may know most and proceeds to those about which they know least.
D. Incorrect. Space order moves from that which is near to that which is far. A report about branch offices could begin with the office nearest and end with the office farthest from the main office.

Chapter 5:

Planning Messages for Reader Reaction

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify elements for planning an effective message.

Preceding chapters illustrate the complexity of communication. In one short letter, the author has many decisions to make about words, sentences, and paragraphs. The task is even more complicated if (while making these decisions) the writer is also concerned about whether the message is what it really should be, or whether thoughts are being presented in the right sequence. To simplify the process, to make the end result more effective, and to save time, a communicator should plan the entire message carefully before beginning to write the letter.

Just as a traveler makes plans before departing, just as a builder makes blueprints before beginning construction, so should a writer get answers to certain questions before putting the first sentence on paper:

1. Is the letter designed to convey the *right message*? If the letter is intended to convey a decision, the writer should be convinced that it is a fair decision. In the absence of that conviction, doubts may complicate the writing and negative metacommunications may creep into the reading. If the letter is intended to make a request, the writer should be convinced that it is legitimate, Otherwise, the writing task should not be undertaken. If a letter is written impulsively, it may not really convey the right message. Although procrastination should not be allowed to become a habit, one who impulsively decides to send an emotionally charged letter should probably wait a day or two-just to see if the thoughts are still appropriate.
2. Is the letter being written for the *right purpose*? The purpose should be to communicate an idea clearly and to promote harmonious relationships with the reader. If a letter is being prepared for any other purpose (to impress, to flatter, to humiliate) its value is questionable.
3. Is the letter likely to evoke an *emotional reaction*? Answering this question helps the writer to employ empathy-to project into the viewpoint of the receiver. It also forces the writer to

consider the reader's background and attitudes. Such preliminary thinking increases the probability that the letter will be tactful.

4. Should the sequence be *inductive or deductive*? Reader reaction (preceding question) determines the answer to this question. Readers react in one of four ways: pleased about the message, interested in the message but not emotionally involved, displeased about the message, or not interested initially and will have to be persuaded.

Although no two individuals are alike, people do have commonality in their behavior. To predict a reader's reaction to a message that is being planned, a writer has but to ask "What would my own reaction be?" The answer determines whether the letter should be written inductively or deductively.

Deductive Letters

Recall that the deductive arrangement presents the main idea first and follows with details. When the reader will be pleased, or when the reader will be interested but not emotionally involved, the deductive arrangement is preferred.

When the reader will be pleased.

Writers can be fairly certain that readers will be pleased to learn that a refund is being made, an order is being shipped on schedule, credit is being granted, or an invitation is being accepted. Confident that the message is based on a fair decision and that the reader's reaction is going to be favorable, a writer is now quite ready to begin composing the first sentence. Composition of the entire letter will be simplified if a brief outline is made first. Having first made the decisions about what the ideas should be and the order in which to present them, a writer can (while composing) concentrate totally on how to express them. Presenting good news is easy, and the writing is easy when the following outline is applied:

1. In the first sentence, present the most pleasant aspect of the communication.
2. Follow with details or explanations.
3. Close with a sentence that either reminds the recipient of the pleasant thought or looks positively to the future.

The following letter illustrates application of this deductive sequence. Italicized words are inserted to illustrate application of the preceding outline.

Yes, you are entitled to a $100 refund (check enclosed).

Begins with the pleasant thought.

> When your March statement was sent, your purchase return of March 10 had not been recorded. We appreciate your full and prompt payment of the invoice and your letting us know about the possibility of an overcharge to your account.
>
> *Adds explanations (details).*
>
> With the new equipment recently installed, we can process your next order on the date received.
>
> *Alludes confidently to future transactions.*

The pleasant-thought-first pattern in the preceding letter has the following advantages:

1. It emphasizes the pleasant idea by placing it in the first sentence-where it will stand out vividly in the reader's mind.
2. It immediately puts readers in a positive frame of mind, prepares them for quick and easy understanding of details that follow.
3. It provides writers with a dependable aid in getting a letter started. They waste no time in wondering how to begin. Now that the primary idea is on paper, the rest follows easily.

The pattern for writing letters in which the reader will be interested but not emotionally involved is similar.

When the reader will be interested but not emotionally involved.

Much of the correspondence that passes in business contains routine information—that is wanted or expected but which can be neither classified as good news nor bad news. Like other letters, they contain a primary idea and support or explanations. The following outline is recommended:

1. Put the primary idea in the first sentence.
2. Follow with details or explanations.
3. Choose an appropriate closing. The closing sentence can refer to the main idea, identify an action the reader is to take, or express appreciation.

The following letter illustrates application of these points. Since it is a request for information, it is not expected to be received as good news or bad news; but the reader (who is in the business of selling machines) should be interested.

> Please send me information about the cost, speed, features, and capabilities of your laser printer.
>
> *Reveals the primary purpose of the letter.*
>
> I am especially interested in buying a printer with at least 25 pages per minute printing speed, 100,000 pages per month volume, and color and network capabilities. The printer should be able to accommodate different paper forms such as blank check forms and invoice forms.

Follows with explanatory details.

Because our present printer is unable to keep up with the current need, I shall appreciate your quick answers to these questions.

Refers to main idea and action desired.

The primary-idea-first pattern in the preceding letter has the following advantages:

1. It saves time for the recipient. The clerks opening the mail can readily identify the desk to which the letter should be sent for reply. The reader can determine quickly what the whole letter is about.
2. It emphasizes the primary idea by placing it at the beginning.
3. It simplifies composition. Once the important idea is stated, remaining sentences fall naturally into place.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. Before the first sentence of a letter is written, all ideas to be included should be identified and arranged in the desired sequence.
2. Before beginning the composition, a writer should be convinced that the message is justified.
3. Approximate length of the letter determines whether it should be written inductively or deductively.
4. By asking "What would be my own reaction to a message like this?" a writer can predict a reader's probable reaction.
5. Letters that convey a pleasant message and letters that convey routine messages should begin with explanatory details.

Answers

1. True. Having made the decisions about the ideas to be included and the sequence in which to include them, a writer can concentrate totally on the problem of how to express them. Division into two phases (first the planning and then the writing) increases the chances of effectiveness in each.
2. True. Without such a conviction, a writer experiences doubts that interfere with composition. These doubts may be reflected in metacommunications picked up by the reader.
3. False. Anticipated reader reaction (not letter length) determines the sequence of ideas.
4. True. Through use of empathy, reader reaction can be predicted with reasonable accuracy. Although each person is unique, with reasonable certainty people can be expected to be pleased when a request is granted, displeased when it is denied, interested in information related to their business, and uninterested initially in a letter designed to persuade.
5. False. That arrangement will not provide sufficient emphasis for the primary idea.

Inductive Letters

When the reader will be displeased or will have to be persuaded, the inductive arrangement is preferred.

When the reader will be displeased.

Compared with the task of conveying good news. The task of conveying bad news is more challenging. Seldom can writers convey bad news in such a way as to make readers happier than they would have been with good news. That much success is not expected. But because relationships may be strained as a result of *what the message is*, writers should be especially careful about *how it is conveyed*. If the message itself is justified, and if it is presented with tact, the cordial reader-writer relationship may be preserved.

If the message (bad news) is justified, the writer will have solid reasons to support the decision. If the reasons are read and understood, the decision may be accepted without resentment. The reasons, then, become the key to harmonious relationships. The reasons deserve emphasis, more emphasis than they would get if the negative decision were presented first.

Suppose, for example, that a refusal letter begins with the following statement:

> Your request for reimbursement has been denied.

A reader who had previously submitted what was thought to be a legitimate request would almost certainly disagree. In that mental state, the reader's receptivity to explanations would be reduced. If the reaction to the first sentence is "I didn't get fair treatment," "The decision was arbitrary," or other negative reactions, the explanations may not be read at all. Or instead of keeping an open mind and trying to understand the explanations, the reader may instead concentrate on rebuttal as each remaining sentence is read. And, having reacted with "This is unjust" upon reading the first sentence, a reader could (because of a sensitive ego) refuse to modify the reaction even though the reasons are very solid. These obstacles can be partially overcome by presenting *reasons before* presenting a major thought that is negative. The following outline is recommended:

1. Begin with a pleasant or neutral statement-one that neither identifies the news as good nor bad but leads to a discussion of reasons.
2. Present the facts, give the supporting reasons.
3. State the negative idea.
4. Close with a positive or neutral statement.

<u>Example</u>: While shopping at a department store, a customer stopped at the office, asked the amount of her indebtedness, and wrote a check for the amount quoted. After receiving a statement for $27, the customer wrote a letter asking that the $27 charge be dropped. The following letter employs inductive sequence; it was designed to let the customer know that the charge was not to be written off.

> A look at your card revealed the answer to the question raised in your letter of October 27.

Neutral statement, reveals what the letter is about, leads to a presentation of explanations.

	Purchases	**Payments**	**Balance**
September 21	20.00		20.00
October 1	44.17		64.17
October 8	10.56		74.73
October 19		47.73	27.00

The clerk who reported your balance obviously read the dollar digits in reverse order (47 instead of 74). If she had overstated your balance and you had paid the amount quoted, you would have had a credit toward future purchases.

Provides reasons for the refusal.

Since the amount was understated, your account shows the $27 balance. Since it is for purchases made, it is your obligation; but, if payment is received before November 15, the amount is interest free.

Reveals that the customer is not being excused from paying.

The clerk recognizes the consequences of the transposition, is genuinely sorry about it, and will keep trying to achieve perfection in handling figures.

Thank you for making your latest payment before receiving a bill.

Closes with a positive statement.

The inductive pattern in the preceding letter has the following advantages:

1. The first sentence reveals that the letter is *about* a problem (the apparent overcharge) without stating the *negative answer* to it (you can't be excused from paying). Because the first sentence is not controversial and looking at the payment record seems like a reasonable approach, the possibility of resentment at this point is minimal.
2. The first sentence is designed to open the mind for discussion; a refusal stated in the first sentence could have closed it. Discussion of the purchase-and-payment record is based on facts that are verifiable. That a clerk could in the haste of a busy day transpose a figure is understandable. That a customer is accountable for payment of purchases made is reasonable.
3. The reasons-first sequence gives reasons the emphasis they deserve.
4. In view of the reasons given, the sentence that conveys the refusal may not be resented at all. Just as "It isn't fair" is a likely reaction to a refusal states in the first sentence. "It seems logical" is a likely reaction to a refusal preceded by good explanations.
5. Since the last sentence is not about the refusal, the negative is de-emphasized.

The reasons-before-refusal sequence has a possible disadvantage: Because the main point is delayed until late in the letter, some readers may become impatient; that's not good. But if the main point is presented first, some readers may become angry; that's worse. Best way to reduce the impact of impatience: Have good reasons and present them concisely.

Letters that present negative thoughts are written persuasively, designed to get a reader to accept a point of view. Likewise, letters designed to get a reader to do something or to buy something are written persuasively.

When the reader will not be interested initially.

When readers receive sales letters or letters requesting special favors, their minds are probably on other matters. Being neither pleased, displeased, nor interested, they will have to be made interested and persuaded.

Naturally, a first sentence that says "Send $150 and I will send you a…"" or "Will you please donate 45 hours of your spare time" is likely to get a negative reaction. The following sequence of ideas is recommended for letters in which the reader will not be interested:

1. Say something to get attention-to make the recipient put aside other thoughts and concentrate on this letter.
2. Introduce the product or idea.
3. Give enough evidence to demonstrate that accepting the proposal would be to the recipient's advantage.
4. Encourage the action necessary for gaining the benefits described.

The advantages of this sequence, and examples of application, are shown in Chapter 8.

The sequence-of-idea patterns presented in this chapter are recommended for most correspondence. The outlines are presented as useful guides that will help to get the composition started and give the writer confidence that a sensible plan is being followed. They are not to be thought of as rules from which there can be no deviation. They are to be thought of as techniques that will help to achieve the twin purposes of clarity and harmony.

When special circumstances indicate that deviation from the guides would best serve the purpose of the writer, that deviation is certainly justified. For example, if a request is resubmitted after an inductive denial, a deductive denial may provide the needed emphasis in the second denial. Or, if a reader is known to prefer main-idea-first sequence in all messages, a deductive denial is acceptable. Having a set of guides from which there can be occasional deviation seems much better than having no guides at all.

Getting ready to write is just as important as the writing itself. What is the purpose? What is the message? What will be the reaction to it? What is the best sequence of ideas? All these questions should be answered before the writing is begun.

Summary

Success in writing a letter is closely associated with the planning that precedes. The task of composition should not be undertaken until the following questions have been answered: (1) Is the letter designed to convey the right message? (2) Is the letter being written for the right purpose? (3) Is the letter likely to evoke an emotional reaction? (4) Should the sequence be inductive or deductive? The answer to the fourth question depends on the answer to the third.

Readers can be expected to react in one of four ways: (1) *pleased*, (2) *interested* but not emotionally involved, (3) *displeased*, or (4) initially *not interested*. For the first two reactions, a deductive approach is recommended; for the other reactions, an inductive approach is recommended.

When readers will be pleased, the following outline is recommended: begin with the most pleasant aspect of the letter, follow with details, and close with a sentence that either reminds the reader of the pleasant thought or looks positively to the future. This technique places emphasis on the positive, puts the reader immediately in a pleasant mood, and gets the writer off to a fast start.

When readers will be merely interested but not emotionally involved, the outline is likewise deductive: put the main idea first, follow with details, and close with a reference to the main idea or to action that is to be taken.

When readers will be displeased with the basic message, the following outline is recommended: begin with a pleasant or neutral statement that leads to a discussion of reasons, present facts and supporting reasons, state the unpleasant idea, and close with a positive or neutral statement. This technique allows the writer to present reasons in an emphatic position. Having first seen the logic of the reasons, readers are less likely to react negatively when the disappointing idea is presented.

When readers will not be interested initially, the recommended outline is inductive: get attention, introduce the idea or product, present evidence, and ask for action. Such an outline allows a reader to see advantages of taking action before being asked to act. Good composition is preceded by careful planning.

Chapter 5 Review Questions

1. The deductive letter arrangement is preferred when:

   A. The reader is emotionally involved.
   B. The reader is pleased or interested but not emotionally involved.
   C. The reader is displeased.
   D. The reader has to be persuaded.

2. With a deductive arranged message the reader is anticipated to react:

   A. Displeased.
   B. Not interested.
   C. Interested.
   D. Emotional.

Chapter 5 Review Answers

1. The deductive letter arrangement is preferred when:

A. Incorrect. The reader will be interested and emotionally involved when the arrangement is inductive.
B. **Correct.** When the reader is pleased or interested but not emotionally involved, the preferred arrangement is deductive.
C. Incorrect. When the reader is displeased or emotionally involved the best arrangement is the inductive format.
D. Incorrect. When the reader has to be persuaded the inductive arrangement is preferred.

2. With a deductive arranged message the reader is anticipated to react:

A. Incorrect. With a displeased message the arrangement should be inductive to prepare the reader for a negative message and to downplay the reader's anticipated reaction.
B. Incorrect. Anticipating the reader's reaction determines the sequence of ideas and determines if the arrangement should be inductive or deductive. The main idea is to introduce, then follow evidence, and finally request the desired action.
C. **Correct.** The deductive approach is recommended for a pleased reaction. Begin the letter with the most pleasant aspect, follow with the details, and close with a positive thought.
D. Incorrect. With an emotionally involved message the preferred arrangement is inductive in order to offer the reader empathy. This technique places the emphasis on the positive and puts the reader in a pleasant mood.

Chapter 6:

Writing About the Routine and the Pleasant

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the different types and usages of business letters.

Recall from the preceding chapter that two questions must be answered before the writing is begun: (1) Exactly, what is the message? (2) What is the receiver's expected reaction?

Recall, too, that the receiver's reaction will fall into one of the following categories: (1) pleased, (2) displeased, (3) neither pleased nor displeased but interested, and (4) not initially interested. This chapter is devoted to a further discussion of letters in the first and third categories. Letters in the first group are referred to as "yes" letters, letters in the third as "routine" letters.

"Yes" and "routine" letters are discussed in the same chapter because both follow the same sequence-of-idea pattern:

1. Pleasant idea in a "Yes" letter or main idea in a "routine" letter.
2. Details or explanations.
3. Closing thought.

The preceding outline is deductive—major idea first, followed by supporting details. Item 3 could be omitted without seriously impairing effectiveness, but including it gives a letter the quality of unity and avoids abruptness.

For "yes" and "routine" letters, the deductive sequence has several advantages: (1) The first sentence can be dictated with very little hesitation; once past the first sentence, writers can follow easily with details. (2) The first sentence attracts attention; readers know immediately what the message is. (3) When the first sentence says "yes," readers are put in a pleasant frame of mind right at the start; in this state, they are receptive to the details that follow. (4) Readers' time may be saved; having received the good news or the big idea, they can move rapidly through the supporting detail.

This basic plan is applicable in several business-writing problems: claim letters, credit letters, order letters, and request letters.

Claim Letters

A claim letter is a request for an adjustment. When writers ask for something to which they think they are entitled (refund, replacement, exchange, payment for damages, and so forth), the letter is called a "claim" letter. These letters can be divided into two groups: *routine* claims and *persuasive* claims. The latter (discussed in a later chapter) assumes the request will be granted only after explanations and persuasive arguments have been presented. The former (because of guarantees, warranties, or other contractual conditions) assumes the request will be granted quickly and willingly, without persuasion. When the claim is routine (when a direct statement of the desired action is not likely to meet resistance), the deductive approach is employed:

> Gentlemen:
>
> Please send a new garden hose to replace the one I am returning to Woods-Edwards today.
>
> *Reveals the claim in the first sentence and thus saves time.*
>
> Although our water pressure is 10 pounds less than the 50-pound limit mentioned in the guarantee, this hose split after two weeks' use.
>
> *Gives supporting details.*
>
> I shall appreciate your returning the new hose as soon as you can.
>
> *Ends with a polite, confident reference to the action desired.*

The same sequence of ideas is recommended for "yes" replies to routine claim letters: good news (customer is getting what was requested) stated in the first sentence.

Businesses *want* their customers to write (or call) when merchandise or service is not satisfactory. They want to learn of ways in which goods and services can be improved, and they want to see that their customers get value received for the money they spend. Typically, customers will take time to write only if they think their claims are legitimate.

After having said "yes" in the very first sentence, we can't stop there. The request was made because something went wrong, and for whatever went wrong there must be a reason. We have to explain it.

Otherwise, the client may assume that we have no explanation or that such problems are frequent in our business. If the claim clearly resulted from our own mistake, we should admit it frankly. Most people like to do business with others who have the courage to admit it when they make a mistake. If we grant a claim in spite of the customer's fault, we must explain it; otherwise, the same problem may present itself again.

We can actually build business with our adjustment letters. By making things right and explaining why they went wrong, we can gain a reputation as a business that stands behind its goods or services. A loyal customer may be even more loyal after a business has demonstrated its integrity.

The "yes" adjustment letter can actually work for us as a low-pressure sales letter. Since we are writing about our product or services, we have the opportunity to speak of it in a favorable light-to reassure the client that the choice is actually a good one (such reassurance is known as "resale"). In addition, we may be able to generate interest in some related item (introducing a related item or service is known as using "sales-promotional material"). We can be reasonably sure such resale and sales promotional material will be read. We don't have that assurance when we send sales letters.

Sometimes the adjustment department decides to grant some claims even though it has sufficient evidence to warrant refusal. But saying "We're granting your request but we don't have to do so" can do as much to destroy the business relationship as would a direct refusal. Notice how the following letter says "yes" but also lets the customer know what can be done to prevent recurrence of the problem:

Mrs. West,

Two long-lasting, snow-white Dresso shirts are on their way to you. Your account will not be charged.

> *Grants request. Puts customer in good frame of mind for understanding the remainder of the letter. Includes some resale on the shirts.*

Compared with conventional shirts, Dresso wash-and-wears stay whiter, last longer, and remain more wrinkle free.

> *Reassures the housewife that she made a wise choice when she chose wash-and-wears, and leads into an explanation of how to get maximum results.*

But for maximum service, they must be washed by hand without strong bleaches.

> *Uses the shirts (instead of the addressee) as subject of this sentence because it treats a negative idea. She will probably recall that she has not been washing them or having them washed by hand. Through positive language, she is made to see her mistake.*

When you take them to your laundryman, just ask him to follow the washing instructions that we have placed on the collar label.

Presents a suggestion that will prevent future trouble. Refers without accusation to the laundry label, which has evidently been disregarded.

You should receive our annual clearance-sale catalogue within a few days.

Reminds Mrs. West that we still expect her to order merchandise from us.

Notice that the preceding letter grants a request, but it does not employ the word *grant*. And it does not refer to the letter being answered as a *claim*. Although these words are convenient in talking *about* such letters, they are not good words to use *in* such letters. “We are *granting* your request” can also convey “We see ourselves as being in a position of power” or “We are acceding to your unjustified request.” “We are adjusting your *claim*” can also convey “We are responding to your overly strong statement of dissatisfaction.”

Confident that a routine request for an adjustment will be granted, a writer simply asks for it (in the first sentence and without seeming to complain). Knowing that the recipient will be glad to learn that a request has been granted, a writer simply states it (in the first sentence and without apparent reluctance). The details and closing sentence follow naturally and easily.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____The deductive approach is recommended for both routine requests and “yes” responses to requests.
2. _____ The recommended outline for a routine claim letter is based on the assumption that persuasion is necessary.
3. _____ “Your letter of May 1st has come to my attention” is a good beginning sentence for a letter that says “yes” to a request for an adjustment.
4. _____ Presenting resale and sales-promotional material in an adjustment letter is an acceptable practice.
5. _____ Claim and grant are good words for use in claim letters and adjustment letters.

Answers

1. True. Since one who writes a routine request assumes no resistance, the main idea (the request) is stated in the first sentence. Since readers will be pleased to learn their request has been granted, the main idea (the grant) is stated in the first sentence.
2. False. If persuasion were necessary, explanations would have to be given before the request. The outline is based on the assumption that the request will be granted willingly and quickly.
3. False. The sentence indicates an inductive approach; it leads up to the main idea.

4. True. Reassuring a customer that the original choice was a good one increases the likelihood of future purchases of that item. Letting a customer have information about related merchandise increases the likelihood of future purchases of other items.
5. False. The words are useful in talking about such letters. But in letters, they can convey emotional connotations that work against good human relationships.

Credit Letters

The network of credit associations across the country has made knowledge about individual consumers easily obtainable. As a result, exchanges of credit information are common in business. Normally, credit information is requested and transmitted by form letters or simple office forms. Like claim and adjustment letters, they present the main point first:

Gentlemen

May we have credit information about Mr. William F. Frame? He has applied for credit with us and has given your business as a reference.

Quickly reveals the nature of the request and the name of the person.

After filling in the blanks on this page, use the back side for additional remarks if necessary. Your reply will be held in strict confidence.

Give assurance that the information will be used for authorized purposes only.

Length of time sold on credit____
Highest credit extended____
Credit limit____
Balance now due__________________ Balance past due____________________
Normal paying habits_________________
Remarks____

Asks for the specific information needed.

Thank you for your help. Please call or write to us when we can be of similar assistance.

Ends courteously.

Another good arrangement for a credit request is to place the complete letter at the top of the page and to arrange the fill-in items at the bottom of the page. If a subject line is used, the letter can be even shorter than the preceding example. Printed forms on which the name of the reference and applicant can be written are certainly desirable when the volume of credit requests is great.

Replies to requests for credit information are usually very simple-just fill in the blanks and return it. If the request does not include a form, follow a deductive plan in writing:

> We considered Mr. William F. Frame, about whom you requested confidential credit information on May 26, as a very good credit risk.
>
> *Presents major idea. Confirms confidential nature of the information.*
>
> During the ten years in which we sold building materials to him on credit, his highest balance was $50,000. His payments were always prompt. He reduced his balance to zero before moving away from Spring City.
>
> *Gives details requested.*
>
> Mr. Frame was a pleasant person with whom to transact business.
>
> *Ends on a pleasant note.*

In such letters, writers have an obligation to themselves, as well as to the addressee and the credit applicant. Presenting factual information is better than making statements that seem to be promises. "His payments were always prompt" sounds more objective than "I'm sure he will pay promptly." "He *paid* us regularly" seems more believable than "He *will pay* you regularly."

When would-be purchasers want to begin buying on credit and assume credit will be granted willingly, they should present the main point quickly:

> Will you please fill the enclosed order on a credit basis.
>
> *Presents the major idea.*
>
> If you need information other than that given on the enclosed financial statements, please write to me.
>
> *Alludes to supporting details.*
>
> I plan to place a similar order every two weeks.
>
> *Closes with a look to the future.*

This approach is recommended only when the writer's supporting financial statements are assumed sufficient to merit a "yes" response.

Before replying to requests for credit, managers seek information from such sources as (1) the potential customer, (2) credit-rating associations, (3) other businesses, and (4) other people who may have some knowledge of the potential customer's paying habits. Satisfied that the applicant will have the money and the willingness to pay when the debt is due, the typical credit manager sends a form letter.

Form letters are used because firms receive so many credit requests that the cost of individualized letters would be prohibitive. Individualized letters do a better job of promoting sales and goodwill. Whether to say "yes" by form letter or by individualized letter is a problem that each credit manager must answer. If the list of credit customers is short and few names are being added, individualized letters may be more practical. Regardless of whether the credit-granting letter is a form letter, the get-right-to-the-point sequence is recommended:

1. Begin by saying credit terms have been arranged; or, if an order has been placed, begin by telling of the shipment of goods and thus implying the credit grant.
2. Reveal the basis for the credit grant.
3. Present and explain the credit terms.
4. Include some resale or sales-promotional material.
5. End with a confident look toward future business.

Revealing the basis for credit may help to prevent collection problems that could arise later. A reminder that credit has been established on the basis of prompt-pay habits is an inducement to continue those habits.

Presenting and explaining the credit terms may also help to prevent collection problems that could arise later. If customers know exactly when payments are expected, payments are more likely to be prompt. If customers know exactly how discount terms are calculated, excessive discounts (and resulting correspondence) are less likely. The mere fact that terms are discussed in detail implies that terms are important, that they are to be followed. Notice the application of these principles in the following letter:

Mr. Cook,

The easy-to-display adjustable screwdrivers should reach your store in time for your weekend shoppers.

> *Presents good news. Reminds the dealer of an important advantage in stocking this particular screwdriver. Indicates that the writer has some consideration for the problems of a dealer. Implies the credit grant.*

Pay us later.

> *States specifically that credit has been granted. Leads to an explanation of the basis and terms of the credit arrangement.*

Because of your very favorable current ratio and your prompt-pay habits with your other creditors, we are sending the shipment subject to the usual credit terms-2/10, net 30.

Gives the dealer recognition for having earned the credit privilege. Reminds him there is a reason for his credit grant. Introduces the credit grant. Introduces the credit terms.

By paying this invoice within 10 days, you save almost a dollar-about enough to equal the markup on two screwdriver sales.

Encourages the dealer to take advantage of the discount.

By using the display rod included with the shipment, you can save counter space and still be assured that your customer will see these handy screwdrivers.

Presents additional resale.

For other hardware items on open account, here is a handy order form.

Looks confidently forward to future orders.

The preceding letter performed two functions; it said “yes” to an application for credit and it also said “Yes, your order is being filled.” The credit aspect was emphasized more than the acknowledgment. But when the order is for cash, or when credit terms have been arranged already, the primary purpose may be to acknowledge an order.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ In a letter requesting credit information, the name of the applicant should be revealed at the beginning.
2. _____ Form letters are commonly used in soliciting credit information.
3. _____ A letter that grants credit should reveal the basis for granting.
4. _____ To decrease the chances of collection problems, the credit-granting letter should make certain the terms are stated clearly.
5. _____ Salesmanship should be left entirely to the Sales department.

Answers

1. True. Placing the name at the beginning emphasizes it. The one who reads the letter knows immediately whom it is about.
2. True. If a firm sends many requests for credit information, dictating and typing each one separately would be too expensive.

3. True. Stating the basis gives the recipient confidence that the writer has reasons to support decisions. Knowing that a favorable point has received recognition, the recipient may strive even harder to maintain a favorable reputation.
4. True. Rules are not likely to be followed if they are not understood. By taking time to state the terms clearly, a writer decreases the chances that they will be forgotten; and a writer implies expectancy that the terms will be adhered to.
5. False. The entire business (all departments) survives on sales.

Order Letters

Order letters create one half of a contract—the "offer" portion. By sending the goods, the shipper completes the other half—the "acceptance" portion. Therefore, one who wants to receive merchandise should use direct language; the order letter should be a definite offer. The recommended sequence for ideas in an order letter is:

1. Present the order in the first sentence. Use specific language, such as, "Please ship," "please send," or "I order." Avoid phrases like "I am interested in ordering," "I would like to order," or similar indefinite statements.
2. Carefully detail the items ordered. Be specific by mentioning catalog numbers, prices, colors, sizes, and all other information that will enable the seller to fill the order promptly and without the need for further correspondence.
3. Include payment plan (or payment) and shipping instructions. Remember that the shipper is free to ship by the normal method in the absence of specific instructions from the buyer. Tell when, where, and how the order is to be shipped.
4. Close the letter with a confident expectation of delivery.

In addition to the application of the outline principles, notice the physical arrangement of the following order letter:

Gentlemen,

Please ship me the following items, which are listed in your current winter catalog:

3 #94 HP Black and Color Ink Combo @32.00	$ 96.00
100 #2332 8 ½ X 13 Bristol file dividers @ .43	$ 43.00
12 #2408 Stick-type erasers with attached brush @ .44	5.28
	$144.28

The enclosed check for $166.00 covers the $16.00 parcel post charge and local sales tax of $5.72. I shall appreciate receiving the materials by April 8.

If the preceding letter had not included payment, it should have mentioned the plan by which payment was to be made. If credit had not been established, financial information should have been included. If an order form is available, an order letter may not be necessary. Sometimes a short letter is sent with the order form. The letter introduces the order form and provides information not called for on the form.

When customers place orders for merchandise, they expect to get exactly what they ordered; and they want it quickly. Most orders are acknowledged by shipment. No letter is necessary. For initial orders or for orders that cannot be filled quickly and precisely, an acknowledgment should be sent. Senders of initial orders like to know that they are going to receive what they ordered. They like to know their business is appreciated. They value information about the firm with which they are beginning a business relationship. If existing customers' orders are not being filled immediately, they have a right to some form of explanation. It is usually a duplicated or printed sheet that says something like:

Dear Customer

We appreciate your order for ______________________

It will be shipped within ______ days.

Cordially,

Such forms are often sent as a matter of routine when orders can be filled immediately but will require considerable time in transit.

Although such a form is impersonal, it is appreciated because it acknowledges the order and lets the customer have some idea of its disposition. "Other-than-routine" acknowledgments require an individualized letter. Although initial orders can be acknowledged through form letters, the letters are more effective if individually dictated.

A primary purpose of the acknowledgment letter is to encourage future business. A good way to achieve this goal is to (1) send what was ordered, (2) generate some awareness of its good qualities, and (3) convey the message that future orders will be handled in the same efficient manner. But future business can hardly be encouraged by use of the words "welcome" and "gratitude" when actions are not consistent with these words. Those whose merchandise and service are poor overwork these words.

Request Letters

Businesses send many letters requesting information about people, prices, products, and services. Because such requests are door-openers for further business, readers accept them optimistically; but at the same time, they draw opinions about the writer based on the quality of the letter. The following outline can serve as a guide in the preparation of effective requests that are expected to be fulfilled:

1. Make the major request in the first sentence. Use a subject line if the letter lends itself to one.
2. Follow the major request with the details that will make the request clear. If possible, use tabulations.
3. Close with a forward look to the reader's next step.

This outline is employed in the following letter:

> Will you please tell me who made the small Japanese-type lanterns you have recently placed near the entrance to Cartwright Park?
>
> I think the small ones (about 1 ½ feet high with a wide top and small base) would fit very well into my landscaping pattern.
>
> I shall appreciate you sending me the name and address of their manufacturer.

The letter is short; but, if it conveys enough information and has a tone of politeness, it is long enough. The following simple request is long enough; it needs no embellishment;

> Gentlemen,
>
> Please send me a copy of your latest price list. I am especially interested in R.D. Irwin's textbooks in management.
>
> Cordially,

Letters that say "yes" to requests are usually very easy to write because no resistance is expected. Notice that the following letter employs the same pattern recommended for other routine and "yes" letters:

> Mr. Worth,
>
> Yes, our Suggestions Supervisor, Mr. Rudolph Smith, can talk with you from 1:30 to 2:00

on November 20. After he leaves for his two o'clock meeting, you may enjoy looking through our files of accepted and rejected suggestions. Mr. Smith thinks they will be of special interest to you, since you are doing a thesis on suggestion plans. After you have finished compiling the results of your study, we would like to see them.

Cordially,

This letter (and all letters discussed in this chapter) introduces the main point in the very first sentence. Details follow. But some letters (discussed in the next chapter) cannot profitably employ that sequence.

Summary

If a letter conveys routine information, a reader is not likely to be involved emotionally. The reaction is neither happiness nor unhappiness. In this category of reader reaction are claim letters that are highly likely to get what is asked for, ordinary requests for credit information, order letters, and request letters. All letters in this category (1) begin with the main idea, (2) follow with details, and (3) close with a reference to desired action or a look to the future.

Similarly, favorable replies to such letters follow a deductive pattern: (1) begin with the "yes" response, (2) follow with details, and (3) include an appropriate, forward-looking closing or a reference to the main (pleasant) idea.

From the writer's point of view, this sequence-or-idea pattern provides a dependable way of getting a letter started. Once the main idea has been presented in the first sentence, following with the remainder of the letter is easy. From the reader's point of view, the pattern saves time and (by getting right to the point) stresses the point that most deserves emphasis.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ "I wish to order the following items" is a good first sentence in an order letter.
2. _____ One purpose of an order-acknowledgment letter is to encourage future business.
3. _____ Form letters are commonly used in acknowledging orders.
4. _____ If a request is expected to be granted willingly, the writing should be inductive.
5. _____ Routine and "yes" letters should contain at least three paragraphs.

Answers

1. False. A reader may wonder whether the sentence is reporting a desire to order if conditions were different, or whether it is actually presenting an order.

2. True. Those who have placed an order like to be informed if it is not being filled in the normal time. Handling one order efficiently and keeping the customer informed is an important step toward getting the next order.
3. True. Especially if the business is large and many orders are shipped, the cost of sending individualized acknowledgments would be prohibitive.
4. False. Since no resistance is expected, the request should be presented in the first sentence. There, it gets attention and emphasis; the reader learns immediately what the whole letter is about.
5. False. In the preceding chapter, the outline for such letters has three parts: big idea, details, closing thought. But a letter may need many paragraphs of details.

Chapter 6 Review Questions

1. When a writer is requesting an adjustment for a refund, replacement, or payment for damages this is called:

A. Credit letter.
B. Order letter.
C. Request letter.
D. Claim letter.

2. A ___________________ tends to be short, polite, and informative.

A. Order letter.
B. Request letter.
C. Claim letter.
D. Credit letter.

3. All of the following statements about effective sentences are correct EXCEPT:

A. Before the first sentence of a letter is written, all ideas to be included should be identified and arranged in the desired sequence.
B. Before beginning the composition, a writer should be convinced that the message is justified.
C. By asking "What would be my own reaction to a message like this?" a writer can predict a reader's probable reaction.
D. Approximate length of the letter determines whether it should be written inductively or deductively.

4. Sales letters requesting special favors that are neither pleasing, displeasing nor interesting need to be:

A. Persuasive.
B. Emotionally involving.
C. Bad news.
D. Good news.

5. Order letters create one half of a contract, the "offer" portion. The "acceptance" portion is usually completed by:

A. A telephone response.
B. A written return letter.
C. Sending the merchandise.
D. A fax.

6. A letter that begins with "yes," followed by more details and closes with a pleasant reference to the main idea is considered:

A. Deductive sequence.
B. Inductive sequence.
C. Bad news letter.
D. Unpleasant letter.

7. A letter that uses specific language and terms such as “please ship” or mentions catalog numbers, prices and color is a(n):

A. Request letter
B. Claim letter
C. Order letter
D. Credit letter

Chapter 6 Review Questions

1. When a writer is requesting an adjustment for a refund, replacement, or payment for damages this is called:

A. Incorrect. A credit letter is a request for transmission of credit information. Requests for credit information are usually very simple – just fill in the blanks and return it.
B. Incorrect. An order letter creates one half of a contract, the "offer" portion, by sending the goods. The shipper completes the other half or "acceptance" portion.
C. Incorrect. Request letters are sent requesting information about people, prices, products, and services. Such letters also serve as door openers for further business.
D. **Correct**. A claim letter is a request for an adjustment such as a refund, replacement, exchange, or payment for damages. These letters can be divided into two groups; routine claims and persuasive claims.

2. A ___________________ tends to be short, polite, and informative.

A. Incorrect. Order letters create one half of a contract, the "offer" portion, by sending the goods and the shipper completes the other half, the "acceptance" portion.
B. **Correct.** Request letters request information about people, prices, products and services. The letter is short and polite, but it conveys enough information to be informative.
C. Incorrect. Claim letters request adjustments for a refund, replacement, exchange, or payment for damages. They are used to improve goods and services as well as see that their customers get value for their money.
D. Incorrect. Credit letters are requests for credit information and are transmitted by form letter or simple office forms. A good arrangement for a credit request is to place the complete letter at the top of the page and to arrange all the fill-in items at the bottom of the page.

3. All of the following statements about effective sentences are correct EXCEPT:

A. Incorrect. Having made the decisions about the ideas to be included and the sequence in which to include them, a writer can concentrate totally on the problem of how to express them.
B. Incorrect. Without such a conviction, a writer experiences doubts that interfere with composition.
C. Incorrect. Through use of empathy, reader reaction can be predicted with reasonable accuracy.
D. **Correct**. Anticipated reader reaction (not letter length) determines the sequence of ideas.

4. Sales letters requesting special favors that are neither pleasing, displeasing nor interesting need to be:

A. **Correct.** Persuasive is a special sales presentation approach.
B. Incorrect. Emotional involvement requires that the reasons be emphasized to establish a harmonious relationship and to be accepted without resentment.
C. Incorrect. Bad news is presented in an inductive sequence to justify the message by solid decisions and support and convey empathy with the reader.
D. Incorrect. Good news is presented in a deductive sequence that presents the most pleasant aspect of the communication in the first sentence, followed by details and a positive closing.

5. Order letters create one half of a contract, the "offer" portion. The "acceptance" portion is usually completed by:

A. Incorrect. A telephone call is not necessary to complete the contract verbally when shipping the merchandise.
B. Incorrect. A written return letter is not required as the accepted portion of the requested merchandise completes the contract.
C. **Correct.** Sending the merchandise completes the acceptance portion of the contract. The order letter should be very definite and define a definite offer of the items ordered, method of payment and shipping instructions.
D. Incorrect. A fax acknowledgement is not needed since shipping the merchandise will complete the acceptance portion of the contract.

6. A letter that begins with "yes," followed by more details and closes with a pleasant reference to the main idea is considered:

A. **Correct.** Deductive sequence is used to express good news or yes letters. It can be very easy to write since no resistance is expected.
B. Incorrect. Inductive letters presents facts before stating an agreement or "yes".
C. Incorrect. Bad news letters employ the inductive sequence and give the details are related first in order to soften the blow of a negative or painful message.
D. Incorrect. Unpleasant letters employ the inductive sequence that tries to establish empathy with the reader before conveying unpleasant news.

7. A letter that uses specific language and terms such as “please ship” or mentions catalog numbers, prices and color is a(n):

A. Incorrect. Request letters ask for information about people, prices, products and services.
B. Incorrect. Claim letters request adjustments for a refund, replacement, exchange or payment for damages.

C. **Correct.** Order letters create one half of a contract - the “offer” portion Sending the goods and the shipper completes the other half - the “acceptance” portion.
D. Incorrect. Credit letters are requests for credit information and are transmitted by form letter or simple office forms.

Chapter 7:

Writing About the Unpleasant

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the different types of unpleasant business communications.
- Identify effective techniques of collection and credit letters.

Before writing, two questions must be answered: (1) What, exactly, is the message? (2) What is the most likely reader reaction? When the message is unpleasant (a "no" answer to a request, for example), the reaction is likely to be one of disappointment. The writer's goal is to convey the message and to minimize the disappointment.

If the sentence that contains the disappointing idea should come at the beginning, the unpleasant idea receives emphasis. Holding goodwill (promoting business harmony) is difficult when emphasis is placed on negatives. Therefore, the following sequence-of-idea pattern is recommended:

1. Neutral statement that leads to reasons.
2. Facts, analysis, reasons.
3. Unpleasant message.
4. A related idea that takes emphasis away from the unpleasant.

Notice that the reasons *precede* the statement of the unpleasant.

When we say "no" we should have a reason to support it. We assume our reader is a reasonable person. Having been led to understand the reasons, the reader may agree that the request should have been denied.

No one has a foolproof formula for persuading readers to agree that their requests should have been refused. Remember, though, that the recipient is entitled to an explanation for refusal. Presenting the refusal *before* presenting the explanation has two disadvantages: (1) The reader may stop before reading the explanation. (2) after having received a disappointment, the reader's mind may not be receptive to an explanation.

Presenting reasons first provides an effective technique for emphasizing reasons (explanations). The more clearly readers understand good reasons, the less the feeling of disappointment when the unpleasant idea is stated. Naturally, good letter planning and writing can hardly be expected to make readers just as happy with refusals as they would have been with acceptances. Rather, the goal is to get readers to *understand* reasons. The more clearly they understand them the less the likelihood that they will think the decision is illogical, unfair, or arbitrary.

Presenting reasons first has a possible disadvantage, however. If the reasons should be presented in a long, involved, round-about way, readers may become impatient before the unpleasant idea is stated. Therefore, the reasons should be stated vividly and concisely. If they are, the reader can concentrate on them.

Well-written explanations (reasons) that precede refusals are unlikely to cause a feeling of impatience as the explanations are being read. Even if they should cause impatience, consider these alternatives: (1) while reading the preliminary explanations, readers become a little impatient. (2) after reading the refusal in the first sentence, readers have a feeling that trying to understand the reasons is pointless or that they should concentrate on rebuttal as they read. The latter alternative seems much more damaging.

The sequence-of-idea pattern suggested in this chapter is not intended as the pattern to be used in every refusal-type letter. Sometimes, circumstances are such that a writer may actually want to jolt the reader with an emphasized refusal followed by a subordinated explanation. If doing so conveys the message adequately and promotes the kind of reader-writer relationship desired, the procedure is acceptable. But, before taking that approach, a writer should give serious thought to the reaction it will produce.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The suggested outline for refusal letters is designed to de-emphasize the negative.

_____ The recommended sequence for ideas in refusal letters is based on the assumption that readers are reasonable.

_____ An inductively written refusal letter places more emphasis on reasons than does a deductively written refusal.

_____ Impatience experienced in reading an inductive letter is more damaging than anger experienced in reading the first sentence of a deductive letter.

_____ Sometimes, a writer is justified in conveying bad news deductively.

Answers

1. True. The negative is not presented in the beginning or ending, which are emphatic positions. Compared with the negative reaction to a refusal stated in the first sentence, the negative reaction to a refusal that follows reasonable explanations should be mild. A reasons-first sequence can avoid a negative reaction completely.

2. True. When writers don't have good reasons for refusing, they should not refuse. Confident that the reasons are good, writers can hardly approach explaining them without assuming that readers are willing to consider sound reasons.
3. True. Inductive refusals present reasons before refusals, thus emphasizing reasons. Reasons presented before disappointment are likely to stand out more vividly in a reader's mind than reasons presented afterward.
4. False. Anger, being a more emotional state that impatience, is more likely to interfere with comprehension.
5. True. Normally, the inductive approach is preferred. But, if the deductive approach serves the writer's purpose better, it should be employed. For example, if a request is renewed after tactful reasons and a refusal has been conveyed earlier, a writer may be justified in emphasizing the refusal by placing it in the first sentence.

Adjustment Refusals

When business prudence dictates that we should say "no," the major writing problems are (1) saying "no" as inoffensively as possible and (2) presenting supporting reasons as convincingly as possible.

The following letter refuses a request for replacement of an electric blanket. The recipient had received the blanket as a gift and had left it in storage for about three years while he was out of the country. After only a few weeks of use, it failed to function. Recalling that the blanket had a two-year warranty (and not recalling that it was for two years from purchase date instead of two years of use), the user returned the blanket to the manufacturer and asked for a replacement.

Ms. Smith,

From the sewn-in label on the blanket you returned to us, we see that it was manufactured at our East Coast factory in 2008.

> *Reveals that this letter is about the blanket that was returned, but neither gives a "no" answer nor leads the reader to expect a "yes" answer. Leads into explanations.*

Attached to the label at the time of sale were instructions for cleaning and drying and a warranty that extended two years from date of purchase. The purchaser's warranty form shows December 13, 2008, as the date of purchase. Materials and workmanship were guaranteed until December 13, 2010 (18 months ago).

Because the wiring in electric blankets is necessarily delicate, the instructions stated that (after being washed) the blanket was to be dried by hanging on a line. Its present condition suggests that it was put through some type of wringing process, which explains the malfunction.

Presents the reasons that support the upcoming refusal.

If the blanket had been subjected to the type of drying process recommended, and had been returned within two years from the purchase date, it would have been replaced at no charge.

Conveys the refusal. By revealing what would have been done if conditions had been different, the sentence reveals the refusal. This technique (subjunctive statement) enables the writer to reveal the refusal in language that is positive. If such a refusal statement seems too subtle and a more direct refusal seems desirable, negative language can be used.

The blanket is not being replaced because drying instructions were not followed and because the warranty period has expired.

To keep the negative from sounding any more forceful than necessary, the sentence uses the blanket (instead of Ms. Smith) as the subject; it also uses passive voice.

Made of heavy-weight material, it is still a useful cover and is being returned to you today. For our most recent innovations in woolen and synthetic materials, see pages 4 through 7 of the booklet that is being sent to you.

Closes on a topic that is about something other than the refusal. Such a closing helps take emphasis off the refusal and implies future transactions.

The preceding letter illustrates the inductive refusal; it seeks to emphasize the reasons and subordinate the statement of refusal. It illustrates techniques that are recommended. For refusal writing in general, here are some techniques to be avoided:

1. Beginning by talking about something only remotely related to the subject of the letter. (If the preceding letter had, in an attempt to begin on a neutral point, begun with “The enclosed brochure shows our latest blankets," the reader would have been led to expect a sales message instead of a letter about the blanket returned.)
2. Giving an elementary lecture. “If a business is to continue, it must formulate and follow plans.”
3. Recalling the original disappointment too vividly. “We know how you must have felt when the blanket failed to heat,” would have come as an unneeded reminder of the unpleasant; and it might have caused the reader to expect a “yes” answer.
4. Employing strong resale in the beginning. “The blanket you returned was one of the very best we manufacture” might (at the moment it is read) generate some negative thoughts that will interfere with concentration on the upcoming reasons. Suggesting that the blanket is good when

at the moment the recipient thinks of evidence to the contrary is risking disagreement at the very beginning.

5. Prolonging the explanations. Unnecessarily long explanations will add to any impatience that may exist.
6. Presenting explanations that are so short or general as to be unconvincing. We should give enough detail to make the reasons clear.
7. Hiding behind "company policy." From experience, many will think of "company policy" as something to hide behind, as a standard answer that is easy to give and not to be challenged.
8. Seeming to accuse. When we want to remind someone of his mistake, we can usually employ third person, impersonal language, and passive construction to get the point across in an inoffensive way.
9. Employing too much negative language. The following words and expressions can be especially annoying: amazed, cannot understand, claim, damage, defective, delay, dissatisfied, error, fault, inconvenience, regret, shocked, surprised, unfortunately, you evidently, you should have, you failed, wrong.
10. Using a tone that hints of "bending over backward" or "giving blood" when offering a counter proposal. Offer it willingly or not at all.
11. Closing by revealing doubts about whether the explanation will be accepted. "We trust this is satisfactory" suggests "We ourselves doubt whether we have made the right business decision or presented it in the right way."
12. Apologizing for action taken. We should take a course of action only when we have a good reason for doing so; therefore, it is inconsistent to end by saying, "We're sorry we had to refuse." Rather, we should be glad to stand behind our reasons.
13. Closing with a reminder of future trouble. "When this happens again, just…." Ends a letter with an unpleasant, negative thought.
14. Closing with a meaningless, outworn expression. "Thank you for your interest" adds very little to a message.
15. Inviting a prolonged correspondence. "If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to write" indicates that the case is still open, that pertinent information may not have been considered, and that through further correspondence the decision may be reversed.
16. Closing on an ironic note. "When we can be of *further* help, please call on us" may be intended to reveal a helpful attitude; but such an ending is especially bitter when the extent of our helpfulness has been to say "no." The sentence could be taken to mean "When you want another refusal, just write."

The principles employed in adjustment refusal are similar to principles employed in other refusals. The techniques to avoid are likewise similar.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Active voice is preferred for statements that contain refusals.
2. _____ Subjunctive statements enable writers to convey refusals in positive language.

3. _____ If a denial is being made because the addressee failed to follow instructions, "You failed to follow instructions" is a good sentence to include in the explanations.
4. _____ "Company policy" is a good expression to employ in explaining a refusal.
5. _____ If a request must be refused, a writer should apologize for the action taken.

Answers

1. False. Active voice is used for emphasizing. Refusals should be subordinated.
2. True. "If these terms had been satisfied, a refund would have been made" reveals that no refund is being made; no negative words are employed.
3. False. The sentence places too much accent on the negative. It uses second person, negative language, and active voice. "If instructions had been followed, the machine would have worked perfectly" reveals that instructions were not followed, but the sentence sounds less accusing.
4. False. "Company policy" is too often given as a standard answer that can be given easily as a substitute for an explanation.
5. False. If the reasons are good, an apology could only serve to weaken them. If the reasons are not good, the action should not be taken.

Credit Refusals

Once we have evaluated a request for credit and have decided "no" is the right answer, our primary writing problem is to say "no" so tactfully that we keep the business relationship on a cash basis. Since requests for credit are often accompanied with an order, our credit refusals may serve as acknowledgment letters. And every business letter is directly or indirectly a sales letter. Our prospective customer may be disappointed when he cannot buy on a credit basis; but if we keep him sold on our goods and services, he may prefer to buy from us on a cash basis instead of seeking credit privileges elsewhere.

In credit refusals, as in other types of refusals, the major portion of the message should be an explanation. We cannot expect our readers to agree that our "no" answers are the right answers unless we give the reasons behind them. Naturally, those who send us credit information will expect us to keep it confidential. But if we give the reasons without using the names of those from whom we obtained our information, we are not violating confidence. We are passing along the truth as a justification for our business decisions. Both writers and readers benefit from the explanation of the reasons behind the refusal. For writers, the explanation helps to establish fair-mindedness; it shows they are businesslike and that the decision was not arbitrary. For readers, the explanation not only presents the truth to which they are entitled; it has guidance value. From it they may learn to adjust habits and as a result qualify for credit purchases later.

Notice that the following credit refusal presents reasons first and that its author incorporates salesmanship.

Mr. Dobson,

Because of the current advertising in Wife and Leader's magazines, Sporta Tuna is fast becoming the best-selling tuna.

Implies receipt of the order. Lets the grocer know this is a response to the order and credit request, and at the same time confirms his choice. The reminder of the National advertising may make him want to buy Sporta even if he cannot buy it on a credit basis.

First-time orders such as yours are coming in daily.

Provides a little more resale and leads into the explanation of refusal.

Thank you for the list of wholesalers from whom you have been making credit purchases.

Suggests a tone of friendliness by indication, in a natural way, that his thoughtfulness in enclosing the lists is appreciated. Provides a transition from the resale beginning into an explanation.

Although your Dun and Bradstreet rating is perfectly satisfactory, some of the referents reported that your recent payments have been as much as 91 days overdue.

Presents reasons before the "no" answer and removes a little of the sting from the adverse reports by preceding them with the favorable report. The technique suggests fair-mindedness on the part of the writer. He considers both the good and the bad. To have mentioned the names of references would have been a violation of confidence.

Of course, we know this circumstance could be a temporary condition for which you have a good explanation.

Maintains a positive tone. Leads to request for explanation.

So that we may supply you with time shipments of choice quality tuna while current national advertising is in full swing, may we have your explanation?

Recognizes that every story has two sides. Further indicates fair-mindedness. Sounds confident of-but does not promise-future credit transactions. Induces the recipient to send the explanation by reminding him of the advantages in selling Sporta.

Or, may we have permission to ship Sporta by sight draft with bill of lading attached?

Presents an alternative proposal. The "sight draft with bill of lading attached" is tantamount to a cash transaction, since a local bank will make the collection before the tuna is delivered.

Our cash terms are 2/10, n/30.

Presents cash terms as an introduction to the advantages in buying on a cash basis.

At $28.00 per case, your cash discount on 12 cases amounts to $6.90-an amount about equal to your markup on one case. In addition to the national advertising, the 24 per cent markup is a major reason for choosing Sporta tuna.

Seeks to be convincing by presenting concrete figures. The fact that the writer takes time for a calculation illustrates his desire to be helpful. Re-emphasizes the advantages of stocking Sporta-a further inducement to accept the invitation to buy for cash.

May we have your instructions right away, so that you can supply your customers with choice quality Sporta while the demand is high.

Ends with a request for action. Uses the general word "Instructions" because the reader may choose to cancel, write an explanation, or wire instructions to ship sight draft with bill of lading attached. Gives final reminder that there is an advantage in stocking Sporta now. That reminder is itself an inducement to action.

A disadvantage of the preceding letter is that it is longer, requires more thought, and is more costly than a short, abrupt refusal. But if it is the beginning of a long business relationship, it is well worth the price.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Salesmanship is to be avoided in credit refusals.
2. _____ When credit must be denied, the customer should be invited to buy on a cash basis.
3. _____ If credit is refused, the supporting reasons should be presented.
4. _____ If credit is being refused, points in favor of a credit grant should be excluded.
5. _____ Credit refusals should reveal a willingness to reconsider in the light of additional information.

Answers

1. False. To a customer whose credit has been denied, paying cash may be a better alternative than seeking credit elsewhere. Through salesmanship, the customer can be encouraged to buy for cash.
2. True. Presenting an alternative is one way of reducing the negative impact of a refusal. From the seller's point of view, cash sales may be even more profitable than credit sales.
3. True. By giving reasons, a writer conveys fair-mindedness and reveals that the decision was not arbitrary. Readers are entitled to know the truth and should benefit from it.
4. False. By including both favorable and unfavorable points, a writer can keep the unfavorable from being any more emphatic than necessary. Willingness to present both positives and negatives can convey fair-mindedness. Thus, the chances for resentment are reduced.
5. True. To the customer, such reconsideration would seem only fair. For the seller, such an expression of willingness reveals a positive outlook; and it does serve as a reminder that the decision was not arbitrary.

Order Refusals

If a customer orders directly from a manufacturer who sells only through distributors, the order is refused. Notice the similarity between order refusals and other types of refusals.

Mr. Estman,

The seat covers you ordered directly from us are made of Miraplast plastic.

Implies receipt of the order; leads to a suggestion that the purchaser has made a good choice.

Miraplast looks like good-quality gingham-feels almost like it, too; but it is so durable that we have asked our dealers to extend the guarantee to two years instead of one.

Gives a little more detail about the outstanding qualities; doing so increases the chances of getting the customer to buy from a dealer. Introduces dealers before indication that purchases must be made through them.

To give our plastic users a wider selection of materials and fast, free installation, we market Miraplast through dealers only.

Presents the reasons for marketing through dealers, then follows logically with the information that sales are not made directly to consumers. This negative thought is expressed in positive language.

The address of your nearest dealer is given at the bottom of this page. By calling at that address, you get a plastic that fits perfectly-plastic that lasts and lasts.

Refers to the action the customer is to take. Encourages action by reminding the customer of the reward for taking it.

If such letters are sent frequently, form letters are satisfactory and inexpensive.

Because of sellers' experience with certain products, they may be better informed about buyers' needs than are the buyers themselves. If a buyer orders a product that the seller knows will be unsatisfactory for that buyer's needs, the order should be refused. Like other refusal letters, reasons would precede the refusal. If the seller does stock what is *needed*, the letter would first acknowledge the order, explain why the item *ordered* would be unsatisfactory, and ask for further instructions. By pointing out virtues of the item needed, the writer encourages authorization to ship it instead of the item originally ordered.

When an order is received for merchandise that is not stocked, it should be returned;

Foreign Models Incorporated handles carburetors and other parts for European cars only.

If you place your order (which we are returning) with the firm listed at the bottom of this page, you should have your carburetor within a short time.

When you need to trade cars, come in and see our selections. We sell 12 different makes-from low-priced economy cars to the most expensive European sports cars.

Telling the customer where the merchandise *can* be purchased is a polite gesture. Including some sales promotional material is an inexpensive way to advertise. The letter is almost sure to be read-something we can't say of all sales messages.

Favor Refusals

Every business person will at some time be asked for a favor-a contribution for which there will be little or no reward. The following letter rejects a fraternity's request for permission to take some rocks from a right-of-way.

Mr. Woods,

The rocks on the Turnpike right-of-way were left there at the suggestion of Commission engineers.

> *Employs a neutral beginning, which identifies the subject of the letter and leads into a discussion of the reasons behind the refusal.*

When the Turnpike was completed, the Commission had plans for future drainage improvement and repair.

> *Reveals the purpose for which the rocks are to be used.*

They foresaw that some rocks on the right-of-way would be useful when flash floods hit the drainage ditch in the Kaywood area.

> *Presents the specific reasons for the rocks and leads the receiver to expect the refusal that follows.*

Since the last three years have been very dry, little repair work has been necessary; but we think we should keep the rocks as insurance against heavy spring rains, which occasionally come to this area.

> *Leads from the reasons into a statement of refusal. Employs a long, complex sentence to de-emphasize the negative.*

For your construction purposes, maybe you could use a different material or a different source. Regardless of the question, someone in the fraternity will come forth with a good answer.

> *Closes on a topic other than the refusal itself.*

From the preceding letters, we can see that all "no" letters have several characteristics in common. Adjustment refusals, credit refusals, order refusals, favor refusals-they all follow the same basic plan: (1) they begin with a neutral or agreement-getting beginning, (2) they present reasons behind a refusal before presenting the refusal, (3) they present the refusal without emphasizing it, (4) they include an alternative if appropriate, (5) they end on a pleasant or neutral note.

Summary

If a refusal is conveyed in the very first sentence of a letter, a reader may not bother to read explanations that follow or disappointment may be so strong that the reader concentrates on rebuttal (instead of understanding) while the explanations are being read. Because the explanations are important, a writer should present them in a position in which they are most likely to be read and understood. If that goal is achieved, the disappointment may be either diminished or eliminated. Therefore, the following sequence-of-idea pattern is recommended for letters that convey disappointing information: begin with a neutral statement that leads to reasons, present explanations and reasons, then present the unpleasant idea, and follow with a related idea that takes emphasis away from the unpleasant. The same basic pattern is recommended for adjustment refusals, credit refusals, order refusals, and favor refusals.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ If the seller believes the product ordered is not suitable for the buyer's needs, the seller should communicate with the buyer before shipping the order.
2. _____ Sales-promotional material should not be included in order refusals.
3. _____ If a seller does not stock the item ordered but knows of a competitor who does, giving the competitor's name and address is a polite gesture.
4. _____ "I am sorry, but I must refuse your recent request" is a good beginning for a favor refusal.
5. _____ In all refusal letters, a writer's goal is to emphasize the refusal.

Answers

1. True. The communication could save time, trouble, money, and possible loss of goodwill. If the buyer should respond by insisting on receipt of the item ordered, the seller is absolved of future problems that may result.
2. False. It costs very little; and compared with direct-mail advertising, the sales-promotional material is more likely to be read.
3. True. The recipient will surely appreciate the effort to help solve a problem. Later, the gesture may be remembered; a sale could result from it.
4. False. Such a beginning would run the risk of turning the reader off before reasons are presented.
5. False. The goal is to convey the refusal and to emphasize the supporting reasons.

Chapter 7 Review Questions

1. In writing a letter with a disappointing idea or unpleasant idea the placement of the unpleasant/disappointing message is placed:

A. Before a neural statement that leads to a reason.
B. After a neural statement that leads to a reason.
C. After a neutral statement and facts, analysis and reason.
D. Preceding the explanation.

2. In a refusal letter:

A. A writer's goal is to emphasize the refusal.
B. State "you failed to follow instructions."
C. Use company policy to explain the refusal.
D. When credit must be denied, the customer should be invited to buy on a cash basis.

3. Which of the following statements is true about refusals?

A. If a request must be refused, a writer should apologize for the action taken.
B. Subjunctive statements enable writers to convey refusals in positive language.
C. If a denial is being made because the addressee failed to follow instructions, "You failed to follow instructions" is a good sentence to include in the explanations.
D. Active voice is preferred for statements that contain refusals.

Chapter 7 Review Answers

1. In writing a letter with a disappointing idea or unpleasant idea the placement of the unpleasant/disappointing message is placed:

A. Incorrect. An unpleasant/disappointing message should follow after a neutral statement or reasonable explanation. A related idea is used to take the emphasis away from the unpleasant.
B. Incorrect. The unpleasant/disappointing message should come after the facts, analysis and reason and not before. Presenting the facts and a neutral statement followed by the unpleasant takes the emphasis away from the unpleasant.
C. **Correct.** After a neutral statement the facts, analysis and reason should precede the unpleasant/ disappointing message.
D. Incorrect. An unpleasant message before the explanation may stop the reader from reading the explanation or facts and analysis and may cause the reader not to be receptive to an explanation.

2. In a refusal letter:

A. Incorrect. The goal is to convey the refusal and to emphasize the supporting reasons..
B. Incorrect. State "you failed to follow instructions" places too much emphasis on the negative and uses active voice. The goal is to get the reader to understand the reasons to lessen the impact of the refusal.
C. Incorrect. Company policy is too often given as a substitute for an explanation when the reader is entitled to an explanation for the refusal.
D. **Correct**. Presenting an alternative is one way of reducing the negative impact of a refusal. From the seller's point of view, cash sales may be even more profitable than credit sales.

3. Which of the following statements is true about refusals?

A. Incorrect. If the reasons are good, an apology could only serve to weaken them. If the reasons are not good, the action should not be taken.
B. **Correct.** "If these terms had been satisfied, a refund would have been made" reveals that no refund is being made; no negative words are employed.
C. Incorrect. The sentence places too much accent on the negative. It uses second person, negative language, and active voice.
D. Incorrect. Active voice is used for emphasizing. Refusals should be subordinated.

Chapter 8:

Writing to Persuade

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Evaluate effective sales and persuasive written communication.
- Recognize the convincing evidence for a sales presentation.
- Identify the characteristics of a delinquent debtor.

The letters discussed in preceding chapters were designed (1) to convey information or (2) to get action. Some were designed for both. Letters in this chapter are designed to get action, but they differ from previously discussed action-getting letters. The difference results from the circumstances surrounding the action desired.

In letters about orders, requests for information, and requests for adjustments, the assumption was that the reader would be willing to take the desired action once it was identified. For example, a supplier who has by mistake shipped the wrong merchandise would almost certainly want to correct the error when attention is directed to it. Circumstances are such that telling why the correction should be made is hardly necessary.

Sometimes, however, we must ask for action when circumstances are such that the proposal will probably be rejected unless we show *why* it should be accepted. For example, we could hardly expect people to accept our proposal that they buy a product if our letter did not reveal *why* doing so would be beneficial. We could hardly expect business executives to provide classified information about their businesses without some preliminary explanation and assurance. Under such conditions, letters have to be persuasive. They have to provide readers with information sufficient to make them want to take the action desired.

Persuasive letters, then, are *sales* letters. They *sell* the idea that one should buy a product or take some other type of action. For various reasons, readers can be expected to resist taking the action desired:

1. Their minds (at the time of exposure to the letter) are on some other problem. They may be reluctant to dismiss it long enough to consider the proposal. They may not have been expecting to receive this message. In fact, they may at the moment be disappointed because what they

consider a more important message is not in today's mail. Therefore, the very first sentence will have to succeed in *getting attention*, in generating willingness to read.

2. They may have sensed no need for (or interest in) the proposal. They may be perfectly satisfied with circumstances as they are. A new idea that would require changes in routines, a new product when an old one is apparently satisfactory-these thoughts may be distasteful. Therefore, the first sentences must have an interesting way of *introducing the proposal*.
3. They may resist (or choose to ignore) supporting evidence. They may not care about the proposal. After all, it belongs to someone else; considering it may be damaging to the ego. They may have considered the proposal (or a similar one) previously and already made up their minds. Additional facts may not be appreciated. They are probably interested in the proposal only if they can identify specific reasons why acceptance would be beneficial to them. Unsupported generalizations and high-pressure talk will almost surely be unacceptable as valid reasons for doing what is asked. Therefore, the sales letter must concentrate on *providing sufficient evidence* to convince readers of the proposal's merits.
4. They may agree that the proposal is good but choose to ignore it. They may be habitual procrastinators, or just plain lazy. They may not do what is wanted unless they are told exactly what to do. Therefore, the sales message closes by *encouraging action* on the part of the reader.

The sequence of ideas on good news and routine letters is deductive, but the sequence in persuasive letters is inductive--getting attention, introducing the proposal, providing sufficient evidence, and encouraging action. But before the writing is begun, writers can profitably take into account certain considerations peculiar to the writing of sales messages.

Before the Writing

As preliminary steps to sales letter composition, writers need to know (1) the product and how it differs from competing products, (2) something about the people to whom the letters are to be directed, (3) the specific action desired, and (4) some basic principles of sales letter composition.

The product and how it differs. Writers of effective sales letters are not satisfied to know their products in a general way; they want the details. They get such details by (1) reading all available literature, (2) using the product and comparing it with others, (3) conducting tests and experiments, (4) watching others use the product, (5) observing the manufacturing process, and (6) soliciting reports from users. Before they can write, they need concrete answers to such questions as these;

- What will the product do for people?
- From what materials is it made?
- By what process is it manufactured?
- What are its superior features in design and workmanship?
- What is its price?
- What kind of servicing, if any, will it require?

Answers to these questions about the product being sold are not enough. Similar questions must be answered about competing products. Of particular importance is the question, “What is the major point of difference?” People are inclined to choose an item that affords some advantage not available in a similar item at the same price.

The people to whom sales letters are to be directed. If a sales message is being composed for one certain individual, the more information the writer has about the individual the greater the likelihood of writing an effective letter. If the message is being composed for a certain group, the writer can profitably ask “What characteristics do the members have in common?” “What are their common goals, their occupational levels, and their educational status?” Answering such questions assists in seeing problems from the reader’s point of view. The empathy thus generated assists in determining what to say and how to say it in such a way that the desired action will be taken.

The specific action wanted. The specific action wanted is *discussed* in the last paragraph, but that action should be *determined* before the first paragraph is begun. After recipients have finished reading, what are they to do? Fill out an order form and enclose a personal check? Return a card requesting a representative to call? Write for more information? If the writer does not make the answers clear, the reader may take no action or take the wrong action.

Some principles of sales-letter composition. The principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis are just as important in sales letters as in other letters. In addition, some other principles are especially helpful in the writing of sales letters:

1. *Concrete nouns and action verbs* help the reader to see the product and its benefits more vividly than do abstract nouns and passive verbs.
2. *Specific language* is more convincing than general language. General words seem to imply subjectivity unless they are well supported with specifics. Specific language is space consuming (saying something is “great” is less space consuming than saying what makes it so); therefore, sales letters are usually longer than other letters. Yet, sales letters need to be concise; they should say what needs to be said without wasting words.
3. *Reader-centered writing* is more effective than product-centered writing. If readers serve as the subjects of sentences, they can visualize themselves with the product in their hands. If they can get the feel of using it for enjoyment or to solve their problems, the chances of creating desire are increased.
4. *A central selling point* should permeate the entire letter. Few products are superior by all standards. A thorough product analysis will ordinarily reveal some feature that is different from the features of competing products. This point of difference can be developed into a theme that is stressed throughout. Instead of using a point of difference as a central selling point, a writer may choose to stress one of the major satisfactions derived from using the item. Application of these principles can be seen in examples of letters that follow.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ A persuasive letter should first identify the action desired and then reveal the advantages of taking that action.
2. _____ One who writes a sales letter expects the message to be met with some resistance.
3. _____ The task of the first sentence of a sales letter is to introduce the proposal.
4. _____ Before writing a sales letter, the writer needs to become familiar with the product and competing products.
5. _____ "We shall expect a response from you" is a commendable sentence for encouraging action.
6. _____ In sales letters, general words are more useful than specific words.

Answers

1. False. The advantages should be revealed first. If the first part of the letter reveals the action wanted, the response is likely to be "No" or "Why should I?" Having thus responded negatively, the reader may be inclined to resist changing that response even though the subsequent advantages are exceedingly valid.
2. True. Readers may have more pressing problems and thus resist even considering the sales message. Previously, they may have felt no need for the product, they may have concluded earlier that they didn't need a similar product, or they may be inclined to delay action even after recognizing a need.
3. False. The task of the first sentence is to get attention, to make the reader put other thoughts from the mind and consider the upcoming proposal.
4. True. Familiarity with the product will enable the writer to show specifically how the product can satisfy needs. Familiarity with competing products will enable the writer to select a central selling point, to place emphasis on the feature that is superior.
5. False. "Response" is too general. The specific action wanted should be identified: return an enclosed card, send an order form and a check, place a phone call, visit a near-by store, and so forth.
6. False. Without supporting specifics, general words will not be believed.

During the Writing

Only after being thoroughly informed (about the product, competing products, and prospects), and only after preparing an outline should the writing be attempted. The basic outline for persuasive letters presents ideas in the following sequence: getting attention, introducing the product, presenting evidence, and encouraging action. As a writer progresses from one portion of the outline to the next, the following suggestions should prove helpful in the composition.

Getting attention. Various techniques have been successful in getting the recipient to put aside present thoughts or activities and consider the letter:

1. A solution to a problem. “A ball-point pen that writes every time!”
2. A bargain. “Top-quality cigars at $12.45 a hundred!”
3. A proverb. “A penny saved is a penny earned.”
4. A news announcement. “INCOME TAXES WILL GO UP 10 PERCENT, the papers are saying. You know what that means for those in our business.”
5. An astonishing fact. “Our city spends more for alcohol than for education.”
6. A story. “It’s ‘sale-ring’ day at the local stockyards. Let’s see what is going on.”
7. A quote from a famous person. “We have met the enemy and they are ours,” cabled Commodore Perry. We get the same report from those who use our termite killer.
8. An analogy. “Whetstone-the Cadillac of sterling silverware!”
9. A what-if opening. “What if the boss came to your desk and said, ‘We’re going to increase production by 13 percent’”?
10. An outstanding feature of the product. “Gasoline that will not knock! We have it.”
11. An interesting anecdote. “A young sophomore approached his professor’s desk and said…”
12. A question, “Why does Oriental wool make such good carpets?”
13. A comment on an attached gadget. “Feel the piece of gingham attached to this letter. Notice…”
14. A gift. “Accept this silver-plated spoon with our compliments.”
15. A fake inside address. For attention-getting purposes, sometimes the first sentence is broken into three or four short lines and placed in the position of the inside address, which is omitted.
16. A split sentence. Some writers have sought to gain attention by placing only the first few words of a sentence on the first line, skipping a line space, and continuing the sentence in what appears to be a second paragraph:
    “You should see…
    how easy it is to operate a tractor with automatic steering.”

Other attention-getting techniques could be added to the preceding list. Regardless of the technique employed, consider the following suggestions:

1. The idea contained in the first sentence (the attention getter) should be related to the product and its virtues. Otherwise, the reader may be confused or resentful.

    > Would you like to make a million? We wish we knew how, but we do know how to make you feel like a million. Try our mentholated shaving cream.

    The sentence seems to suggest that the letter will be about how to make a million, but it is not.

2. The first sentence should introduce (or lead to a quick introduction of) a central selling point. One idea--an outstanding feature of the product or a primary need that it will satisfy--needs to be stressed throughout the entire letter. Since the beginning sentence is in a very emphatic position, it’s an ideal sentence for stressing the central selling point.

3. The attention getter should be "you" centered. Since readers are naturally more interested in themselves than in those who write sales letters, "We have just introduced…" is not a particularly interesting way to begin.
4. The attention getter should sound interesting. "It has been shown that…" may lead a reader to expect a dull discourse.
5. The attention getter should be original. The preceding list of attention getting devices can be employed without destroying originality. A writer can begin with an anecdote without using one that many others have used previously. Even original ideas may not seem so if they are presented in stereotyped phrases.
6. The first paragraph should be short. The spaces between paragraphs serve three purposes: (1) They show the dividing place between ideas. (2) They improve appearance. (3) They provide convenient resting places for the eyes. A reader is encouraged to take the first step if it's a short one. If possible, let the first paragraph be no longer than three lines, preferably fewer.

Of all possible ways to get attention, perhaps the most dependable is one that makes the reader think "Here is a solution to one of my problems," or "Here is something I can use." We may lead the recipient to this thought by introducing the product in the attention-getting sentence.

Introducing the product. Although the product can be introduced in the first sentence, the typical sales letter has an attention-getting sentence that leads to the introduction of the product. Good sales writing does not require that we have separate sentences and paragraphs for each phase of the letter. In writing the sentence that introduces the product, keep the following suggestions in mind.

1. *The introduction should be natural*. If coherence techniques are being applied well, the second sentence will continue with a thought that was introduced in the first. Notice the abrupt change in thought after the first sentence: "Strained eyes cause bad tempers. The Westview Assn. of Office Managers has been conducting a survey for the last six months. Their primary aim is to improve lighting conditions." Now, in the revision, notice that the second sentence leads smoothly from the first: "Strained eyes cause bad tempers. That's one thing the Westview Assn. of Office Managers learned from their six-month survey…."
2. *The introduction should be action centered*. Chances for vivid, interesting writing are improved when people (instead of products) are used as subjects of sentences. A small amount of product description is only natural; but, for most of the writing, try to place the product in readers' hands and talk about their using it. Notice the contrast: "This 8 mm projector is housed in a die-cast aluminum case. It has a 750-watt projector bulb, a tilt-control knob, and an easy-to-use swing-out film gate." "Lift this projector. See how easy? That's because of the lightweight aluminum case. Now, swing the film gate open and insert the film. All you have to do is keep the film in front…See how easily you can turn…" In a sense, we don't sell products; we sell what they will do for their users. We sell the pleasure people derive from use of the product. Therefore, time is more profitably spent in writing about people deriving satisfaction from using a product than in writing about the product.
3. *The introduction should stress a central selling point*. As observed earlier, a sales letter needs to have a theme--an outstanding feature or a major advantage that competing products do not

have. Early introduction of this theme gives it the stress it deserves. For example, if ease of operation were the primary feature of a movie projector, the projector would be introduced as an easy-to-operate projector. Throughout, other features would be mentioned; but, from the introduction, this one feature would get more emphasis than the others.

Presenting convincing evidence. Most of the space in a sales letter is devoted to the presentation of evidence. If evidence is lacking, or not presented well, the letter will probably not be successful. In composing these vital paragraphs, keep the following suggestions in mind.

Continue to emphasize the central selling point. A product has a feature that others do not have, or a reader gains an advantage by using this product instead of another--these points need to be kept uppermost in the reader's mind. (Later in this chapter, a sample letter will illustrate the technique.)

Using specific, concrete language. Simply saying a product is "ideal," "efficient," "durable," or economical" is hardly enough. Without supporting facts, such evaluations are likely to be rejected. Notice the supporting details here: "How can we guarantee NCC carpet to last for 10 years? Because we use Oriental wool exclusively-every fiber is at least 12 inches long. And the longer the raw wool, the greater the strength of the yarns. Count the number of knots per square inch. Conventional carpets, which average a life of about five years, have fewer than 100." Presenting such details is more likely to convince a reader than saying "The carpet's great."

Be objective. Superlatives, exaggerations, flowery statements, unsupported claims, incomplete comparisons, and remarks suggesting certainty all run the risk of making letters sound like high-pressure sales talk. One sentence that contains such subjectivity can destroy confidence in an entire letter. An incomplete comparison such as "Our filters make the air cleaner" can turn the reader off. Without revealing the other item of comparison, the statement is meaningless. Cleaner than any other filter, cleaner than one other, cleaner than our last year's model? "The writer is trying to make me think the filter is cleanest of all without taking the responsibility for saying so." If such a thought strikes the reader, the likelihood of accepting a proposal is greatly reduced.

Interpret statements. Instead of merely stating that a refrigerator is frost proof, a letter could profitably continue with some reminders of what the frost-proof feature means to the consumer. Instead of merely presenting dimensions of a radio, a letter could profitably remind the reader that a radio of these dimensions would fit easily into a purse or a shirt pocket.

Give experimental evidence. If research has established that a product is better, a few lines of detail about the research could be very convincing--much more convincing than general remarks that "it has been shown to be superior."

Use enclosures to help convince. Serious consumers like to see supporting facts and figures. When such information is abundant, a writer can place selected points in the letter; and, for those who may need still more information before making up their minds, an enclosure can be included.

Use testimonials and references. One way to convince prospects that they will like a product is to give them concrete evidence that other people like it. The technique should be employed only with the permission of the people involved.

Offer a guarantee or a free trial. When we offer a guarantee or a free trial, we are saying between the lines that we invite scrutiny and comparison; we are willing to have our statements tested.

Talk convincingly about price. Most sales letters should include a mention of price. They should either tell what the price is or say something to assure the reader that the price is not unreasonable. Logically, price should be introduced late in the letter--after most of the advantages have been discussed. For reducing resistance to price, consider the following suggestions:

1. Introduce price only after having presented the product and its virtues.
2. Keep price talk out of the first and last paragraphs--unless price is to be the central selling point (and it seldom is).
3. Mention price in a sentence that relates or summarizes the virtues of the product; that is, in the sentence where price is mentioned, remind the reader of what is being received in return for that price. The virtue is a positive; the money from which the recipient is being asked to part is a negative. Placing the two in the same sentence helps to de-emphasize the negative.
4. Employ a complex or compound sentence for stating price.
5. Use figures to illustrate how enough money can be saved to pay for the expenditure.
6. State price in terms of small units. ($12 a month instead of $144 a year)
7. If practical, invite comparison of prices with other products with similar features.
8. If facts and figures are available, use them to illustrate that the price is reasonable.

Regardless of the kind of evidence given, it is given for the purpose of motivating action.

Motivating action. Although the purpose of a persuasive letter is to get action, identifying that action in the first paragraph would be hazardous. Only after having presented evidence that a proposal is worthy should a writer state the specific request for action--in the last paragraph. For writing the final paragraph, consider the following suggestions:

1. Mention the specific action wanted. Just inviting a “response” is not enough. Exactly, what is the reader to do? Return a form? Send a check? Sign and return a card?
2. Allude to the reward for taking action. Readers are more likely to do what is wanted if they are at the same time reminded of why they should. By alluding to the advantages of taking action, a

writer gets a final opportunity to stress the central selling point. It was introduced at the beginning, was talked about throughout the evidence paragraphs, and stopping without a final reference to it would seem like a violation of unity.

3. Present the action as being easy to take. Since people hesitate to do that which is difficult or time consuming, the action should be made as easy to take as possible. Instead of asking for a “letter of response,” ask a recipient to check his choice on an enclosed card. The more difficult the action seems, the greater the chances of procrastination or failure to respond at all.
4. Provide a stimulus for quick action. The longer a reader waits to take action, the dimmer our persuasive evidence becomes in the mind. Some commonly used inducements to quick action are (a) buy before prices go up, (b) buy before the supply is depleted, (c) buy before a certain date approaches, (d) buy while a bonus is being offered, and (e) buy quickly to get benefits quickly. Sometimes, the attempt to get quick action can do more harm than good, especially if it shouts too loudly for quick action. Because the following expressions are likely to be met with resistance, they should be avoided: Act today. Do it now. Don’t delay. Hurry, Hurry, Hurry. Why wait? Don’t wait another minute.
5. Ask confidently for action. Little is gained by such statements as “I hope you will…” or “If you agree…” Between the lines, these expressions convey lack of self-confidence or lack of confidence in the product.

For good appearance, and for emphasis, the last paragraph should be kept fairly short. The preceding suggestions can be incorporated into a paragraph of five or fewer lines, preferably fewer.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The central selling point can be either an outstanding feature of a product or an advantage a reader gains by using the product.
2. _____ Language that is specific, concrete, and objective is more effective than language that is general, abstract, and subjective.
3. _____ The price of a product should be introduced early in the letter.
4. _____ The price of a product should be presented in a short, simple sentence.
5. _____ The final paragraph should remind a reader of the reward for taking action.
6. _____ “Don’t delay” and “Why wait” are recommended expressions for encouraging quick action.

Answers

1. True. Either an outstanding feature or a special advantage can be easily stressed throughout an entire letter. Each can serve as a primary reason for buying.

2. True. Specific, concrete, objective language conveys more vivid mental pictures. In addition, such language reveals the basis for the conclusion that the product is worthy.
3. False. If a reader has not been first exposed to the virtues of a product, the early introduction of price is likely to be met with resistance. Prospects need to have a good picture of what they would get before they are told what they would have to give.
4. False. Normally, price should be de-emphasized because it is a negative, a reason for no action. Short, simple sentences emphasize. A short, simple sentence can hardly be expected to mention both the price and the primary advantage of the product.
5. True. A reminder of the reward for taking action serves as an inducement to action. Reminding a reader of the reward for acting constitutes another reference to the central selling point. This final reference adds unity to the letter; the message now seems to be complete.
6. False. Encouraging action is commendable, but “don’t delay” and “Why wait” seem to push too hard for action and thus generate resistance.

After the Writing

Before composing sales letters, writers should identify the ideas to be included and arrange them in proper sequence. They should review some composition principles they intend to employ. During the writing, they should follow the outline and try to apply the principles. After the writing, they should check carefully to see whether improvements can be made. Asking others for their reactions to the original draft will usually result in improvement.

No point is too small for consideration. Because hundreds or even thousands of copies may be mailed, and because success is measured by the number of responses, the final draft must come as close to perfection as the writer can make it.

A sales letter. To illustrate the application of organizing and writing principles discussed earlier in the chapter, the following letter is discussed sentence by sentence:

The Gazette delivery boy throws the paper at almost exactly the same time every day.

Uses the central point as a device for getting attention and identifying the subject matter.

The news stories are just as timely as he is punctual.

Employs a sentence closely related to the first.

For example, you can read up-to-the-minute accounts of important local and national events in less than two hours after they have occurred.

Proceeds to give detail to support the idea of timeliness. Uses the reader as the subject of the sentence.

That’s because we keep our news wires open right up to the four-o’clock press time.

Continues with additional details to support the time theme.

When important news breaks just before press time, our skilled reporters and printers can arrange to include it in today's Gazette; you can read it this evening shortly after six o'clock.

Gives more support for timeliness. Ties timeliness in with punctual delivery. Employs concrete nouns and action verbs.

You can read tomorrow's paper at the very same hour.

Further emphasizes the central selling point.

When you can depend on receiving your paper at the same time each day, reading it naturally becomes a habit--a habit that's easy to fit right into your regular routine of family living.

Suggests an advantage of punctual delivery.

Whether you want a first-hand report of Washington affairs, a baseball or football score, or a local wedding, you can have the habit of turning to the Gazette regularly.

Refers to features of the paper in a sentence in which the reader is the subject. "Habit" and "regularly" serve as reminders of the central selling point.

You can turn to the up-to-date Classified Ad section for anything you want to buy, rent, or locate.

Lets the reader take the paper in his hands and use it to solve his problems.

They say the ads enable them to save many times the $7 monthly subscription rate.

Employs the pronoun "they" as a coherence device. After having presented most of the sales points, introduces price in a sentence that suggests a reward for paying the price. Subordinates price by presenting it in a long paragraph.

For example, this week's Thursday paper will carry a coupon that lets you buy nationally advertised instant coffee for $2.15 (regular $2.49) and frozen TV dinners for $1.49 (regular $1.89). Similar coupons are featured daily.

Gives figures to support the idea of saving money.

You can keep up with the local and national news as a matter of habit.

Uses "habit" as a reminder of the central selling point.

You can take advantage of local advertising as a matter of economy.

Seeks to summarize (as does the sentence before it) the advantages of subscribing.

By subscribing in plenty of time to get Thursday's paper, you save 74 cents on this week's grocery bill.

Follows the summary of advantages immediately with a mention of the action necessary to get them. Shows the reward for quick action.

Please sign and return the enclosed card.

Indicates the specific action desired.

Your delivery boy will then leave the Gazette on your steps around 6:15 each weekday evening.

Look at your clock when Thursday's paper comes; from now on you can expect to receive it at almost exactly the same time.

Presents a final reminder of the central selling point.

The preceding letter was written for the purpose of getting someone to buy. The principles of planning and writing are very similar when the letter is written for the purpose of getting someone to take action.

A persuasive claim. Claims letters are often routine; the basis for the claim is a guarantee or some other assurance that an adjustment will be made without need of persuasion. However, when an immediate remedy is doubtful, persuasion is necessary. In the typical large business, the claim letter is passed on to the claims adjuster for response.

In spite of the distasteful aspects of their jobs, claims adjusters are human beings with emotions that can be influenced. Very likely, they have had little or nothing to do with the manufacture and sale of a product; they did not create the need for the claim letter.

In modern businesses, any reasonable claim will probably be adjusted to the customer's satisfaction. Modern businesses appreciate reasonable claims because such claims enable firms to improve their products or services. Therefore, venting strong displeasure in the claims letter is of little value. It can alienate the claims adjuster--the one person from whom cooperation is sought.

From the point of view of the claims adjuster, all claims should receive a fair hearing. Only a small percentage of claims are from "cranks"; the great bulk of claims letters are from people who believe they have a legitimate complaint. The way in which the adjuster handles the claim determines, to a large extent, the goodwill of the company. For the adjuster, granting a claim is much easier than refusing it. Because saying "no" is one of the most difficult writing tasks, the writer of the persuasive claim letter has the advantage over the adjuster.

Notice how the following claim letter presents a sincere statement of the situation and appeals to the business character of the firm. The letter begins with a point on which the reader and writer can agree, presents an adequate description of the reason for the claim, reviews steps needed to remedy the cause, and relies on the letter's basic theme for the closing appeal.

"Customer satisfaction after the sale," as stated in your advertising, is certainly the cornerstone of your reputation for integrity. It is also the primary reason why you have so much repeat business. On February 1, just one month ago, I purchased a new "factory-fresh" Cardinal from you, and it functioned well for two weeks. I followed the new car breaking-in instructions to the letter and had little difficulty. But two weeks ago the front wheels developed a frightening vibration that forced me to bring the car to your shop for inspection. The service manager inspected the wheels, said the bushings had been damaged, and immediately had the old bushings replaced. Later that day, we tested the car together, and it worked satisfactorily. The service manager then asked me to sign the service slip indication my willingness to pay the repair and parts charges of $98.75. In the discussion that followed, he stated that the bushings could not have been damaged by normal operation but only by careless driving over rough terrain. I refused to pay. He refused to make the bill "no charge." There the matter stood until today, when I received a bill from you for $98.75. Because I had not driven the car over rough terrain and had taken care of it during the breaking-in period, I can only conclude that the bushings were damaged in the sixty miles the car was driven before I purchased it. Perhaps the damage to the bushings occurred during demonstration trips by salesmen. Please write "no charge" on the attached bill, proving that your advertising is backed by the integrity you claim.

Knowledge of effective claim writing should never be used as a means of taking advantage of someone. Hiding an unjustifiable claim under a cloak of untrue statements would be very difficult and strictly unethical. Adjusters are fair-minded people who will give the benefit of the doubt, but they are not give-away specialists who would satisfy a grumpy customer simply to avoid a problem. An ethical business follows the Golden Rule.

The letters in this chapter have been directed toward getting a reader to do something-buy a product or accept an idea and act accordingly. The recommended sequence of ideas has been (1) get attention, (2) introduce the idea or product, (3) present evidence, and (4) encourage action. This pattern serves well as a guide; it is not intended as a substitute for imagination and creativity. Writers have abundant opportunity to use their originality when they decide which appeals to use, which words are best, which sentence structure is most appropriate, and so forth.

Like sales letters and persuasive-claim letters, collection letters are written persuasively; but because circumstances surrounding the desired action are different, the persuasive approach is different.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ A sales letter is written inductively, but a persuasive claim letter is written deductively.
2. _____ Very likely, the person who reads a claim letter is the person who caused the problem that resulted in the claim.
3. _____ In a claim letter, venting displeasure is of little value.
4. _____ From a claims adjuster's point of view, a high percentage of claim letters are written by "cranks."
5. _____ Knowledge of effective claim writing should never be used as a means of taking advantage of someone.

6. _____ By following the sequence of getting attention, introducing the product or idea, giving evidence, and encouraging action, a writer places a serious limitation on creativity.

Answers

1. False. Both should be written inductively. If a claim letter were written deductively when the circumstances require persuasion, the reader's most likely response to the first paragraph would be negative. Having made a quick and negative decision, a reader is inclined to hold to it in spite of subsequent arguments that are very persuasive.
2. False. The manufacturer, the carrier, the seller, the service agent, the buyer-any of these would be more likely to cause the claim-writing problem than would the claims adjuster, whose job is to decide whether claims are justified and to communicate the decision to the claimant.
3. True. Since people are naturally disappointed when unpleasant problems arise, saying "I'm terribly disappointed" is hardly necessary. Expressing strong displeasure to one from whom cooperation is wanted is hardly a diplomatic way of exerting a positive influence.
4. False. A claims adjuster must take the view that most claims have a reasonable basis. Otherwise, legitimate claims will be denied and negative, goodwill-losing messages will be transmitted in the letters.
5. True. If a claim does not have a reasonable justification, it should not be made. Trying to get that to which one is not entitled is unethical.
6. False. A writer can follow the suggested sequence and still exercise creativity in word choice and sentence structure. Deviating from the suggested sequence purely for the purpose of achieving creativity would be risky. The results of getting a "no" reaction early in the letter would be much more damaging than would following a sequence-of-idea pattern that is conventional.

Persuading to Pay

Floods of computerized requests and forms and personal letters flow through our mail system daily in an effort to collect money. Business revolves around the use of credit. Credit comes from the Latin word *credere* meaning to believe. The very nature of credit is belief or trust in another person's ability and willingness to uphold an agreement. Credit applicants are evaluated on the basis of the C's of credit-character, capacity, and capital.

Character is the applicant's reputation for meeting monetary obligations: What is the past pay record? Capacity is earning power: Is current income adequate to meet all obligations? And capital is determined by the net worth of an individual: What security exists if earnings decline? Thus, these are sensitive items. To be refused the use of credit indicates a weakness in one or more of the C's. Of course, a fourth C, conditions, could be added to cover those circumstances beyond the control of the individual--the economic health of the community. The use of credit is an earned privilege, not a given right. Yet, individuals and business firms constantly let obligations go beyond due dates. Fortunately these represent a minority of credit users. Collection tasks are simplified because delinquent debtors have some special characteristics.

Characteristics of the delinquent debtor. First, the delinquent debtor *knows he or she owes*. A bill may have been overlooked inadvertently, but the debtor knows this fact when reminded. Second, those who owe don't mind being asked to pay. Third, because debtors are human, they are subject to emotional or psychological appeal.

Keeping these characteristics in mind, let's see what advantages they give the collection writer. Because the debtor was extended credit on the basis of the C's, he or she has established a reputation as a person who can be trusted. All users of credit are members of a group that underwent some selection. We can assume then that most debtors are honest and would pay if it were possible.

As an emotional person, too, the debtor is susceptible to certain appeals. Gestalt psychology tells us that all people must make closures. That is, when one's world is out of balance, things aren't right until the world is back in balance. A person who owes has an out-of-balance world. And the collection writer takes advantage of this condition by encouraging the delinquent to pay. This task is accomplished through the use of appeals such as:

- *Fair play*: including loyalty, integrity, cooperation.
- *Pride*: including reputation, prestige, accomplishment.
- *Fear*: including loss of possession, privileges, and credit.

Variations of these appeals permit the writer to adapt to almost anyone's ambitions, security, or reputation. And challenges to these human desires elicit emotional responses. The appeals must be honest ones that reveal a degree of faith in the debtor. Threats of physical violence or of damaging action to one's reputation are out of place and could result in legal difficulty for the writer.

In addition to susceptibility to appeals, debtors have other important characteristics based on previous payment practices which classify them as one of the following types of debtors:

- *Good pay*. The debtor whose past practice was always to pay on time.
- *Good but slow pay*. The debtor who always pays but occasionally requires some prodding.
- *Poor pay*. The debtor who was probably granted credit on the chance he or she would change past paying habits-the borderline credit risk.

Good-pay debtors probably need only a simple reminder to induce payment. Strong appeals should be used only as a last resort. Appeals to cooperation and fair play are effective on early collection efforts, and pride and prestige appeals would be effective only after long periods of collection efforts.

The good-but-slow-pay debtor may well be a person of great integrity but be, as well, somewhat disorganized and forgetful, or a procrastinator. Much like the good-pay debtor, the slow payer may put things off until the creditor shows a degree of impatience.

The poor-pay debtor probably has been down the collection process road before. Straddling the fence between pay and no pay may be a game that isn't decided until legal implications are mentioned. Strong appeals about loss of credit or repossession actions are effective after early reminders prove fruitless.

People in this category probably have other shaky credit relationships and will ultimately respond simply because they still have need for credit.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Character of a credit applicant is determined by comments in letters of reference.
2. _____ Because credit is an earned privilege, the collection writer can develop appeals to pride based on the selection process that made the debtor part of a select group.
3. _____ Appeals used in collections grow directly out of the credit C's which serve as the basis for extending credit.
4. _____ Poor-pay debtors represent a special problem because the collection process is not something new to them.
5. _____ General economic conditions not only have an influence on the extension of credit to an applicant but also would have an effect on collection processes.

Answers

1. False. Character, as one of the C's of credit, is determined by credit checks with other firms and credit bureaus to evaluate past pay practices.
2. True. The process of extending credit provides the basis for the process of collecting. If credit were not earned, many of the appeals, such as fair play or pride, would be useless. Many oil companies have issued credit cards to people on a mass scale without requiring an application and, in turn, have found collection problems to be multiplied.
3. True. When one's character, capacity, and capital have qualified the person for credit, the credit and collection writers should use this distinction, even if a mild one, in dealing with the customer or debtor.
4. True. Poor-pay-debtors would not be classed as such if it were not for prior payment difficulties. Therefore, they have probably experienced the collection process in the past, even to the point of being able to predict what the collector will do next.
5. True. During good economic periods, credit is extended more readily, and collection processes may be more stringent because money should be plentiful. During down periods, credit may be more difficult to obtain, but collection procedures may be more lenient or understanding. For example, in periods of high unemployment most home loan companies adopt a less stringent collection policy to avoid undue foreclosures.

The language of collections. Collection letters, also with letters about credit, have terminology somewhat unusual to business writing. Although not a vocabulary unto itself, the following list of terms represents some language usage important in the credit-collection talk.

Extended. Credit is *extended*, because it is earned. The phrase *grant credit* should not be used, because *grant* implies something for free or in the form of a gift. Therefore, use *extend credit* rather than imply that it wasn't earned.

Delinquent. Although we have used delinquent in this discussion to describe one whose payment is past due, the term should not be used in letters to describe people. You may use phrasing to describe an account as delinquent as in "payment is delinquent," but unfavorable implications derive from its use with people. Teenagers are often described as delinquents, and that meaning should be avoided in letters. The following wordings are satisfactory: "Your account is past due," and "Your payment is delinquent." To be safe, though, avoid the word if possible.

Very, extremely. In difficult collection situations, use adverbs such as very and extremely to add stringency to writing. A situation may be important, but it takes on power when it is described as "extremely" important. Serious is serious, but a "very serious" problem is acute.

Must, compelled, no other alternative. Use words or phrases like these to add a sense of urgency to messages. "We must have your payment." "You leave us no other alternative."

Mutual, fair, cooperative, agreed, bargain. "We've lived up to our side of the bargain. How about you?" The words listed are effective in pride and fair-play appeals. Although a bit redundant, a combination such as "mutually agreed upon" seems to stress the two-sided nature of credit.

Collection stages. Using knowledge of debtor characteristics, pay habits, and human nature as a basis, collection procedures have become fairly well established within a frame-work of collection stages. The series of stages incorporates collection messages, which proceed from courteous reminders to strong demands for payment. A maximum would include the following stages:

1. Notice.
2. Reminder.
3. Inquiry.
4. Appeal.
5. Strong appeal or urgency.
6. Ultimatum.

Notice and reminder stages most often are handled by duplicate copies of billings containing statements such as "past due" or "please remit." All but serious delinquencies are usually cleared at these stages. Tone of collection efforts must be courteous and show concern for goodwill by appearing to be routine. The collection writer's assumption at the notice and reminder stages is that payment was simply overlooked.

The inquiry stage occurs after the normal number of reminders have been sent without success. The assumption here is that nonpayment is symptomatic of something wrong. Collection efforts try to get some action from the debtor by using a helpful tone. The gist of inquiry is to offer help if something is wrong and, if nothing is wrong, to receive payment, Here is a typical inquiry letter taken from a form collection series used by a personal finance company.

> Dear Friend,
>
> The payment on your travel loan is twenty days overdue and another payment will soon be due. If there is some reason why you are unable to make this payment, will you let me know by telephoning or writing an explanation on the back of this letter and returning it in the enclosed return envelope?
>
> Otherwise, may we have your check right away?
>
> Cordially,

For those debtors who haven't responded to the inquiry, the collection writer must use persuasion to elicit payment. This is done by selecting the most appropriate appeal for the individual case. The appeal letter deals with the sensitive C characteristics-character, capital, capacity. Probably the weakest appeal is one that says "If you don't pay us, we can't pay our bills." That puts both the debtor and the creditor in the poor-pay category. Good appeal letters (1) review the situation, (2) develop a single appeal, (3) describe the necessary action for the debtor to take, and (4) request action. Notice how the following letter appeals to fair play:

> Dear Mr. Smith,
>
> Ten weeks ago we shipped 12 dozen Whoozits to you as the first purchase charged to your new account.
>
> The mutual contract we entered into was based on two things-our ability to make delivery as agreed and your ability to pay as agreed, an ability, incidentally, that was apparent in comments we received from your credit references. You'll have to agree that we kept our part of the bargain. The only way to complete the agreement is for you to do your part by sending your check for $316 today.
>
> Please slip the check in the enclosed envelope now-while this letter is before you.
>
> Cordially,

The strong appeal letter normally follows the appeal letter in attempts to stress the urgency of the situation. “We must have the payment…” is the general tone of the strong appeal. Frequently, “for your own good” stresses the nature of a self-preservation appeal. At any rate, the letter used at this stage tries to obtain payment through every effort short of issuing an ultimatum or last-chance letter. A common practice is to have these letters signed by a senior executive to impress in the debtor the seriousness of the problem. Notice how the following letter uses a fear appeal to develop urgency.

> Dear Mr. Smith,
>
> As you well know, the use of credit is an earned privilege-earned on the basis of the applicant’s character, capacity, and capital. The routine check we made before extending credit to you revealed you met these three requirements.
>
> We were disappointed when your account was referred to me. Because legal action is always costly, accounts reaching the critical condition come to me before being turned over to our legal department.
>
> Won’t you, for both our benefits, return your check in the enclosed envelope, which will come directly to me? I must hear from you within five days.
>
> Sincerely,

Often, at the urgency stage, the technique of giving the debtor a choice between two or more methods of solving the problem is used, such as sending payment or signing an interest-bearing note. In any case, urgency letters let the debtor know very clearly that collection will ultimately be made.

At the ultimatum stage, the letter simply indicates that if payment is not received within a certain time, legal action will commence. An ultimatum is the final letter, and the tone is “now or never.”

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Because all delinquent debtors know their use of credit is an earned privilege, collection letters should avoid dwelling on that aspect.
2. _____ A characteristic of collection efforts at various stages is that letters take on an increasingly stringent tone as debts become longer past due.

3. _____ Strong appeals are developed easily by adding urgent language to normal appeals.
4. _____ Assumptions underlying collection efforts are that (a) in early stages payment may have been overlooked inadvertently; (b) after attempts have been made to obtain payment routinely, persuasion will be necessary; and (c) last chance efforts are most effective when appeals are used.
5. _____ Credit and collection language evolves from the two-sided nature of the credit relationship.

Answers

1. False. Something earned is harder to give up than something received free. Therefore, mention of an earned privilege is effective.
2. True. Collection efforts are characterized by increasing stringency, as well as by timeliness, regularity, and understanding.
3. True. Simply adding adverbs such as very and extremely to normal appeals create urgency.
4. True. The assumption guiding all collection efforts is that practice must become tougher as the seriousness of the delinquency increases.
5. True. All language in collections is built around the two-side nature. One part earns credit; the other extends credit based on belief in the other. These relationships lead to the development of collection language.

Form collection series. The following principles establish the framework for firms planning to use form collection letter series:

1. Collection problems must be frequent, and thus, routine.
2. Collection problems must be of the same nature.
3. Secured loans lend themselves most readily to form collection letters.

One oil company uses over 200 form collection letters. All are computerized and are issued based on three criteria: the length of time the customer has had a credit card, the period amounts are past due, and the amount past due. For example, a customer having a 30-day past-due amount in excess of $50 dollars and having had a card for less than a year would get a letter specially written for that situation. If the amount reaches 45 days past-due, a different letter would be issued.

Other collection problems. In addition to the usual collection series, other letters must be written for unusual cases. For example, the debtor who always pays 20 days late may simply have a pay day that falls at an inconvenient time. Here's an example of such a letter:

Dear Mr. Blank,

Thank you for your March 1 payment which was received yesterday, March 20.

Although we are pleased with the regularity of your payments, we wonder if a different due date would be more convenient? Your payments generally are received around the twentieth of each month.

If a change of date would assist you, make a note at the bottom of this letter and return it to us. Otherwise, we ask that you make payments on the first as scheduled.

Sincerely,

The problem of collecting unearned discounts plagues many manufacturers and wholesalers. A bill providing a discount for prompt payments is often ignored until well after the discount date and then paid with the discount deducted. In these cases, a simple notation on the next bill calls attention to the problem:

The additional amount on your bill represents the discounts you may have taken inadvertently when you paid your last bill after the discount period.

Of course, persistent deductions of the discount by a party calls for the use of regular collection procedures.

Using the telephone and telegram in collections. For local problems, the telephone provides a quick and inexpensive collection tool. Notices, reminders, and inquiries can all be handled by phone. In a sense, the telephone call does three jobs at once: (1) It completes early collection stages quickly. (2) It provides for instant feedback by the debtor. (3) Because of the two-way communication, it enables the creditor to maintain goodwill. When the telephone is used in long-distance collecting, it creates a sense of urgency. Therefore, long-distance collecting by phone should be reserved for urgency cases. Those who collect by telephone should become familiar with state laws. Calling too frequently or during normal sleeping hours is inadvisable and probably illegal.

Why study collections? Because credit is a rather cherished institution, the problem of collecting past-due amounts of money deals with a sensitive area of human behavior. Writing effective collection messages while still maintaining a degree of goodwill is a most valuable art and skill. The carry-over values into other writing tasks is considerable.

Summary

Before writing an action-seeking letter, a writer should first try to determine whether the action would be taken willingly or whether it would be taken only after persuasion. If persuasion is thought necessary, the inductive approach is recommended.

Through inductive writing, readers are given an incentive before being asked to act. Typical action-seeking letters are designed to sell ideas or products, get special favors, or collect money. The recommended outline for such letters: get attention, introduce a product or idea, give evidence, and encourage action.

Success in sales writing can hardly be expected if careful planning has not preceded it. Before writing, the following considerations should be taken into account: the product and how it differs, the people to whom the letters are directed, and the specific action wanted. Concrete nouns, action verbs, and specific language are especially helpful in sales writing. Effective sales writing is reader centered; it also stresses one central idea that permeates the entire letter.

Like sales letters, persuasive claim letters draw attention to a problem, present arguments, and then ask for favorable action. Although one who writes a claim letter may feel angry or disappointed, sarcasm or abusive language should be avoided. That principle applies also to collection writing.

Typically, collection letters are shorter than other persuasive letters. Debtors usually know already that they owe. A fairly short letter that presents one point emphatically is superior to a long letter that presents many points (each of which competes with others for attention). In collection letters, typical appeals (incentives for paying) are fair play, pride, and fear. The collection process moves through various stages: notice, reminder, inquiry, appeal, urgency, and ultimatum. If collection is unsuccessful at one stage, a writer moves to the next stage. Except for the appeals stage (which may include several letters), one letter is written at each stage. The final stage (the ultimatum) reveals the action the writer will take if payment is not received.

In all persuasive writing, one principle is paramount: before asking for action, let the reader see why action is beneficial or justified.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ 1. Computer-generated form letters can be so cleverly done that even the most astute observer will not be able to recognize them as forms.
2. _____ 2. Collecting unearned discounts and offering to change due dates are problems falling outside the scope of normal collections and, thus, should not use collection appeals nor the language of collections.
3. _____ 3. The major shortcoming of telephone calls is that the caller is not able to say things that could be said in a letter.

4. _____ 4. Form letters that will include amounts and names should contain underlined blanks for those items rather than being individually typed.

Answers

1. False. Astute observers can identify computer-generated form letters. Although collection problems can be similar, all those covered by the same letter are not identical. Stamped signatures and paper perforations are other ways of identifying letters as computer generated forms.
2. False. Collecting unearned discounts and changing due dates are typical problems for collection writers. Both situations call for the use of appeals or inquiries as well as the use of collection language.
3. False. The telephone permits two-way communication and instant feedback. Therefore, more can be said than in a letter, and misunderstandings can be cleared up more easily.
4. False. Individually typed letters are superior. In early collection stages-notice and reminder-printed forms are appropriate. In later stages, obvious form letters lose impact.

Chapter 8 Review Questions

1. Sales letter should be:

   A. Persuasive.
   B. High-pressure talk.
   C. Unsupported generalizations.
   D. Encourage inactivity.

2. In introducing a product, the typical sales letter has an attention getting sentence that leads the product such as:

   A. The introduction should be artificial and contrived.
   B. The introduction should stress action.
   C. The introduction should be about the pleasure people derive and not about the product.
   D. The introduction should stress many beneficial points.

3. In additional to susceptibility appeals good debtors have important characteristics such as:

   A. They only need a simple reminder to induce payment.
   B. They need many reminders to induce a payment.
   C. They are persons of low integrity.
   D. They have been down the collection road many times.

4. The reasons that sales letters lack motivation to persuade a reader include all the following except:

   A. The reader has no interest or need.
   B. The reader resists or ignores the supporting evidence of the sales pitch.
   C. The letter supplies sufficient evidence to convince the readers to take action for their own benefit.
   D. The reader is a habitual procrastinator.

5. Attention getting techniques that have been successful in writing include all the following except:

   A. A solution to a problem.
   B. A statement expressing "we shall expect a response from you."
   C. A bargain.

D. A proverb.

6. An example of a statement or attention getting technique that should not be used is:

A. Would you like to make a million then try our mentholated shaving cream and it will make you feel like a million?
B. Our city spends more for alcohol than for education.
C. We have met the enemy and they are ours.
D. Gasoline will not knock.

7. Terms to be avoided in the language of collection letters include:

A. Grant and delinquent.
B. Mutual and fair.
C. Cooperative and agreed.
D. Bargain and free trial offer.

Chapter 8 Review Answers

1. Sales letter should be:

A. **Correct.** Persuasive letters are sales letters; they sell the idea that one should buy a product or take some other action and provide sufficient evidence to act on.
B. Incorrect. A sales letter should have an attention getter in the first sentence that leads to the typical introduction of the products and present the evidence and encourage action.
C. Incorrect. Concrete nouns and action verbs help the reader to see the product and its benefits more vividly then do abstract nouns or passive verbs.
D. Incorrect. Specific action should be given to the reader in the last paragraph to encourage the reader to make a purchase.

2. In introducing a product, the typical sales letter has an attention getting sentence that leads the product such as:

A. Incorrect. Unsupported generalizations are unsupported and should be avoided, therefore the letter must offer concrete details and sufficient evidence about the product and its benefits.
B. Incorrect. The introduction should stress one or two key pleasures and not many that take away from the interest of the message. The benefit of the product should precede the request for action. The last paragraph should state clearly the desired action required by the reader.
C. **Correct.** An attention getting sentence should be about the satisfaction people derive from using a product or service. Good sales writing does not require that we have separate sentences and paragraphs for each phase of the letter.
D. Incorrect. Reader-centered writing is more effective than product–centered writing. If a product can offer enjoyment or solve a problem the chance of creating desire are increased.

3. In additional to susceptibility appeals good debtors have important characteristics such as:

A. **Correct.** Good debtors always pay on time or only need occasional prodding or a simple reminder.
B. Incorrect. Good debtors only need a simple reminder not many reminders.
C. Incorrect. Good debtors are usually persons of great integrity and usually pay their debts in a timely manner.
D. Incorrect. The poor-debtor has been down the collection road many times and often has a history of default payments and bad credit ratings.

4. The reasons that sales letters lack motivation to persuade a reader include all the following except:

A. Incorrect. People do not respond to sales letters because of a lack of interest or a lack of need for the product.
B. Incorrect. The reader resists or ignores the supporting evidence of the sales pitch is because they have no interest, need or motivation to respond to a sales letter.
C. **Correct.** The letter supplies sufficient evidence to convince the readers to take action for their own benefit. The reader is self-motivated by the sales pitch or the opportunity to satisfy a personal need.
D. Incorrect. People are inclined to delay action even after they recognize a need and often have more pressing problems then responding to a sales letter.

5. Attention getting techniques that have been successful in writing include all the following except:

A. Incorrect. This is a successful attention getting technique to get the reader’s attention and motivation to continue reading the sales evidence.
B. **Correct.** A statement expressing "we shall expect a response from you" is too general a request; a specific action should be requested such as return the enclosed card, phone, or visit our nearest store.
C. Incorrect. A bargain is a successful attention getting technique to introduce a potential customer of the exceptional value and savings that can be achieved as well as reducing any resistance to the price.
D. Incorrect. A proverb is a successful attention getting technique that takes the reader from a familiar to a central idea, concrete benefit and an introduction to the product or service being offered.

6. An example of a statement or attention getting technique that should not be used is:

A. **Correct.** “Would you like to make a million than try our mentholated shaving cream and it will make you feel like a million” is deceptive practice; the initial idea implies money and is not related to the product.
B. Incorrect. Our city spends more for alcohol than for education is an astonishing fact and an excellent attention getter.
C. Incorrect. We have met the enemy and they are ours is a famous person quotation that has often been used successfully as an attention getter.
D. Incorrect. Gasoline that will not knock is an outstanding product feature and has often been used as a sales leader to attract attention.

7. Terms to be avoided in the language of collection letters include:

A. **Correct.** Grant and delinquent grant implies it is free and delinquent is associated with unfavorable teenage behavior.
B. Incorrect. Mutual and fair are satisfactory words appealing to pride, and fair-play.
C. Incorrect. Cooperative and agreed are satisfactory words appealing to mutually agreeable actions that benefit all parties.
D. Incorrect. Bargain and free trial offer are perceived as benefits to motivate a buyer to take action.

Chapter 9:

Writing Special Letters

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify effective elements for condolence or sympathy letters
- Recognize the components of other unique/special communication pieces.

A variety of special situations occur so regularly that the good writer should have no problems with them. Most, too, have to do with personal relationships and sensitive problems.

Condolence of Sympathy

From an etiquette point of view, the letter of sympathy to the family of a friend who has died must be written promptly. Yet, this is a most difficult writing problem. One way to handle it, although a little impersonal, is to send a card with the handwritten message "Deepest sympathy." Telegrams may be used with messages such as "Deeply saddened by your loss. Sympathy to you and your family." When written, the message should be handwritten, although usage now permits typed messages when the deceased is a business associate. The simplest plan is to start with a statement of sympathy, follow with a sentence conveying your interest, close with some words of comfort and affection. For a letter to the widow of a deceased acquaintance, for example:

> Dear Mrs. Smith,
>
> I was deeply sorry to hear of your sad news. Jim was a genuinely fine person with whom I spent many enjoyable and satisfying times. He will be greatly missed by those of us who worked with him in the Chamber of Commerce. Please accept my warmest sympathy and best wishes.
>
> Most sincerely

Also, when a close relative such as spouse, son, daughter, mother, or father of a close friend dies, you should write the friend a letter of sympathy.

Congratulations

All too often we read of the promotion, election, or other significant achievement by an acquaintance and think how nice it would be to congratulate the person only to forget it promptly. In terms of building good will for yourself and your organization, take the time to send a short note. It will be appreciated--and might even be the only note the other person receives, thus making your thoughtfulness really stand out.

Some executives accomplish this good will gesture by using one of a supply of note cards which is always available. A handwritten message is satisfactory, and a typed one enables you to say more. Births, weddings, and engagements are other circumstances calling for congratulatory messages, particularly when those involved are employees of your firm.

Here's a short letter of congratulations on the occasion of a promotion:

> Dear Jim,
>
> I just read of your election to President and Chief Executive Officer. Please accept my warmest congratulations and best wishes for every future success.
>
> Sincerely

Both letters of condolence and congratulations should be acknowledged. Acknowledgment of a letter of condolence could be as simple as "Thank you for your kind expression of sympathy," and it should be handwritten. For a letter of congratulations, a typed business reply might take the following form:

> Dear George,
>
> Thanks so much for your nice words about my promotion and for the good wishes. I look forward to continuing to work with you. It's always a pleasure.
>
> Sincerely

Recommendations

Letters of recommendation about employees or friends take two forms. One is the solicited recommendation requested by a business organization, and the other is the unsolicited letter which is requested by the individual to incorporate in an employment dossier. The first will be addressed to a specific person or organization; the second may be headed by "To Prospective Employers." Generally, the solicited letter will reply to specific concerns of the prospective employer as outlined in a request. The unsolicited letter will be broader in nature and contain statements about work performance, attitude, and potential.

If the one written about can be endorsed with enthusiasm, the letter should be written deductively. If the endorsement cannot be strong, an inductive plan permits the use of negatives, but subordinates them. A device, used by good writers to de-emphasize mild comments and stress favorable ones, is to place the name of the person talked about in the independent part of a complex sentence and the pronoun in the dependent part. Note the difference in the following pair of sentences:

1. Although John is only a fair golfer, his amiability and integrity should make him a good club member.
2. Although he is only a fair golfer, John's amiability and integrity should make him a good club member.

Because readers gain greater communication from the independent part of a sentence, the second version of the sentence, which is an independent clause, not only stresses John's strengths but uses his name as well. People pay more attention to proper nouns than to pronouns.

In the following letter, recommending a person for club membership, notice how the writer has endorsed the candidate enthusiastically while using the preceding illustration to subordinate his golfing ability:

> Gentlemen,
>
> As a member of Lakefront Country Club for over twenty years, I endorse without reservation the nomination of Charles R. Jones for membership.
>
> Charles has been active in community affairs, has a fine family of five, and is well known in legal and business circles because of his successful law practice. Although he is only a fair golfer, Charles' amiability and integrity should make him a good club member.
>
> I would be pleased to represent him at the membership interview if desired.
>
> Sincerely,

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Letters of sympathy should be handwritten. This extra effort indicates the genuineness of the sympathy expressed.
2. _____ 2. Ideas that deserve emphasis should be placed in dependent clauses.
3. _____ Letters of recommendation should only include positive, favorable comments about the person.
4. _____ Negative or weak traits of a person should be included in the dependent part of a complex sentence, while proper nouns and strong traits should be included in the independent part.

Answers

1. True. Handwritten messages are considered more personal than typed ones. First person writing, too, is more personal than third person. Therefore, you express more sincerity by saying "I was distressed to learn…" rather than by saying "It was distressing to learn…."
2. False. Ideas that deserve emphasis should appear in simple sentences or at least in independent clauses.
3. False. Honest letters of recommendation should indicate known shortcomings. If asked to give a recommendation for someone you can't endorse, tell the person you don't feel you should do so.
4. True. Independent clauses and proper nouns are more meaningful to readers, because the independent clause is a complete thought and the noun is specific.

Introductions

Social and business courtesy contribute to the practice of providing letters of introduction for others. In such a letter, introduce the person, give a reason for the introduction, mention something about the person's background, and thank the reader. Letters of introduction should, of course, be sent only to close acquaintances. Here's an example:

> Dear Steve,
>
> I hope you can take a few minutes of your time to talk with Roger Jones, who will be visiting in San Francisco next week.
>
> Roger is the new U.S. representative for Cutty-Dunn, Ltd., and is making his first visit to the West Coast. Prior to this appointment, he was in charge of their European operations.
>
> I've asked him to call your office for an appointment and will appreciate any courtesy you can show him.
>
> Cordially,

Reservations

The letter of reservation for hotel accommodations should be very specific in terms of arrival time, days to stay, type of room, and confirmation. For example:

> Gentlemen,
>
> Please reserve a single room for me for the nights of June 11, 12, and 13. I shall arrive

about 6 p.m. on June 11 and depart at noon on June 14.

I shall appreciate a prompt confirmation.

Very truly yours,

Invitations

The informal invitation resembles a business letter. It is desirable to use smaller paper than regular business letterhead. Your wording should be conversational, as though you were making the invitation orally. As a matter of style, the inside address should be placed following the letter:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,

You are cordially invited to attend the annual Installation Ball of the Chamber of Commerce at the Surfrider Hotel on January 10. Cocktails will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner and dancing. Please RSVP to my office at 777-4183 by January 4. I hope to see you there.

Cordially,

Mr. And Mrs. Theodore Smith

444 Commonwealth Street

Beverly Hills, California

The invitation should be acknowledged promptly. When a telephone RSVP is not mentioned, either a typed or handwritten reply is satisfactory and should use the same conversational style as the invitation used.

Formal invitations are generally printed, and a printer can provide examples. At the same time, however, many formal invitations are handwritten, especially for smaller groups. When the affair is to be black tie, the invitation should include that notation. Here is an example of a formal invitation:

Mr. and Mrs. George L. Dawes request the company of Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Clarkon at dinner on Saturday, the twelfth of June at seven-thirty o’clock, 635 South Maryland Avenue Chicago, Illinois.

Black Tie

A reply to such an invitation should be written in longhand and follow, as much as possible, the same style. Wording such as the following is appropriate: Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Clarkon accept with pleasure the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. George L. Dawes for dinner on Saturday, the twelfth of June at seven thirty o'clock.

Resignations

When an employee leaves one firm to accept employment in another, employers normally expect a written statement of resignation. Tone and length are determined by circumstances surrounding the resignation. An employee who is leaving under rather unpleasant circumstances would probably include no more than (1) the job title, (2) the resignation, and (3) the effective date:

I resign my position as administrative assistant in the accounting department. My last day of service will be September 30, 2011.

If the urge to take a final stab at a superior, a colleague, or the firm cannot be resisted, include it; but hold the letter for a day or two and read it over. By then, the wisdom of its deletion will almost certainly be evident.

The resignation letter may also include information about the position or firm into which the employee is moving, a limited amount of reminiscence, and an expression of gratitude:

I resign my position as administrative assistant in the accounting department.

From my very first day in the department, I have appreciated the friendly atmosphere, the efficient teamwork, and the encouragement to grow professionally.

After receiving my accounting degree on June 15, I will be moving to San Francisco and beginning my career as an auditor on July 15.

My experience here at ATWELL has been very gratifying.

My last day of service will be September 30, 2010.

Sincerely,

Summary

Special letters have to do with personal relationships and sensitive problems. Such letters are short, seldom longer than just a few lines.

Condolence letters should be sent promptly. Sympathy may be expressed by writing “Deepest Sympathy” at the bottom of a printed card; or a short letter may be handwritten (typewritten if the deceased is an associate). The letter normally includes a statement of sympathy, a sentence conveying interest, and some words of comfort or affection.

Congratulatory letters may be either handwritten or typewritten. Because the letters are about something positive, the letters are easy to write. Because so many people don’t bother to write or simply procrastinate until too much time has passed, the letters that are received make positive and lasting impressions.

In recommendation letters, fairness is paramount-fairness to the job applicant as well as to future employers. Most applicants invite recommendations only from people who can report positives; thus, recommendations are relatively easy to write. When negatives are reported, they are best subordinated.

Introductions, reservations, invitations, and resignations (like other special letters) are short, factual, and courteous.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Letters of introduction are developments of social and business courtesy.
2. _____ The technique of placing the inside address at the bottom of the informal letter helps remove the aura of a routine business letter.
3. _____ Handwritten acknowledgments indicate informality.
4. _____ Even though an invitation is formal, formal dress should be prescribed if it is to be worn.

Answers

1. True. Courtesy is the only rationalization for a letter of introduction.
2. True. Many executives use smaller stationery for personal letters of all types and place the inside address at the bottom. When the reader sees the salutation, first, rather than the inside address, informality is pronounced.
3. False. Handwritten acknowledgments are recommended in most books on etiquette, and handwritten acknowledgments of formal invitations are “musts” in such books.
4. True. As a matter of courtesy, dress should be prescribed. Nothing is more awkward than to be “out of uniform.”

Chapter 9 Review Questions

1. Promotions, elections or other significant achievements may elicit a letter of:

   A. Resignation.
   B. Recommendation.
   C. Congratulation.
   D. Condolence.

2. Letters of reservation for hotel accommodations:

   A. Need not be specific.
   B. Need not be followed by a confirmation.
   C. Need not specify arrival time.
   D. Need to be specific in type of room and day to stay.

3. A letter that should be acknowledged is:

   A. Recommendation letter.
   B. Condolence letter.
   C. Resignation letter.
   D. Introduction letter.

Chapter 9 Review Answers

1. Promotions, elections or other significant achievements may elicit a letter of:

A. Incorrect. Resignation letters are offered when an employee leaves a position to accept other employment.
B. Incorrect. Recommendation letters are used to solicit a statement about performance, attitude, and potential of an individual.
C. **Correct.** Congratulation letters are thoughtful messages sent to acknowledge people on their promotion, election, or some other significant achievement.
D. Incorrect. Condolence letters offer sympathy to family or friends who have suffered or had death or tragedy in the family.

2. Letters of reservation for hotel accommodations:

A. Incorrect. Hotel letters requesting reservations need to request exact dates and accommodations required as well as any other special needs.
B. Incorrect. Hotel letters for reservations need to be confirmed to assure the availability of the required accommodations.
C. Incorrect. Arrival time is needed to specify the exact time of arrival to prepare the room or accommodations and any request for transportation.
D. **Correct**. Hotel letters for reservations need to be specific in terms of days to stay and type of room requested.

3. A letter that should be acknowledged is:

A. Incorrect. Recommendation letters are used for friends or employees either solicited or unsolicited.
B. **Correct.** A letter that should be acknowledged is condolence letter. It is a mark of respect to acknowledge a sympathy or condolence offered by a well-wisher.
C. Incorrect. Resignation letters are short, factual and courteous and require no response.
D. Incorrect. Introduction letters are usually sent to close friends or acquaintances as a social or business introduction.

Chapter 10:

Preparing Personal Resumes

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the attributes of a person who deserves a job
- Identify the information and content of an effective resume..

Sending a written message is not the only approach to getting a job. In some instances, it may not even be the best approach. But it's a good one if the applicant (1) is a person who deserves a job, (2) locates a job possibility, (3) analyzes the job and the preparation for it, (4) prepares an effective job resume, and (5) writes an appropriate letter.

Be a Person Who Deserves a Job

Only those who deserve a job should write for one. They should be able to give affirmative answers to the following questions:

1. Do I want to work? A commendable attitude is "I want to do something worthwhile and for that service I wish to receive a reasonable reward."
2. Can I do something specific? If an employer has a job open, he wants someone who can do the specific tasks for which the job calls. He is not likely to be impressed with the young applicant who wants any job that is open. Those who are prepared for a specific job have an advantage. Since businesses appreciate personnel who make and take advantage of opportunities in business life, they are impressed with young people who have obviously planned their personal lives.
3. Would I be loyal? In a sense, all employees are ambassadors for their firms. In return for their salaries, they are expected to do good work, but more, too. They are members of a team. Their jobs depend on the firm's success. Therefore, they conduct themselves in such a way as to

reflect honor on their firms. To those outside the firm, they speak of it in a favorable light. They explain its actions and interpret its goals if necessary. If interviewees cast aspersions on their present employers, the interviewer's reaction is likely to be negative: "Avoid this applicant. If hired, the applicant would soon be knocking the new employer."

4. Would I be co-operative? Businesses want people with ideas of their own, but they also want workers who have consideration for the ideas of others.
5. Do I have initiative? Employers need workers who have initiative. Those with enough initiative to prepare a job resume and write a letter of application may demonstrate initiative in their work.

Conducting a Successful Job Search

Searching for a job today is vastly different than it used to be as a result of the Web. Until fairly recently a job seeker browsed the local classified ads, found a likely-sounding job listing, prepared an elegant résumé on bond paper, and sent it out by U.S. mail. All that has changed because of the Web. The challenge today is realizing how to use the Web to your advantage, while realizing

Searching for a Job Online.

Searching for a job online has become a common, but not always fruitful, approach. With all the publicity given to Web-based job boards and career sites, you might think that online job searching has totally replaced traditional methods. Although Web sites such as CareerBuilder.com and Monster.com list millions of jobs, actually landing a job is much harder than just clicking a mouse. In addition, these job boards now face competition from social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. The following is a list of some best-known online job sites.

CareerBuilder (www.careerbuilder.com) claims to be the nation's largest employment network. Users can search for millions of jobs by job category, geographic location, keyword, industry, or type of job (full-time, part-time, internship, and so on).

Indeed (www.indeed.com) is one of the newest and fastest growing job search sites on the Web. Indeed.com is a metasearch engine that uses a Google-like interface to search the entire Web for jobs.

Monster (www.monster.com) offers access to information on millions of jobs worldwide. Monster.com uses a search technology called 6Sense to match applicants with the best job opportunities. Because of this cutting-edge search system, many consider Monster.com to be the Web's premier job site.

CollegeGrad (www.collegegrad.com) describes itself as the "number one entry-level job site" for students and graduates. In addition to searching for entry-level jobs, users can also search for undergraduate and graduate degree programs to help them become more marketable.

Beyond the Big Online Job Boards. Many job seekers may turn their backs on job boards but not on online job-searching tactics. Savvy candidates know how to use their computers to search for jobs at Web sites such as the following:

- Company Web sites. Probably the best way to find a job online is at a company's own Web site. Many companies now post job openings only on their own Web sites to avoid being inundated by the volume of applicants that respond to postings on online job boards. Many job seekers also find that they are more likely to obtain an interview if they post their résumés on company sites. In addition to finding a more direct route to decision makers, job seekers find that they can keep their job searches more private than at big board sites.
- Professional organization Web sites. Online job listings have proved to be the single-most popular feature of many professional organizations such as the International Association of Administrative Professionals, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the National Association of Sales Professionals, the National Association of Legal Assistants, and the Association of Information Technology Professionals. Although you pay a fee, the benefits of joining a professional association in your career field are enormous. Remember that it is never too early to start networking. If you join a professional organization while you are still in college, you will jump-start your professional connections.
- JobCentral National Labor Exchange. JobCentral is a public service Web site provided by the DirectEmployers Association, a nonprofit consortium of Fortune 500 and other leading U.S. corporations. Many companies now use www.jobcentral.com as a gateway to job listings at their own Web sites, advertising millions of jobs. Best of all, this service is free, bypassing the big commercial job boards. You can enter a job description or job title, and a list of openings pops up. When you click one, you are taken straight to the company's Web site, where you can apply.
- Local employment Web sites. Although many of the big job boards allow you to search for jobs geographically, many job seekers have more luck using local employment Web sites such as Craigslist (www.craigslist.org).
- Niche Web sites. If you want a job in a specialized field, look for a niche Web site, such as Dice (http://www.dice.com/) for technology jobs, Advance for Health Care for jobs in the medical field, and Accountemps (www.accountemps.com) for accounting positions. Niche Web sites also exist for job seekers with special backgrounds or needs
- Social media sites. Perhaps you use sites such as Facebook or Twitter to communicate with family and friends. However, users are-increasingly tapping into social media sites to prospect for jobs; and recruiters also use these sites to find potential employees. LinkedIn is currently the top site for job seekers, with over 250 million users, including job seekers and recruiters. Other popular sites include Facebook, TheLadders, BlueSteps, and Jobster. Many companies now post recruitment videos on YouTube. Savvy job seekers use these tools to network and to search for available positions. Of course, the most successful job seekers understand the necessity of maintaining a professional online appearance at all times.

You need to be aware of the dangers associated with using online job boards and other employment sites. Your current boss might see your resume posted online, or a fraudster could use the information in your résumé to steal your identity. The following tips can help you conduct a safe, effective Web job search:

- Use reputable sites. Stick to the well-known, reputable job boards. Never use a site that makes you pay to post your résumé.
- Be selective. Limit the number of sites on which you post your résumé. Employers dislike "résumé spammers."
- Use a dedicated e-mail address. Set up a separate e-mail account with a professional-sounding e-mail address for your job search.
- Limit personal information. Never include your social security or other identification numbers on your resume. Consider omitting your home address and home phone number to protect your privacy.
- Post privately. If given an option, choose to post your résumé privately. Doing so means that you can control who has access to your e-mail address and other contact information.
- Count the days. Renew your résumé posting every 14 days. If you keep it up longer, it will look as if employers have no interest in you. If you haven't received a response in 45 days, pull your résumé from the site and post it somewhere else.
- Keep careful records. Keep a record of every site on which you post your résumé. At the end of your job search, remove all posted résumés.
- Protect your references. If you post your résumé online, don't include your references. It is unethical for job seekers to post their references' personal contact information online without their knowledge.
- Don't respond to a "blind" job posting. Respond only to job postings that include a company name and contact information. It is unfortunate that many scammers use on line job boards to post fake job ads as a way to gather your personal information.

Searching for a Job Using Traditional Techniques

Finding the perfect job requires an early start and a determined effort. Those with proactive personalities were the most successful in securing interviews and jobs. Successful candidates were not passive; they were driven to "make things happen. You are cautioned that grade point averages make a difference to employers. You are also advised of the importance of experience, such as internships. Traditional job search techniques, such as those described below, continue to be critical in landing jobs.

- Check classified ads in local and national newspapers. Classified job ads can be found in print or online versions of newspapers. Be aware, though, that classified ads are only one small source of jobs.

- Check announcements in publications of professional organizations. If you do not have a student membership, ask your instructors to share current copies of professional journals, newsletters, and so on. Your college library is another good source.
- Contact companies in which you are interested, even if you know of no current opening. Write an unsolicited letter and include your résumé. Follow up with a telephone call. Check the company's Web site for employment possibilities and procedures. To learn immediately of job openings, use Twitter to follow companies where you would like to work.
- Sign up for campus interviews with visiting company representatives. Campus recruiters may open your eyes to exciting jobs and locations. They may also help you prepare by offering mock interviews.
- Attend career fairs. Job fairs are invaluable in your quest to learn about specific companies and your future career options. Recruiters say that the more you know about the company and its representatives, the more comfortable you will be in an interview.18
- Ask for advice from your instructors. Your teachers often have contacts and ideas for conducting and expanding your job search.
- Develop your own network of contacts. Networking still accounts for most of the jobs found by candidates. Therefore, plan to spend a considerable portion of your job search time developing a personal network.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ An applicant is well advised to apply for any job that is open.
2. _____ An employee’s obligation is limited to the doing of work for which the employer pays.
3. _____ In responses to newspaper ads, promptness is a key factor.
4. _____ Compared with private employment agencies, placement bureaus have a greater incentive to locate high paying jobs for applicants.
5. _____ If a firm has a policy against nepotism, it will not hire friends of present employees.

Answers

1. False. An applicant who applies for any job that is open may not be sufficiently prepared for the one job that is open. Ideally, a young person selects an occupation, prepares for it, and applies for a job in it. People who are that systematic in planning their personal lives may also be systematic in planning and performing their work.
2. False. Employers also expect such qualities as loyalty, cooperation, and initiative.
3. True. The first letters received may get more careful attention. The trait of promptness is a personal virtue that prospective employers may consider a business virtue.
4. False. For private agencies, the higher the pay the higher will be their fee. School placement bureaus do not have the financial incentives to find high paying jobs for applicants.
5. False. If a firm has a policy against nepotism, it will not hire relatives of present employees.

Analyze the job and your preparation for it.

The main purpose of a job resume and an application letter is to get an interview. Afterward, they may be scrutinized again to see if the interview corroborated the first impression. Ordinarily, the resume and application letter are considered successful if they get an interview; but a candidate who is given an interview but later loses out when they are compared with other letters and resumes has not necessarily written a successful letter. The most successful letters lead the prospective employer to think, "I believe this applicant can do what we want done." If you are to lead the employer to this conclusion, you must have a clear idea of (1) what the job entails and (2) your preparation for doing it. And, of course, you have to write convincingly; you have to show how the preparation matches the job.

Before you convince the employer, you have to convince yourself. On one side of a sheet, write down everything you know about the job. You have a chance to learn about the job through several media: (1) Your occupational courses in school. If, for example, you are applying for a junior accountant's job, you should have a good idea of what tasks a junior accountant performs. Or, if you are applying for placement in a management-trainee program, your management courses should be helpful in a general way. (2) The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. Although job titles do not always give accurate descriptions of the work performed by someone who has that title in a specific firm, they do give you a general idea. (3) A visit to a branch office, if that is convenient. (4) A talk with former employees. (5) A talk with workers who perform a similar job for another company. (6) The firm's annual report or any other information (such as its field, service, or product) that you can get from the company's Web site. Blogs are also good sources for company research. Many employers maintain both formal and informal blogs. Also join the company's Facebook or Twitter page and start following the company to gather even more information prior to your interview. And while you are learning about the specific job you want, learn as much as possible about the company. If you can learn who your supervisor would be and what that person's viewpoints are, do so. The more information you have, the better are your chances for making a sound decision.

These instructions may seem elementary. Yet it's one thing to *know* something should be done but another to *do* it. A college-campus recruiter for one of the largest firms in the country had some lamentations at the end of a long day of interviewing. He said it was obvious that not a single applicant had done any research on his company before the interview. In fact, most of them had not even read the pamphlets given to them by the school placement bureau when they had made the interview appointment. According to the interviewer, the candidates were "not hungry enough." His firm was not interested in prospective employees who showed such an astonishing lack of interest or initiative. The more you know about your prospective employer, the easier it will be for you to write to and talk with him or her.

Now that you have filled up one side of a page with information about the requirements of the job, fill up the other side with information about yourself. The common tendency is to say, "I can digest all this job-and self-analysis information and just keep it in my mind. No need to bother writing it down." Remember that the employer is going to get an impression from the written facts. Put them down and see how you would react. If your self-analysis reveals a startling lack of preparation, begin making plans to get it or seek a different job. Good writing, of course, is helpful; but you can never count on it as a substitute for the training, experience, and education necessary for the job you want. Opposite the training required for the job, list the training you have had. Do the same for experience, education, and other factors. Ask yourself whether the job would lead to your life's goals. Do some serious thinking about your strengths and weaknesses.

Keep those job-and self-analysis notes; they will help you prepare a job resume.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The resume and letter of application are ordinarily considered successful if they result in an interview.
2. _____ "what does the job entail?" and "What is my preparation for the job?" Before preparing a resume, a job seeker should answer these questions.
3. _____ Since the information obtained in job- and self-analysis is primarily for the job seeker, the information need not be written down.
4. _____ Before applying for a job with a certain company, a job seeker should try to become informed about that company.

Answers

1. True. The purpose of the resume and letter is to get an interview. A job seeker can hardly be expected to get a job on the basis of the letter and resume alone.
2. True. Answering these questions may convince the seeker that more preparation is necessary. Answering these questions helps the seeker to see vividly how the preparation fits the job. Having seen these points clearly, the applicant has an improved chance of making the prospective employer see them.
3. False. The act of writing down the results of job-and self-analysis helps an applicant to see them clearly. The prospective employer will be getting information from written words; putting them on paper assists in looking at the facts from that point of view.
4. True. The more an applicant knows about the prospective employer, the more effectively the applicant can write to or talk with that employer.

Prepare a Resume

Times have changed the style of application letters. No longer do we attempt to compose a long letter that includes all pertinent data. Nowadays, personnel managers prefer to receive application letters accompanied with a sheet of factual information.

The resume goes by various names-personal data sheet, summary, qualification sheet, or personal profile. Ordinarily, it is clipped to the back of the application letter. Therefore, the personnel office reads it after having read the application letter; however, the resume should be written first. Preparing it first forces the applicant to do some job-and self-evaluation before writing. Preliminary thinking and evaluation are good mental preparations for writing the letter.

The resume and the letter of application serve different purposes. One does not repeat the other. The resume *summarizes all pertinent information about the applicant*. The letter *interprets the information*. Typically, applicants examine their resumes and select the most outstanding facts. Then, in their letters, they point out how, by these facts, they are qualified to do what the employer wants done. The resume is usually treated like any other enclosure--alluded to in the last few lines of the letter.

The resume saves both time and effort for reader and writer. If readers are primarily interested in an applicant's work experience, they can locate it quickly on the data sheet; it is listed under an obvious heading. They can get the facts quickly because they are in summary form. At first thought, a writer may think it takes more effort to prepare both a letter and a data sheet than to write a lengthy letter. For those who are not accustomed to typing, the tabulation required on a data sheet may appear to be somewhat of a problem. But this problem is offset by the ease of composition.

By arranging their resumes in a pleasing manner and presenting data in appropriate sequence, job seekers give proof of their ability to organize. Various formats are acceptable. A resume makes a good impression if the typing is done so that space is used economically without giving a crowded appearance and if the headings are obvious enough to make finding them easy. There are numerous software, templates, and even online resume builders are available (e.g., www.pongoresume.com and http://resume-writing-software-review.toptenreviews.com/). The models on Figure 1 are acceptable; so are others.

Most of the information included on a data sheet can be divided into the following categories: (1) Experience, (2) Education, (3) Personal details, and (4) References. If you want to be conventional, begin with the personal details and end with references. If you want to be more modern (and more practical), begin with the category you wish to emphasize most. The first position is most emphatic. If you have had little experience but have just finished college, your most distinctive selling point is probably your education.

If education is to be emphasized more than experience, let education occupy the first section of the resume sheet. Since the employer will be less interested in personal details than in education and experience, place personal details in a subordinate position. Just before references would be a good place to indicate them. The last section of the sheet is a good place for references. Now that the employer has read your letter and the foregoing parts of the resume, it's just natural for you to end by inviting inquiries of others for more information.

If you have accumulated considerable experience, you may conclude that your most outstanding qualification for the new job is not education but experience. Then, emphasize experience by placing it in first position. Should you tell all your experience, part-time and full-time? Yes, for those who have had little experience; no, for those who have had a great variety.

If you are just getting out of school, you may never have held a full-time job. If not, perhaps you worked for short periods between school terms. Rare indeed is the young person who has had no experience at all. And rare, too, is the graduate who would want to advertise lack of experience by listing on the resume, "Experience: None." If job seekers have actually had no work experience, they may be able to mention fraternities, clubs, or other groups in which they have held positions of responsibility. They would want to make a definite selling point of education. Instead of using the negative sounding "no experience," they could list the specialized training courses that have prepared them for entry into the occupation.

Almost all who have done a good job of self- and job-analysis will see how some of their experiences have been good preparation for the job they want. A part-time filling station attendant who is just graduating and looking for his first accounting job can still list something under the heading "Experience." True, he can't call it "accounting experience"; but it's "work experience" and pretty good experience, too. He can profitably analyze the ways in which his filling station work and accounting work are similar. Most station attendants have some records to keep and most accountants have to handle money. Both have to be accurate. Both may have keys to the premises. Both need to be punctual. Both have some contact with the public. Both have to work long hours in certain seasons. The conduct of either to a certain extent determines the profits of the business. If management had no faith in an attendant's ability to accept responsibility, the attendant would no longer have a job. The same is true of an accountant. Furthermore, people tend to judge our capacity to perform one job by our performance on another. Even if accounting and filling station work were less related, management would still be inclined to believe that a part-time station attendant with a record of dependability would also be a dependable accountant.

By the same token, a student who served as a janitor or a cook while in college does have some work experience to report. These facts should be reported on the resume and interpreted in the letter of application. The fact that a student has worked at any part-time job while in school is a recommendation in itself. Even though the work may have provided little valuable experience, it does suggest that the candidate has some initiative. It somehow suggests that education was considered important enough to work for it. And those who really want an education are inclined to apply themselves on the job.

Naturally, those who have a variety of work experiences have an advantage. They can choose the experiences most related to the job for which they are applying. No rule says you have to report your experiences in chronological order. Why not list first the experience that is most related and end with the one that ranks next in order of relatedness? In this way, you gain emphasis on the experiences that deserve it.

No rule says you have to list every job you ever held. To do so might result in a list so long that your outstanding experiences are de-emphasized. Also, a long list may suggest that you have moved about too much. It may suggest that you were unpopular on your jobs or that you were occupationally unsettled. In either case, the reaction is negative. Of course, if you are filling out an application form, give the information in the order called for in the form. If you are making your own data sheet (resume), however, you are free to list the most relevant experience and then indicate that you have at times held other jobs.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ 1. Instead of two separate sheets, personnel managers prefer to receive a single sheet that combines the resume and the letter of application.
2. _____ 2. The resume should be prepared before the application letter is written.
3. _____ 3. Regardless of an applicant's background, "Experience" should be the first section of the data sheet.
4. _____ 4. Experience that requires considerable manual labor should be omitted from a resume that seeks an office-type job.
5. _____ 5. Experience should be listed in chronological order.

Answers

1. False. Two sheets are preferred-one that gives the pertinent information in easy-to-locate, summary form (the resume) and another that interprets the information (letter of application).
2. True. Preparing the resume forces job-and self-evaluation. This preliminary thinking and evaluation is good mental preparation for writing the letter.
3. False. If experience is considered an applicant's strongest qualification, it should be presented in the first section. If the background of experience is weak, placing experience in the first section would serve to emphasize the weakness.
4. False. The duties and attributes required for certain manual jobs may be required also for the office-type job sought. For example, one who reports manual experience is also implying some evidence of such qualities as dependability, initiative, cooperativeness, and punctuality.
5. False. If experience is reported in chronological order, the most significant experience could appear near the middle of a list where it will get little attention and emphasis.

Try to apply the following guides in preparing your resume: (1) Choose the format most suitable for you; make the arrangement neat and uncrowded. (2) Arrange the categories of information in the best psychological sequence. (3) Use phrases rather than complete sentences wherever practical; this procedure will save space and make for parallel construction. (4) Put all the information on one page if you can; thus, you will list only important facts and save time for the personnel department. There is no rule against using two or more pages if necessary. (5) Keep the resume factual. Your letter is the persuasive instrument that interprets the facts.

Look at the resume illustrated in Figure 1

The title identifies the sheet as a resume for a certain person; it also reveals the nature of the work being sought. The title is such that copies of the sheet could be sent to many different firms. The sheet could be made to appear tailor-made for a specific firm by changing the title to "Charles B. Hay's Resume: A Career in Finance and Management with XYZ Company." In the mind of an XYZ official, an applicant who makes the effort to adapt the resume to the company may have some desirable qualities not possessed by competing applicants.

FIGURE 1

Charles B. Hay's Resume: A CAREER IN FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Education

Master of Business Administration Degree, University of Michigan, August, 2010.

Among the Business and Economics courses taken:

- Managerial Finance
- Managerial Accounting
- Managerial Economics
- Research and Report Writing
- Marketing Concepts
- Business Policy

Grade average: 3.45 (on a scale in which 4 is an A; 3, B; 2, C; 1, D)

Bachelor of Science in Financial Administration, Kansas State University, 2007.

Among the Business and Economics courses taken:

- Principles of Management
- Principles of Finance
- Financial Institutions
- Tax Accounting
- Public Relations
- Business Law
- Business Communication
- Managerial Decisions
- Human Relations

Grade average: 3.65 (on a scale in which 4 is an A; 3, B; 2, C; 1, D)

Experience

- Graduate Assistant: University of Michigan, 2008-2009. (Assisted Dr. John Snell in preparing, proctoring, and grading tests. Evaluated term reports.)
- Part-time Teller: First National Bank, Manhattan, Kansas, 2006-2007. (Worked two hours daily at the Drive-up Window.)
- Part-time Cashier: Wilson's Discount Stores, Manhattan, Kansas, 2005-2006. (Took inventories and stocked shelves, in addition to operating the cash register.)

Other Responsibilities

As a graduate student:

- Vice president, MBA club
- Intern fellowship, Mutual Life Insurance Association

As an undergraduate student:

- Treasurer, Alpha Kappa Psi
- Secretary, Senior Class
- Senator, College of Business

As a high school student:

- Member, National Honor Society

As a community servant:

- Tennis instructor, Parks and Recreation Dept.

Personal Information

Recreational interests: Playing tennis, watching football and baseball
Address: 1401 Bolt Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
Telephone: 517- 926-5622

References (by permission)

Dr. John Snell
Professor of Finance
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Mr. John White
Branch Manager
First National Bank
114 West Boulevard
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

Mr. Harry W. Wilson
President, Wilson stores
441 West Fourth Street
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

The *education* section appears first because the applicant considers his education a greater asset than experience. As years go by and experience accumulates, experience will deserve first place position on the resume. Only the most closely related courses are listed. Listing all courses would require too much space and take emphasis away from the most pertinent courses. The grade average is interpreted because not all schools use a 4-point system in computing averages. If education had not extended beyond the bachelor's degree, the applicant would probably have listed the high school from which he was graduated. To stress the fact that education was directly related to the job sought, the applicant could have changed the section title from "Education" to "Education in Finance and Management."

The *experience*, likewise, could have been titled "Job-Related Experience" or "Related Experience in Finance and Management" to indicate a closeness of relationship between previous jobs and the job sought. Because the applicant considered the experience as a graduate assistant to be of greater importance than the other experiences, it was listed first. The parenthetical statements about duties performed are especially helpful to a reader who is trying hard to see how past experiences have prepared an applicant for the job sought.

The *other responsibilities* section seems appropriate for this applicant, but it need not be included in all resumes. It provides some clues about the applicant's ability to learn, willingness to accept responsibility, ability to get along with others, and desire to be of service.

The *personal information* requires less space than any other section. It is further subordinated by its position on the sheet. Other personal details could have been included, but the interview would probably be a better place for revealing them. If the address after August 31 were known, it could have been included.

The *references* section presents names, titles, and addresses as they would appear on a letter or envelope. Note that each name is preceded by a courtesy title and followed by the official title. Since education was the applicant's strongest asset, at least one of the references had to be from the educational field. Some applicants prefer not to include a list of references for fear that knowledge of job seeking efforts will result in human-relations problems on the present job. Those who think it best not to include references usually indicate that a list of references will be provided on request or at the interview.

Now compare the resume in Figure 2 with that of Figure 1. The applicant is obviously one whose work experience is a stronger asset than is prior education. Also, an equivalent position in another, larger firm appears to be the goal of the applicant. Generally when a person in a job is interested in a job change, he or she should withhold the list of references until an interview is held and serious consideration for the person is apparent.

FIGURE 2

SYLVIA MANCHESTER

765 Belle Fleur Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70113 — (504) 555-9504

OBJECTIVE

A position in marketing or sales with the opportunity to work in the field of biochemical research

WORK EXPERIENCE

2004–present: Fisher Scientific Instruments, Field Sales Representative

- Call on directors of medical labs and of government and university research labs in a three-state territory (Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas).
- Increased territory's sales 150 percent in 3 years. Help define needs for electronic instruments and explain features and benefits of Fisher's line.
- Follow up with regular visits to monitor needs for instrumentation.
- Write sales letters to prospective and existing clients.
- Represent Fisher at trade shows in territory and at annual meeting of American Medical Association.

- Won company sales award 2009, 2010.

2001–2003: Fisher Scientific Instruments, Customer Service Representative

- Answered customer calls about delivery, quality, and operation of electronic instruments.
- Corresponded with customers who required written response.

1998–2001: Medical Electronics, Inc., Administrative Assistant to Vice President of Marketing

- Compiled monthly sales reports, using figures provided by field sales force.
- Conducted market research.

1995–1998: New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, Part-Time Tour Guide

- Led all-day tours for city visitors.
- Greeted convention attendees, explained history and features of the city.
- Helped train new tour guides.
- Prepared a handbook with interesting facts on attractions and answers to frequently asked questions.

1995–1998: University of Louisiana, Admissions Office, Part-Time Clerk

- Processed student applications and handled correspondence with high school students and administrators.

EDUCATION

June 1998: B.A., Biology, University of Louisiana

Note: Topics such as age, sex, race, religion, or national origin are forbidden by government regulation.

Preparation of a Job Interview

Once you are called for an interview, remember that in the competitive business world, there are sure to be dozens of other highly qualified candidates going after your job. It's important to make yourself stand out as someone special. Now is the time to practice exactly how you will sell yourself to a prospective employer during that crucial first meeting. Do your homework. Research the company beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and will help you to formulate intelligent questions to ask him or her.

Summary

The task of finding a first job after graduation or of seeking a beneficial job change should be a serious one and is often time consuming. Whether you fall in either of these categories or neither, you will find that maintaining an up-to-date personal record is valuable. Just as most people take the time to assess their monetary net worth from time to time, they should assess their personal worth. You might find you are worth more than you imagined. Finally, once your data sheet is complete, proofread it carefully. If you were an employer, would you be pleased to receive the data sheet you have prepared? All the thinking that went into it will pay dividends as you proceed to write the letter to accompany it.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ On the resume, phrases (instead of complete sentences) are preferred.
2. _____ Preferably, resumes should be presented on one page (instead of two or three).
3. _____ The education section should list all courses taken.
4. _____ Personal information should be given in great detail.
5. _____ If education has received more stress than experience, at least one of the references would be expected to be from the field of education.

Answers

1. True. With phrases, much information can be placed on one page. Compared with complete sentences, phrases are easier to tabulate. Tabulated items are easy to locate on a page.
2. True. Presenting on one page forces the applicant to identify and list only the most pertinent information. Pertinent points will stand out more vividly if they are not competing with insignificant points. A one-page resume is more timesaving and convenient for the receiver.
3. False. Listing all would consume too much space and take emphasis away from the most closely related courses.
4. False. Listing in great detail would consume too much space and take emphasis away from more relevant information.
5. True. Absence of a reference from the educational field would possibly arouse suspicions about whether educators could supply a favorable recommendation.

Five Tips on Customizing Your Résumé

1. *Research your target market.* Some job seekers make the mistake of having a "one-size-fit-all" résumé with no regard as to who is about to read it. Every job opening has a different set of requirements, meaning that your résumé must be customized. First, identify and write down the key points and requirements sought by the employer. Concentrate on the tangible skills and amount of expertise needed for the job. Disregard vague words such as "team player" or

"problem solver" in the job description and instead focus on the concrete skills and education being sought.

2. *Create a powerful headline statement*. Begin with a concise statement conveying your title, industry background, area of expertise, and amount of expertise. If an employer were skimming hundreds of résumés for a specific type of professional, what headline would entice them to read further?
3. *Summarize your relevant skills*. Clearly address all of the relevant points that the employer requires with a summary at the top of your résumé. Use concise statements and succinct language.
4. *Go beyond the job description*. Many poorly written job descriptions that fail to include important information such as the company's industry, the product they produce, or even specific skills or responsibilities the job entails.
5. *Do your own research using the Internet or telephone to fill in these gaps yourself*. You will need to know this critical information if you get called to the interview, so addressing this critical information early will set your résumé apart from the others.

Build Personal Websites

With an online presence increasingly helping -- or hindering -- careers, many consultants and recruiters say personal web sites can be key to controlling your image. A web site is your way of owning your Google results" and can help your name come up when people search for your area of expertise. You can make a free site via programs like Yahoo or Google's (sites.google.com) that don't require complex web-design skills. You also can buy your domain name -- basically, yourname.com -- for as little as $10 a year. The free option could be cluttered with ads, but buying your domain requires you to build the site from scratch.

- Break your résumé out into tabs on your web site, using categories like work experience, education and community involvement. You also can start a blog -- but only if there's a topic you care enough about to write on at least once a week.
- List the web site on your business card, résumé and social networks. And make sure your online portfolio matches the real you -- on paper and in person. You're raising a red flag by saying one thing on your marketing portfolio online and something different on the résumé you've sent.

Chapter 10 Review Questions

1. A person who deserves a job is one that:

   A. Does not have a job or initiative.
   B. Is not cooperative.
   C. Is not loyal.
   D. Is prepared for a specific task.

2. The main purpose of a job resume is to:

   A. Organize your thoughts.
   B. Get an interview.
   C. Learn to write an application letter.
   D. Exaggerate your talent and skills.

3. A good resume will:

   A. Be limited to one page.
   B. Use sentences instead of phrases.
   C. List education and work related experience and personal details.
   D. Give personal data in great detail.

4. In a tight job market the best source of job possibilities for professional jobs are:

   A. Newspaper advertisements.
   B. Libraries.
   C. Professional organizations.
   D. Teachers.

5. The letter of application is used to:

   A. Summarize all pertinent data.
   B. Interpret the resume data and emphasize outstanding qualities and abilities.
   C. Present a personal profile.
   D. Serve as a qualification sheet.

6. Most information included on a data sheet (resume) should include all the following categories except:

A. Wages and benefits expected.
B. Personal details.
C. Education background.
D. Work-experience and references.

7. The best technique to prepare for a job interview is to:

A. Prepare an effective resume.
B. Prepare an outstanding application letter.
C. Research the company you are applying to.
D. Dress casually to appear relaxed.

Chapter 10 Review Answers

1. A person who deserves a job is one that:

A. Incorrect. Employers need workers who have initiative.
B. Incorrect. Businesses want workers who are cooperative and have consideration for the ideas of others as well as being team players.
C. Incorrect. Employers want loyal employees who reflect honor on the firm and are ambassadors of good will.
D. **Correct**. Employers want someone who is trained and can do the specific task for which the job calls for.

2. The main purpose of a job resume is to:

A. Incorrect. Organizing your thoughts is preparing yourself and not the main purpose of a resume.
B. **Correct.** The main purpose of a job resume and letter of application is to get an interview.
C. Incorrect. Learning to write an application letter is preparation for writing a resume and not the main purpose.
D. Incorrect. Exaggerating your skills and talents can create embarrassment and loss of a position if you cannot back up your talent and skills with evidence and performance.

3. A good resume will:

A. Incorrect. There is no advantage to one-page vs. two-pages. The most important is convey all the necessary information possible in the best possible manner..
B. Incorrect. Using phrases allows you to put more informative information on one page.
C. **Correct.** Most information included in a resume can be divided into: experience, education, personal details, and references.
D. Incorrect. Listing personal data in great detail would consume too much space and take the emphasis away from more relevant information such as job skills and related job experience.

4. In a tight job market the best source of job possibilities for professional jobs are:

A. Incorrect. Newspaper advertisements have a flood of applicants in a tight job market.
B. Incorrect. Libraries have too general of information that is usually not current.
C. **Correct.** The best source of job possibilities for professional jobs is professional organizations. Many professional associations' websites post job openings.

D. Incorrect. Teachers do not always have access to professional openings to refer potential graduates who are often competing for the same positions.

5. The letter of application is used to:

A. Incorrect. Summarizing pertinent data is part of the resume and would be redundant for the letter of application to include this material.
B. **Correct.** The objective of the application letter is to interpret the resume data and emphasize outstanding qualities and abilities.
C. Incorrect. Personal profiles are included in the resume in terms of education, work- experience, and personal achievements.
D. Incorrect. The qualification sheet is a key part of the resume that details your education, training, and work history.

6. Most information included on a data sheet (resume) should include all the following categories except:

A. **Correct.** A data sheet should not include wages and benefits expected. However, it should include education, skills, training and work-related experience.
B. Incorrect. Personal details are a standard category listed on all resumes.
C. Incorrect. Educational background is a standard requirement on all resumes often the major element especially for those with limited work experience.
D. Incorrect. Work-experience and references are standard categories required on all resumes.

7. The best technique to prepare for a job interview is to:

A. Incorrect. An effective resume is used to obtain a job interview, not prepare for it.
B. Incorrect. An outstanding application letter is used to draw attention to your skills and abilities and how they match up with the job description.
C. **Correct.** The best technique to prepare for a job interview is to research the company beforehand so that you can showcase that knowledge during the interview. This will boost your credibility with the interviewer and will help you to formulate intelligent questions to ask him or her.
D. Incorrect. In preparing for a job interview good grooming and attention to proper dress is a required advantage.

Chapter 11:

Writing Application Letters

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Define the basics of good job applications.
- Recognize strong components and usage of elements within an application.

The application letter follows the basic sales-letter plan--getting attention and interest, identifying specific preparation to do a job, giving sufficient evidence to be convincing, and asking for action. The primary difference is in the product you have to sell. Instead of selling a thing, you are selling your own *merits*. But in either case, you're selling an idea-you have what the recipient needs.

As indicated earlier, the writing task is simplified if you have preceded it with a thorough job- and self-analysis. For most of us, the writing is almost sure to be more effective if we first review some of the important aspects of composition discussed in Chapters 2,3, and 4: coherence, concreteness, convention, emphasis, originality, simplicity, sincerity, and empathy.

Knowing the basics of composition is certainly helpful in composing application letters. Knowing them and even applying them well, however, do not assure an effective letter. The following list illustrates some of the common errors made by applicants:

- Copying a letter written by some other person.
- Sounding unduly humble.
- Begging or asking for sympathy.
- Sounding too flippant or casual.
- Seeming to lecture the recipient.
- Seeming to brag about accomplishments.
- Writing "I'm qualified" without giving evidence to support the statement.
- Using the present employer's stationery.
- Commenting negatively about the present employer.

- Writing about graduation as if it were the only requisite needed.
- Using vague, general terms.
- Repeating (instead of interpreting) resume information.
- Using outworn expressions.

The following words and expressions have been overused in application letters. Try to avoid them.

- *Applicant*. If your letter shows how you are suited to do the work, you need not label yourself as an "applicant." To do so is to say the obvious.
- *Application*. Your letter will be identified as an application without this label.
- *Consider me as an applicant for the position*. Indicate this idea through implication.
- *I should like to apply for*…. Just apply. No need to say you "would like" to apply or "are applying."
- *Interview*. Let your competitors use this expression. It connotes a formal, question-and-answer session. This word is very common in the final paragraph. A careful writer can introduce the idea of an interview without using the word. "Talk with you," "discuss the work," and "call at your office" are possibilities.
- *Position*. To some people, a position is a title or post that someone holds; it doesn't necessarily apply to work. Use job or work if you want to sound more original and more realistic.
- *Qualification*. Others use this word too much. Employers will recognize training and experience as "qualifications" without your attaching the label. You can usually leave the word to implication or use such words as preparation, background, or work record.

Let's examine some parts of application letters written for different job-getting occasions: unsolicited application letters, solicited application letters, and other letters about employment.

The unsolicited application letter

For several reasons, firms like to receive applications for jobs they have not advertised. With a file of unsolicited applications, a firm can achieve several objectives: (1) save advertising costs; (2) fill jobs more quickly, because the personnel department can look in the file and be in touch with an applicant in a short time; (3) save personnel department time, because the department may find a suitable worker from a small file of unsolicited letters; otherwise, an advertisement may bring fifty or a hundred invited applications, all of which require some attention; (4) avoid possible goodwill-losing situations, because some who have applied may be embittered when they are not employed; (5) get applicants who possess the qualities of initiative and foresight; (6) be fairly certain that any present employee who may not be measuring up to performance standards can be replaced.

From the applicant's point of view, the unsolicited application letter also has advantages: (1) It increases the number of jobs from which the applicant can select. (2) It meets with less competition than it would have if it were sent in response to an advertisement. (3) It could create a job if it persuaded the employer to believe that a worker was needed to do something that is not now being done. (4) It may assist in getting a better job, because the highly preferred jobs are often filled before any applications are invited. (5) It may suggest initiative on the part of the writer.

Basically, the unsolicited letter of application is a sales letter. As such, it follows the fundamental steps of selling--getting attention, arousing interest, presenting convincing evidence, and asking for action.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The application letter follows the same sequence-of-idea pattern as does the sales letter.
2. _____ The application letter should repeat information presented on the resume.
3. _____ An applicant should state specifically “Please consider me an applicant for the position.”
4. _____ Firms normally resent applications for jobs that have not been advertised.
5. _____ Because an application letter was not invited, the recipient may assume the applicant has a certain amount of initiative.

Answers

1. True. Both are inductive. Selling one’s merits is similar to selling a product: get attention, identify the preparation for the job, give evidence that the preparation is meritorious, ask for a chance to discuss the job.
2. False. Instead of repeating the resume, the application letter should interpret; it should point out how the facts included on the resume actually constitute suitable preparation for the job.
3. False. The expression is worn. One who writes an application letter obviously wants to be considered. Saying so is not necessary. The space could be more profitably used on presenting evidence of good preparation for the job.
4. False. Firms normally appreciate unsolicited letters. They save advertising costs and personnel time. As a group, unsolicited applicants may have more initiative than do those who respond to ads.
5. True. One who sends an unsolicited letter has not waited for the employer to make the first move. By sending the unsolicited letter, an applicant may cause the employer to see the applicant as one who seeks and creates opportunities-a quality the business would like to see in its employees.

Getting attention and interest

In application letters, the choice of attention getters is more limited than in sales letters. Consider the following possibilities.

1. Presenting outstanding qualifications: "When you need a secretary who can type 70 words per minute, take shorthand at 125, and transcribe at 50, please call me."
2. Describing job requirements: "Trainee must have college degree with major in finance and economics, and excellent references." Please check to see how well my background fits these trainee specifications, as listed in your Information Booklet No. 45!"
3. Referring to the source of job information. "From the Gazette's July 13 story about your plans to market pork on the West Coast, I concluded that you may want to hire a well-trained, experienced meat salesman."
4. Using the name of someone in the organization. "Dr. Allen Porter of your Market Research Department told our fraternity last month that you often add young marketing majors to your summer sales force."
5. Using a catch phrase that leads to the presentation of qualifications. 'A blind man is driving this car.' That sign on the back of one of your representative's cars opened my eyes. I'm no longer blind to the fact that you are selling four-fifths of the Venetian blinds sold in Springburg. May I help you?"

The possibilities for attention-getting devices have by no means been exhausted. Regardless of the manner in which you seek to attract attention, your attention-getting paragraph should let the employer know he is about to read an application for a specific job or a specific type of work. The first paragraph should lead naturally into a discussion of preparation for the job.

Presenting Preparation

If you can get attention by summarizing your outstanding qualification in the very first sentence, fine. Then you should give the supporting details. If you use some other attention getter, you will need to introduce your qualifications as quickly as possible. The natural tendency is to plunge into an historical account of past experiences, as the following second paragraph does:

> While I was a student at Wilcoy High School, I majored in business subjects-bookkeeping, salesmanship, and business law. Then after studying business for two years at Hays Business College, I took a job as collection agent with Porter and Sons, where I am still employed.

Perhaps many applicants use this approach because it is narrative. Sequence of ideas is easy because the applicant writes about experiences in chronological order. But the disadvantages of the narrative approach probably outweigh the advantages. Remember, the reader wants to know whether you can do the job for which you are applying. You are probably a stranger, and your autobiography may sound very much like hundreds of others. Then, too, the narrative approach is conducive to using too many "I's." Remember the admonition to write to others in terms of their own interests. The reader is primarily interested in the phase of your experience most related to the job. You are expected to point out that relationship. Does the preceding example tell anything not included on the resume? Observe that the following paragraph concentrates on *interpreting* the resume instead of *repeating* it.

> From the business courses taken in school and from two years' experience as a collection agent, I have wrestled with a variety of human-relations problems-legal, psychological, and sales promotional. The claims adjusters in your department almost certainly have the same types of problems—acting always within the limits of law and ethics, saying words most likely to influence a particular client, and constantly promoting the company.

Notice that the preceding paragraph employs "I" only once; it does not mention the factual details about where the applicant went to school, the courses taken, or the location of the present job. These facts can be included in the resume. Notice, too, that the emphasis is not on chronology. Rather, it is on the relationship of the applicant's experience to the requirements of the job. Furthermore, the paragraph gives the impression that this applicant knows what would be expected of a claims adjuster. This point comes across without lecturing or boasting. The last sentence is long, but it is not too complicated for easy reading.

In the discussion of your background, you can sometimes weave something into your writing to show that you are familiar with the firm and its future plans or present problems. But don't put yourself in the position of telling that which is already known, as the following sentence does:

> In addition to opening three new branches this year, your bank is installing drive-in windows in all its branches and switching to electronic calculating machines.

The sentence does little more than reveal a knowledge of company affairs. Use an indirect method of revealing this knowledge; let this information appear in a sentence that says something more important:

> In addition to taking finance courses and working part time as a teller at the ABC Bank, I'm just completing an eight-week course in the programming of the XXX computer-the same model State Bank (the bank to which this application is being sent) is now making preparations to install.

The paragraph that follows the preceding paragraph could profitably continue with some details about the course just completed-significant subject matter covered, most important concepts the applicant came to understand and appreciate, projects undertaken, names of guest speakers if they were well known, and so forth. From a desire to be brief, or from sheer laziness, too many applicants would omit such details. Rationalizing, they would argue that the reader is a busy person and does not want to read a long letter. Remember, however, that the reader's task of finding the right employee for the job is a serious one. Instead of being resented, the details are appreciated; they illustrate vividly the relationship between the applicant's background and the job. In addition, the applicant who presents such details implies knowledge of what the job entails and the requisites for success in it. Many are the applicants who will be satisfied to reveal that they have "had a course in" or "majored in" a subject; but, without supporting details, a reader can hardly judge whether anything was *learned*.

Asking for Action.

As in a sales letter, writers of application letters define for themselves the desired action before beginning to write. Whether they want the employer to grant an immediate interview, give some indication of interest, or file the application for future openings, they write with that action in mind. Naturally, they define that action in the final paragraph. They may want the employer to *call* (the number is on the resume) or to *write*. Either of these specific words would be better than the general word *contact*.

For the ending paragraph, keep the following suggestions in mind: (1) Mention the specific action you want; just ask for it, don't demand it. (2)Try to sound natural and original; too many letters end with a trite expression, such as "May I have an interview at your convenience." (3) Express gratitude because you are asking a favor, but use first person and future tense instead of the present "Thank you for calling…." Or the presumptuous "Thank you in advance." (4) Try to work in a final reference to the most outstanding feature of your preparation for the job; this final reference adds *emphasis* because of its last-paragraph position, and it shows *coherence* because of its relationship to the preceding discussion. It makes the whole letter now seem complete, as does the following closing paragraph:

> Please examine the attached data sheet and write to the references. Then, I wish you would call me to suggest a time when we could discuss the possibility of putting my collection experience to work for you.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The first paragraph should reveal the specific job or type of work sought.
2. _____ The advantages of the narrative approach probably outweigh the disadvantages.
3. _____ "Your company is now opening three new branch offices; therefore , you will be needing…" is a good sentence for revealing some knowledge about the firm to which application is made.
4. _____ In the discussion of courses taken, brevity is the primary consideration.
5. _____ The final paragraph can profitably include a final reference to the applicant's most outstanding feature of preparation for the job.

Answers

1. True. Especially if the employer has a need for employees in the job or type of work mentioned, quick identification has attention-getting value. If the job or type of work is identified in the first paragraph, the one who opens the letter can quickly determine the desk to which it should go for evaluation.

2. False. The reader is more concerned about the question of whether the applicant's background matches the job than about the life history of a stranger.
3. False. The sentence is a direct statement of that which the reader would know already. A sentence such as the following one reveals knowledge of the new branches without seeming to relate that which is known already. "Especially the courses in business law and real estate appraisal were ideal for those of us who wanted to work in the Trust Department in one of your new branches."
4. False. The primary consideration is to give enough detail to enable the employer to see that training and experience are adequate preparation for the job. One who tries hard to keep the letter brief is likely to resort to use of general words, which are hardly convincing.
5. True. By making a last-paragraph reference to the primary qualification, an applicant places deserved emphasis upon it. In addition, the technique adds the qualities of coherence and unity to the letter.

Now that we have examined the major parts of an unsolicited letter of application, let's examine a complete letter. The following letter is not presented as a "model"; regard it as a letter illustrating the application of principles discussed previously. (Since this application was signed by a man, the masculine pronoun is used in the commentary.)

Part-time writing for a collection agency and a year's university instruction in business writing--please check to see how well these experiences prepare me for entrance into your Correspondence Services Section.

Seeks attention by mentioning the most pertinent features of the applicant's background. Since the experience was considered more likely to influence the reader, it is presented before university instruction is presented. Since he speaks of "entrance," he doesn't expect to begin at the top. He's realistic. He knows he will have to prove himself before being given a more responsible position. By using the exact name of the correspondence section, he reveals some knowledge of the firm.

When you need a new sales series to promote your new Perfecto 301, an individual adjustment refusal, or a new collection series, you could have me prepare them; I have worked with all three types.

Talks of doing something to solve the employer's problems. The applicant must have analyzed the relationship between preparation and job requirements. He must know that, in this section, writers are called upon to write various types of letters. Through his own initiative or observation, he has learned about the 301 promotional campaign.

My school writing courses included the writing and criticizing of all types of letters. We analyzed letters from every angle.

> *Reveals the applicant did something in the school courses. Many applicants would have simply said they had them.*

My sales letters seemed to be most effective when I chose a central theme and stuck with it, placing the product in the prospect's hands and describing the benefits he got from using it.

> *Indicates he learned something in the courses. And he reminds the reader of what he learned without preaching or lecturing. He talks the language of a sales writer-"prospect," "central theme," and "product."*

Both students and teachers were very critical of my refusal-adjustment letters until I started giving the reasons behind refusals, then following with a logical refusal and an attempt to preserve goodwill.

> *Makes no pretense of perfection. He improved his writing as a result of criticism; he's not afraid of it. He is willing to learn. He's tactfully revealing some knowledge of the proper technique for good adjustment writing-without seeming to lecture. And he's still using the language of the job.*

As a part-time worker in Maxwell's Collections Department while earning my B.S. degree, I helped Mr. Albert Smith prepare an entire collection series. We know how much hard work goes into such a writing project; we know the pleasures that go with it, too.

> *Does not repeat information given on the data sheet, but interprets it. Since the job is as likely to entail collection writing as any other type, he provides evidence of his ability to write collection letters, too. He establishes his graduation, but notice how it is de-emphasized. He knows graduation never made a writer of anyone. Suggests he can work with other people-"we know…" he knows that writing is not play-it's a serious business. He likes his work, however, probably because he is successful. He is not likely to quit on the spur of moment for some other type of work.*

Mr. Smith tells me this year's loss from bad debts is almost one percent less than last year's, and he thinks the new letters are primarily responsible. Would you like to see them?

> *Presents evidence (which can be verified by calling Maxwell's) of his effectiveness without seeming to judge himself or to brag. He shares the success with Mr. Smith, and he isn't so naïve as to rule out the possibility of another variable's influence. Shows willingness to substantiate his claims with proof. Maybe the reader will suggest he bring the letters along when he comes for a personal discussion. The sentence serves as a good transition into the action ending.*

Please study the attached data sheet and call or write to the references.

> *Delays reference to the resume until he has completed his talking points. He refers to his resume in a sentence that also says something else, and he avoids the obvious remark, "References are listed on…."*

I shall appreciate your writing me to name a time when we can talk over the correspondence work you have to do and the correspondence work I have done.

Expresses gratitude in first person to make it emphatic. Tells the action wanted. Uses informal language (“Talk over”) instead of the formal(“interview”). Uses “work” as a mild reminder of his desire to perform instead of hold a position. Includes a final reminder of his basic correspondence experiences, which are essential for entrance into the correspondence services section.

When placed on a standard-sized sheet of stationery, the preceding letter fills one page. A shorter letter would hardly have afforded the opportunity to illustrate the extent of versatility in correspondence work.

The preceding letter makes no mention of salary. That problem can be discussed later. To discuss salary in the initial application letter is to risk magnifying its importance.

Neither does the letter reveal why the applicant wants to leave the job now held nor why the addressee has been selected as a prospective employer. To include too many subsidiary details is to de-emphasize qualifications. An applicant cannot hope to answer all questions in the letter; some are most appropriately discussed in the interview. In some job-getting situations, the letter of application is actually preceded by an interview during which the letter is invited.

The solicited application letter.

Whether your application letter is solicited or unsolicited, the principles of presenting qualifications are the same. The primary difference is the beginning paragraph. In the solicited letter, no attention-getting device is necessary. The firm is already devoting some attention to filling its vacancies. You already have a contact. The preferred way is to start with the contact (the source of the invitation) and proceed from there. A good beginning for an invited application will ordinarily (1) refer to the source of the invitation, (2) indicate the specific job for which the candidate applies, and (3) suggest the candidate’s major qualifications. The following examples illustrate:

> As you requested in our discussion yesterday, I have prepared the attached resume of my educational and experience background for cost-accounting work.

Or

> Because of my three years’ military experience as a personnel man and several college courses in personnel administration, I believe you will be interested in my application for the personnel post you advertised in this morning’s Daily News.

In responses to blind ads, follow the principles that apply to other solicited application letters. But keep in mind that the advertiser has placed you in a rather awkward position by not telling you the name and location of the business. Without these details, you may have difficulty matching your preparation with the job. You may want to give a reserved response. For example, you may not want to give references, but just indicate a willingness to supply them on request. You don't want your references to receive requests from firms with whom you would not care to work.

If the blind ad asks you to state the salary expected, you will have to mention salary in some way. Perhaps the best way is to say you are willing to accept the standard or customary salary paid for the job, or that you would like to discuss the salary with the interviewer. The employer places you in an awkward position when he asks you to state a salary even though you don't know the precise duties or circumstances that surround the job.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ In the application letter, graduation should be emphasized.
2. _____ The resume should be called to the reader's attention somewhere in the first half of the letter.
3. _____ Preferably, salary should not be discussed in the unsolicited application letter.
4. _____ The application letter should reveal an applicant's reason for wanting to leave the present job.
5. _____ Except for the beginning paragraphs, the solicited and unsolicited letters of application are very similar.

Answers

1. False. Preferably, graduation should be de-emphasized. Instead of placing emphasis on graduation as such, an applicant should concentrate on giving details of education and experience-details that demonstrate adequate background for the job. People can be graduated without being prepared for work. Too much emphasis on graduation could communicate something like this between the lines: "My degree is a great accomplishment. Because of it, I need say no more; anyone would want to hire me."
2. False. As a supporting document, the resume is to be read after the letter is read. To mention the resume in the first half of the letter is to put the reader in the position of deciding whether to turn to it immediately or wait until the entire letter has been read. By referring to the data sheet in the last lines of a letter, an applicant gets a smooth transition into the action ending.
3. True. The primary purpose is to get an interview, and the best way to achieve that goal is to devote the letter to a specific discussion of how preparation matches the job. If they match well, salary can be fruitfully discussed in the interview. Discussing salary in the letter runs the risk of placing too much emphasis on the applicant's reward for his services (a negative point from the employer's point of view).

4. False. The reason for wanting to leave the present job is a little difficult to present without seeming to knock the present employer. To include too many insignificant details is to run the risk of de-emphasizing significant points in the letter.
5. True. Since the writer of a solicited letter already has attention, an attention getter is not necessary; but, from the first paragraph on, both carry the burden of presenting evidence that the applicant will be able to do what the employer wants done.

Other letters about employment

Other job-connected letters include job-inquiry letters, application follow-ups, job acceptances, job refusals, and thank-you letters.

Job-inquiry letters are sometimes mailed when applicants know the firm will not officially regard them as applicants until they fill out an application form. In that case, they may write to request a form. Although the request for the form is fairly routine, candidates increase their chances of getting the form if they at least give enough information about themselves to assure the personnel department that they have some of the requisites for the job mentioned. For example:

> May I please have an application form for work in your actuarial department? I am finishing my college work, which includes several courses in mathematics, statistics, and insurance. We plan to make our home in your city after school is out in June.

Such a letter can hardly be more effective than a complete letter of application; it can be less effective. Because of its directness and shortness, however, it does enable the candidate to make job contacts that would probably not be made otherwise. Especially if the applicant wanted a position for which applicants were relatively scarce, some sort of response would be almost certain.

Application follow-ups can be well worth the time required to write them. If within a short time candidates do not receive a response to their application, they might reinforce it with a second letter. By so doing, they (1) keep the file active, (2) report additional experiences that prepare them for the job, and (3) create an impression of diligence-of knowing what they want and going after it methodically:

> Since I wrote to you about a junior accounting position in January, I have completed three additional courses in accounting and have been doing some part-time individual income-tax work for Mr. Hugo Smith of this city.
>
> Please keep my application in the active file and let me know when you need another junior accountant.

Job-acceptance letters are easy letters to write. As in other letters that convey good news, they begin by accepting the job in the very first sentence, follow with any necessary details, and end naturally with a pleasant look toward the time when the employee is to report for work:

> I accept your offer of a job in the Accounts Payable Department.
>
> Here are the security-clearance forms and health record. I shall bring a photostatic copy of my birth certificate when I report for work on Monday morning, July 1.
>
> Thank you for introducing me to some of the accountants when I talked with you last week. I shall enjoy working with them.

Job-refusal letters follow the inductive sequence-reasons first, then the refusal, and a pleasant ending. When the job we wanted goes to some other candidate, we want to know about it and we want some justification. Employers are the same way. They like to know as quickly as possible whether a job offer has been accepted; and, if possible, they would like to know the reasons why a job offer has been declined. As a matter of courtesy, we should tell them. We should be tactful because we may want a job with the firm later:

> Yours was one of the most interesting job interviews I had in my search for tax accounting work. I especially remember your ideas on the percentage-depletion problem.
>
> As you pointed out, opportunities in Petrolio are exceedingly good for those who are primarily interested in costs. But since my major interest is in tax accounting, I have taken a job with Mills Mining Company where my responsibilities will be restricted to tax accounting.
>
> I appreciate the time you spent with me.

The first sentence lets the personnel person know the candidate had other interviews-a good way to lead up to the statement of his accepting a job with another company. In the second sentence, the applicant reminds the reader of knowledge gained in the interview-a compliment to the interviewer. After these remarks come the reason for the refusal, the refusal (stated in polite, positive language), and an expression of gratitude.

Thank-you letters following an interview are appropriate, even when applicants think they have no chance for the job. After an interviewer has indicated there is no chance for the job, the candidate still owed the interviewer an expression of gratitude:

> I certainly appreciated your taking time to talk with me last week about the job in your data-processing department. As you suggested, I am enrolling in a computer course this

summer. Later, after my knowledge and skill have improved, I would be glad to talk with you again.

An employer who receives such a letter would no doubt react something like this: "This applicant recognizes his weaknesses and he is doing something about them. I'll keep him in mind."

Many competitors for a job will neglect this small courtesy of sending a thank-you note. The simple expression of gratitude could decide the case in the applicant's favor:

I appreciate the time you took to talk with me today.

After your discussion of service-attitude in selling, I was glad I had chosen selling for my career. You sold me on the Farnsworth Company.

Thank you very much.

In each of the thank-you examples cited, the candidate reveals that something is remembered from the interview. That's more original way to please the interviewer than to say you "enjoyed" the interview. Observe, too, that the thank-you letters are relatively short. Presenting too much of anything else de-emphasizes the gratitude.

Summary

The letter of application is a sales letter that sells you! Its goal is to secure an interview in which you can continue to sell yourself. Meticulous effort should go into the entire application. In the preceding discussions of letters and resumes, not much has been said about grammar, spelling, punctuation, and typing. Check to see whether errors appear. Those who read applications naturally assume their authors have done their best. To allow errors to appear is to risk a reader's interpreting them as evidence of ignorance, disrespect, haste, or carelessness-negative characteristics that could carry over into a person's work as an employee. On the other hand, a well prepared application can only indicate positive qualities.

Indicate whether each question is true or false.

1. _____ Those who write for application forms should reveal some information about their backgrounds.
2. _____ Job-acceptance letters should follow the deductive sequence-of-idea pattern.
3. _____ "I enjoyed yesterday's interview" is a better way of pleasing an interviewer than saying something to reveal that an important point was remembered from the interview.
4. _____ Of all letters about employment, the letter of application is the longest.

5. _____ Application-letter writers are expected to use their very best grammar, spelling, punctuation, and typing.

Answers

1. True. Revealing some information about one's background gives the employer some confidence that the form is not wasted. In fact, the technique could provide the employer with a basis for sending a letter encouraging the applicant to fill in and return the form quickly.
2. True. Now that an applicant has accepted an offer, the employer will be pleased to know of the acceptance. Stating the acceptance in the first sentence will put the employer at ease immediately. Having stated the main idea in the first sentence, the writer can quickly and easily present the details that will follow.
3. False. "I enjoyed the interview" is an expression that can be easily used by those who enjoyed it and those who did not. Since the interviewer would probably read it many times, it may mean little. On the other hand, an interviewer would probably be pleased to know that one of his points made an impression. One who could recall the point a day later was at least listening.
4. True. The application letter is by necessity long because it has to present enough detail to convince the reader that the applicant's education and experience are adequate preparation for the job.
5. True. If high standards are not met, the applicant may be regarded as ignorant, hasty, careless, or disrespectful-characteristics that could be very detrimental on a job.

Chapter 11 Review Questions

1. An excellent application letter will always:

   A. Be a copy of a letter written by someone else.
   B. Get attention and interest by identifying and applying for a specific job.
   C. Use vague and general terms.
   D. Repeat resume information.

2. The unsolicited application letter:

   A. Is a waste of time on your part.
   B. Wastes the employers time needlessly.
   C. Is well received by most employers.
   D. Displays a lack of initiative by the applicant.

Chapter 11 Review Answers

1. An excellent application letter will always:

A. Incorrect. Copying a letter written by someone else is a common error, it does not highlight your skills and personal attributes for the job.
B. **Correct.** The application letter gets the attention and interest and identifies a specific job and gives sufficient evidence to be convincing and asks for action.
C. Incorrect. Using vague and general terms is a common error and does not identify specific skills and preparation required by the job.
D. Incorrect. The application letter should interpret the resume information and not repeat it.

2. The unsolicited application letter:

A. Incorrect. The unsolicited letter increases your job selection chances and meets with less competition.
B. Incorrect. Firms like to receive unsolicited applications because it saves advertising costs and personnel time and are kept on file for future openings.
C. **Correct.** Unsolicited applications are well received by most firms saving them advertising costs, saving personnel time, and are kept on file for future openings.
D. Incorrect. Unsolicited letters suggest initiative and foresight on the part of the writer and not a lack of initiative.

Chapter 12:

Business Reports and Research Methods

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the nature of business reports.
- Identify different research methods.
- Define the logical steps in problem solving.
- Identify the best methods to collect and organize data.
- Recognize organization methods to develop a better report.

Although the business letter is written and planned to achieve a desired action to the news conveyed, the business report is written and planned to transmit objective information logically and concisely. In essence, a report is a logical document, and a letter is a psychologically designed message. This chapter and several following are intended to give an overview of report processes and preparation.

The Nature of Business Reports

A report is a written or oral message used (1) to convey business information about status or research from one area of an organization to another to assist the decision-making function or (2) to present a solution to a problem. The profit-and-loss statement, balance sheet, daily stock averages, market analysis and other forms of business information are reports; so too are internal memoranda showing production figures, work progress, and employee turnover.

As a matter of practice, management should request only reports that are needed. Many in business consider routine reports as "busy work." Perhaps these people are actually uninformed about the ultimate application of their work. The growth of business information systems came about to increase and improve the flow of report-type information to management. It seems that management never has enough information. When information is needed, we can be assured that the need arises because of a problem. Thus, the real basis for a report is its contribution to problem solving.

Some recurrent problems call for a constant flow of information; other problems are unique and call for information on a one-time basis. If we can, therefore, accept the business problem as the underlying reason for all report writing, the preparation, organization, and writing become much easier. We can pinpoint the specific need and use of the information.

The logical steps in problem solving are the following, and they apply to report preparation:

1. Recognize and define the problem.
2. Select a method of solution.
3. Collect and analyze data.
4. Arrive at an answer to the problem.

It is important to remember that these steps all take place normally before any attempt is made to put a written report in final form. Let’s take a closer look at these four preliminary steps to successful report writing.

Recognize and define the problem

Pinpoint the problem to be solved. Take a good look at the instructions accompanying the report request. Attempt to divide the major request into sub-requests such as “What, why, when, where, and who?” The solutions of the parts may lead to the solution of the major problem. The what and why are the important questions. Unless we know what is wanted, it is difficult to explain why. The opposite is also true. Once these two elements are identified, write them down. The problem is on its way to solution.

At this point, laboratory scientists would establish a hypothesis-a tentative solution which they would attempt to prove or disprove. The early definition and analysis of the problem would have given the study direction.

Hypotheses may be stated in either of two ways, positively or in null style. A positive hypothesis is stated to indicate a definite bias toward a conclusion as in: Production of employees will increase if employees are given added pay for production in excess of the standard. This hypothesis, it is claimed, shows the researcher’s bias toward the conclusion. It could be advanced also that the researcher would be susceptible to treating data in such a way as to lead to that conclusion.

In sophisticated research, a hypothesis is often stated in null fashion to attempt to eliminate a stated bias as in: No significant difference will exist between production of workers on an incentive pay plan and those on a regular pay plan. Although not all business research is amenable to hypothesis testing, the concept of using hypothesis is valuable in terms of maintaining an objective view by the researcher.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Reports differ from letters primarily in terms of organization; i.e., reports follow logical organization, letters a psychological plan.
2. _____ Business problems constitute the basis for report production.
3. _____ Each of the four steps in problem solving is taken prior to the actual writing of the report.
4. _____ The following is a null hypothesis: Men perform more effectively under pressure than do women.
5. _____ Hypotheses should always be developed before research leading to written reports is undertaken.

Answers

1. True. Because they aim to present information logically, reports should be organized to that end, whereas letters are organized to appeal to the reader's emotions.
2. True. Reports either provide help in the solution of a problem or attempt to solve a problem.
3. True. Although notes may be prepared throughout the problem solving process, the researcher does proceed through all four steps prior to drafting the final report.
4. False. A null hypothesis should not be slanted toward a conclusion. Thus, the example should have been stated as: No significant difference will exist between the performance effectiveness of men and women while working under pressure.
5. False. Not all research is amenable to hypothesis testing. Gathering data to prepare financial statements and other routine business reports constitutes research which is not amenable to hypotheses testing.

Select a method of solution

Four commonly used research methods are available for the solution of problems:

1. Library and online research.
2. Normative survey research.
3. Observational research.
4. Experimental research.

Library and online research is a part of all studies. It saves a researcher the trouble of "reinventing the wheel." By searching for already-developed information on a problem, one can save much time and effort. Because the boundaries of knowledge in any given field are constantly expanding, library and online research is necessary to establish "what is" at any given time. New research, then, adds to the boundaries. Applied to business research, the library method involves the investigation of books, periodicals, and any records stored by the business. Because it concerns itself with material already created, library research contributes second-hand data, and library materials are described as "secondary sources."

In undertaking library research, keep in mind two suggestions. First, protect yourself against collecting too much information. You can do this by taking notes as you proceed rather than by attempting to collect entire articles, books, or reports. Second, preserve your integrity. Do this by making bibliography references on each source used. A bibliographical reference consists of the following: Author's name, title of article or book, volume or publisher and page number(s) of materials used. For example:

Chase, Stuart. *The Power of Words*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1999, p.84.

Note: There are a handful of Web sites creating a virtual library of online resource material. Questia.com (www.questia.com) is one of them. Subscribers can search the site by subject, title, author, publisher, medium (i.e., book, magazine, etc.) or keyword, much like a library's card catalogue. Others include www.proquest.com, www.highbeam.com , and www.britannica.com . One of the greatest advantages of using Web-based research materials is that information tends to be brief and to the point.

Normative survey research is a method used to determine the status of something at the time of the research-hence, the term "normative" which describes norms or standards. This method most often uses questionnaires or interviews for gathering data. The United States Census and Gallup political polls are examples.

In all surveys, an assumption is made that the people surveyed are either representative of a larger group or constitute the entire population to be studied. When the survey covers only a portion of the entire population on which generalizations are to be drawn, the portion surveyed is called a "sample." Obviously, care must be taken to assure that the sample is really representative of the population. Here are some suggestions for questionnaire or interview surveys:

1. Test the wording of your items with others before preparing the final survey instrument. Test their answers to assure understanding.
2. Try to ask for easily recalled information.
3. Begin with the easiest item. The questionnaire may end up in the waste basket otherwise.
4. Make responding easy. Items which can be answered simply by checking an appropriate place are best.
5. Group items by subject or area if possible. You'll help the respondent stay on track.
6. Provide adequate instructions to assure consistency in replies.
7. Develop a format that will make your job of tabulating replies easy. A little more time spent preparing the questionnaire may save much time in later handling the data.
8. If you use mail questionnaires, enclose a stamped return envelope.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Secondary sources provide data for minor or secondary parts of a research problem.
2. _____ Giving credit where credit is due by citing sources in library research is one way of preserving the researcher's integrity.
3. _____ Normative survey research establishes "what should be."
4. _____ Careful sampling procedures can help assure accurate findings regardless of the quality of the survey instrument.

Answers

1. False. Secondary sources provide material already available, but this material may very well contribute to major parts of a research problem.
2. True. Plagiarism, using work of others without giving credit, is not ethical. A simple footnote or other method of giving credit not only preserves the writer's integrity, but in many cases it also lends authoritativeness to reports.
3. False. Normative research establishes what is, not what should be. Even surveys asking what should be actually result in conclusions about what is an opinion at the time of the survey.
4. False. Two critical elements in survey research are adequate sampling and effective instrument design. Neither is effective without the other.

<u>Observational research</u>, or statistical research, is used here to describe research involving statistical analysis of data. Suppose, for example, that you wanted to know if scores on an aptitude test had a relationship to grades made in a college course. You would gather grades and test scores on each student, perform statistical correlations, and draw conclusions from the analysis. Frequently, market surveys use both survey and observational research to determine buying habits of income groups. The name observational research is used because this type of analysis observes phenomena to assist in establishing new principles.

<u>Experimental research</u> is familiar to most of us as the test-tube research conducted in a laboratory. Experimental research involves two samples having exactly the same ingredients under the same conditions before a variable is added to one of the samples. The differences then identified are due to the variable. As a simple example, assume an office has a great number of clerk-typists doing the same routine tasks. Management decides to make a study of the effect of incentive pay on production. It separates the clerk-typists into two groups equal in experience, skill, and previous production rates. One group is then placed on incentive pay. During the length of the study, the difference in production is noted. Because the incentive pay is assumed to be the only variable, the difference is attributed to its influence.

Although experimental research is difficult to adapt to human activities, the point is that it can be used by management just as the laboratory scientist uses it. Along with library, survey, and observational research, experimental research completes the available research methods. No matter what problem serves as the basis for a report, we must use one or a combination of these methods to solve the problem.

Collect and organize the data

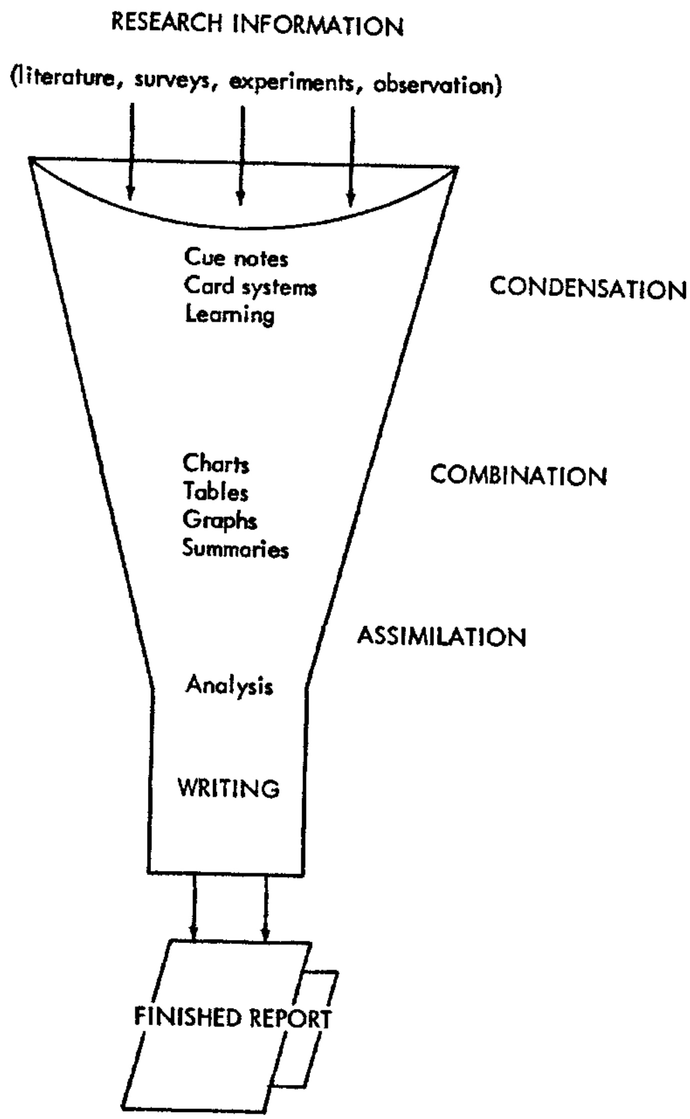
Having decided on the plan, the researcher must outline a step-by-step approach to the solution of the problem. Because the human mind is inquisitive, given a desirable tangent, it will wander off into ephemeral daydreams. Such trips to dreamland distract from the job at hand; and if given free reign, they can lend to obliteration of the object of the study.

Therefore, keep on the right track. Plan your attack and follow it. Question every step you take for its contribution to your objective. Keep a record of your actions. A criterion for good research is whether another qualified researcher could take the report of research, conduct the same study, and arrive at the same conclusions. Thus, sufficient detail on procedures should be included to permit a similar study to be made.

Use such techniques as a card system to reduce library findings to workable size. Through tabulation techniques, quantitative data included on a vast number of questionnaires can be reduced. As shown in Figure 1, the report process is one of reducing original information to a convenient size that can be handled in a written message. The following steps are suggested:

1. Evaluate each item of information for its usefulness.
2. Reduce the useful information through cue notes (the shortest thing you can write that will aid in recall of a larger amount), card systems, or memory.
3. Combine like information into understandable form through the use of graphics or tables or written summaries.
4. Report in written form your analysis of the data.

FIGURE 1
THE REPORT PROCESS



Arrive at an answer to the problem

At this final stage in the solution of a problem, report writers have the results of their research before them in concise form. They are able to see the problem in its entirety. Following the step-by-step plan, researchers collected and organized information in usable form. When properly taken, these steps should lead to a logical answer to the problem.

Sound answers or conclusions, however, are unlikely if interpretation is faulty. Some common mental errors can seriously affect the interpretation of data:

1. Trying, consciously or unconsciously, to make results conform to a prediction or desire.
2. Hoping for spectacular results. Unfounded, revolutionary conclusions can negatively affect the researcher's future credibility.
3. Attempting to compare when commonality is absent. Concluding that a certain product would sell well in Montana because it sold well in Florida would be risky.
4. Assuming a cause-effect relationship when one does not exist. A new sales manager may have been in office one year and sales may have doubled. The doubling might have been in spite of, rather than because of, the new sales manager.
5. Failing to consider important factors and thus basing conclusions on lack of evidence. Simply because "we have had no complaints about our refund policy" is not necessarily evidence the policy is good. Has anyone applied for a refund?
6. Assuming a constancy of human behavior. In the 2004 election, people changed their minds or made them up at the last minute; public opinion polls taken only a few days earlier were completely inaccurate.

Electronic Sources of Information

Electronic sources of information include the Internet, online databases, and CD-ROM databases. The quantity and availability of these electronic sources, along with the ease and speed with which they may be searched, should place them high on your list of resources for most research.

The Internet

One step in your research plan will often be to search the Internet for material related to your topic. You have probably already used a Web browser program such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Google's Chrome to visit hundreds of popular home pages. Search engines such as Google, MSN Bing, and Yahoo, which are accessible with your Web browser, enable you to locate documents ("pages") on the Web. Once you have selected a search engine, you can tailor the search to your needs by using keywords or phrases associated with your research topic. The Internet may lead you to publications available at your library or to documents that you can download to your computer. Read the material you find on the Internet carefully and take accurate notes of your findings, including references to the sources you are using. It is good practice to print out useful material you may find unless the length of a particular source makes this impractical, in which case you should save it on a CD along with the Web address (URL).

CD-ROM and Online Databases

Many information databases are available on CD-ROM or online. For example, the FASB Accounting Standards and AICPA Professional Standards arc both available in this manner. CCH's Access and RIA's OnPoint System information databases are electronic versions of CCH's Standard Federal Tax Reports or RIA's U.S. Federal Tax Reporter and Tax Coordinator. You can easily search these databases by using keywords and then downloading and printing the results. Many other databases are available on CD-ROM or online.

Summary

Good researchers attempt to consider all factors, and they recognize and identify possible limitations to their research. Throughout the entire four-step problem-solving method, they attempt to protect themselves not only against their own human failings but also against their material. That is the nature of research. Your own success as a report writer will rest on your ability to reason objectively and to write accurately.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Observational research and experimental research could well be combined in a single study.
2. _____ A possible shortcoming in using experimental research is the difficulty of equating the two samples prior to applying the variable.
3. _____ Documenting a research report is necessary only to protect the integrity of the researcher.
4. _____ Effective report development is the result of constantly reducing materials; thus, a good report writer protects against being deluged by collected data.

Answers

1. True. Observational or statistical research methods are involved in almost any study involving quantitative data.
2. True. The key to experimental research is to assure that the two samples are identical. The degree to which they are alike helps establish the soundness of observed differences when the variable is applied.
3. False. Documentation is important in making the report of the study complete enough that another researcher could duplicate it.
4. True. “Protect yourself against your material” is a principle important to all report writers.

Chapter 12 Review Questions

1. The method of research most often used with questionnaires or interview to gather data is:

   A. Experimental research.
   B. Observational research.
   C. Normative survey research.
   D. Library research.

2. In arriving at a solution to a problem you should:

   A. Try consciously or unconsciously to make the results conform to predicted desire.
   B. Organize collected information in a useable form before analyzing.
   C. Attempt to compare when commonality is absent.
   D. Assume a cause-effect relationship when one does not exist.

Chapter 12 Review Answers

1. The method of research most often used with questionnaires or interview to gather data is:

   A. Incorrect. Experimental research involves use of test-tube research in a laboratory involving two samples under the same conditions with a variable.
   B. Incorrect. Observational research or statistical research involves statistical analysis of data.
   C. **Correct.** Normative survey research describes norms or standards most often using questions or interviews for gathering data.
   D. Incorrect. Library research is a part of all studies searching for already developed information to save time and effort.

2. In arriving at a solution to a problem you should:

   A. Incorrect. This is a common mental error that can seriously affect the interpretation of data.
   B. **Correct.** Follow a step-by-step plan which should lead to a logical answer to the problem.
   C. Incorrect. Attempt to compare when commonality is absent is a common mental error that seriously affects the interpretation of the data.
   D. Incorrect. Assuming a cause-effect relationship when one does not exist is a common mental error that can seriously affect the conclusions and interpretation of the data as well as bias the study.

Chapter 13:

Organizing Reports

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the report outlining process.
- Define the steps to organize a report in logical sequences.
- Identify effective introductions, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

As we have just learned, the report itself is written only after the following four steps in the problem solving process have been completed:

1. Recognize and define the problem.
2. Select a method of solution.
3. Collect and organize the data.
4. Arrive at an answer to the original problem.

The Report Outlining Process

Obviously, if these steps form the basis for a study, they can also serve as the basis for organizing the report. Rephrased, the steps could become headings for a report outline:

1. The problem.
2. Method used.
3. Findings.
4. Conclusion.

Logically, the report would then tell the reader what the problem was in the first section, detail the method or methods used in the second section, report what was found in the third, and end with the answer to the problem or the conclusions.

Because the findings and the conclusions are of utmost importance to both the researcher and the reader, they receive the greatest attention in the written presentation. The definition of the problem and detail of the method used are of secondary interest in most business studies. To place emphasis on findings and conclusions, then, the outline may be changed to give the problem and method relatively minor status compared to findings and conclusions as in the following:

I. Introduction.
    a. Statement of the problem.
    b. Description of the method and sources used.
II. Findings.
III. Conclusions and/or recommendations.

This outline includes all four items, but by combining the problem and method in one section, it gives relatively greater importance to the sections devoted to one item-the findings and conclusions. But these headings could make pretty dull reading. Keep in mind that the items in the outline will later become headings and subheadings in a report. In long reports, they might well become items on the familiar "Table of Contents" page. Let's take a hypothetical problem, assume we've done the research, and plan an outline for the written report.

Here's the problem. The XYZ Company is considering the purchase of a corporate airplane to replace a ten-year-old one. You are to prepare a report presenting an analysis of three possible new planes--the Jetstar, the Rover, and Skylark. You've studied trade-in allowances, prices, range, speed, operating costs, and safety factors. Also, you had opinions from two company pilots and six company executives who took test rides. After much consideration, and much arithmetic, you know you are going to recommend the Jetstar. Thus, your outline could take this form:

I. Introduction.
    a. Problem.
    b. Method and sources.
II. Performance factors of three planes.
    a. The Jetstar.
    b. The Rover.
    c. The Skylark.
III. Conclusions and recommendations.

Something is missing, however. What criteria were used in making the selection? Performance is covered, but what about price and opinions of the pilots and executives. It is evident that the report will include, according to this outline, a complete statement about all the features of the Jetstar and follow with similar statements about the Rover and the Skylark. Consider the difficulty of the reader in trying to make comparisons when items being compared are not presented together in the report. For example, comparison would be easy if the cost of each plane were presented in the same section. Using criteria as divisions in the report makes the presentation much more effective. Note how the following improved outline uses criteria rather than names of planes for report divisions.

I. Introduction.
   a. The problem.
   b. The method and sources.
II. Cost and trade-in favor of the Jetstar.
III. Range and speed are comparable in the three planes.
IV. Executives prefer Jetstar's comfort.
V. Pilots like the Jetstar and Rover.
VI. XYZ should purchase the Jetstar.

Notice that items II and V are actually subdivisions of the findings and item VI is the conclusion and recommendation section. The language used also describes the contents of each section. Descriptive headings such as these are commonly called "talking headings." As shown below, this outline becomes a contents page simply by adding page numbers. Because of the organization, even the Roman numerals and letters can be omitted.

Introduction……………………………………………….	1
The problem………………………………………	1
The method……………………………………….	1
Cost and trade-in favor the Jetstar…………………………	2
Range and speed are comparable in the three planes…………	4
Executive prefer Jetstar's comfort…………………………..	6
Pilots like the Jetstar and Rover……………………………..	8
XYZ should purchase the Jetstar……………………………	10

The report writer has an option about outlining style. Because people expect the beginning of a report to be the introduction, the introductory headings might be omitted. In that case, the preceding outline would begin with the heading about cost and trade-in as shown here:

Cost and trade-in favor the Jetstar…………………………..	2
Range and speed are comparable in the three planes…………..	4
Executives prefer Jetstar's comfort…………………………	6
Pilots like the Jetstar and Rover……………………………..	8
XYZ should purchase the Jetstar…………………………….	10

The content about statement of the problem and method of solution would not be different in the two reports. Only the headings would be removed in the second example.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Report outlines should contain only four major divisions to indicate the four steps in the problem-solving process.
2. _____ An outline can indicate how the writer approached the report problem.
3. _____ The use of criteria rather than objects being studied facilitates the development of talking headings in the outline.
4. _____ Headings in a report constitute a table of contents.

Answers

1. False. Report outlines do reflect the four steps in the problem solving process; however, the outline can contain as many major headings as the writer deems desirable. Emphasis of items is a major criterion in determining how many major divisions (or headings) to include. Three headings-introduction, findings, and conclusion-may be adequate to cover some report contents. On the other hand, several divisions of the findings may be necessary to present the material. The airplane study, for example, contained six major divisions.
2. True. Especially when criteria are used in the development of headings, the reader can understand rather readily the nature of the approach to the problem.
3. True. When criteria form the basis for reporting, talking headings are developed simply by reflecting the conclusions evolved from the findings in each section. To prepare headings using objects being studied limits the writer to the use of nouns. When criteria are used, headings will probably be longer, but they will reveal much more about the contents and thus contribute to easier reading and greater understanding.
4. True. All headings used in the report should be shown in the contents of the report to indicate organization. An exception may occur in the case of books where chapter titles only may be shown to avoid having several pages of content outline. At the same time, however, the book probably includes material from each heading in the index at the end of the book.

The scope of outlining

To this point, reports have been considered from a formal point of view. That is, we have talked pretty much about reports as being presentations of a highly sophisticated nature. The report process was built around a problem to be solved, the method of solving it, and what to do with the material gathered. This process led to an outline, to possible headings in a report, and then to a theoretical table of contents. Not all reports require this much attention to outlining.

The sophistication of the report and the detail put into it depend on two factors: (1) the purpose of the report, and (2) the amount of presentation necessary to serve the purpose. Various classifications of reports have evolved in business and have labels attached to them, such as internal-external reports, progress reports, periodic reports, financial reports, annual reports and so on. Regardless of the label, a business report is an organized, objective communication of information, which assists in the solution of a business problem.

The most useful classification of reports involves the formality or sophistication involved in presentation. All reports will fall on a formal-informal continuum as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Degree of formality

Formal		**Informal**
Scientific research		
	Business research	
		Routine communications

We have shown business research in the center of the continuum primarily because it can extend from one extreme to the other. Complex problems deserve more detail and hence more formality than simple problems. The needs of the reader of the report also help determine the degree of formality. Some executives prefer a straightforward, casual style; some desire great detail and formal writing; some shun statistical data, and others thrive on it. Thus, business probably has as many degrees of formality as there are types of readers and writers.

The interoffice memorandum, for example, may be short with the only outline needed being the appropriate subject line. Toward the formal end of the continuum lies the hypothetical outline prepared for the report on the study of the three airplanes covered earlier. In that study, the formal outline was developed only after all the research findings had been gathered and analyzed. Keep this in mind: outlining and writing are processes that take place after you know generally what your findings mean and what your conclusion will be. The outline is simply a guide for the writing task.

The more writing involved, the greater the need for outlining. The outline establishes the sequence of items in the report. A good outline also helps the writer make sense of his material. To the writer, then, creating order from disorder, even chaos, is the function of outlining. Outlining is a mental task, and though no magic formula applies, an understanding of some outline symbols is helpful in the process.

Outline symbols

Styles of outline symbols other than the Roman numeral type are increasing in usage. The use of symbols helps systematize material to be classified and organized. For example, the Dewey Decimal System used in libraries contributes to an outline of man's knowledge. This system has a great advantage over others in that it is expandable. Despite the tremendous increase in publications since

Dewey developed it over 100 years ago, the system has been able to accommodate the volume. Along with the Library of Congress system, it is used in all libraries in the country.

Although such a sophisticated system is not required in report outlining, the logic of a system of symbols leads to effective organization. In Figure 2, note the similarity of outline symbols.

FIGURE 2
Outline symbols

Roman numeral	Decimal	Alphanumeric
I.	1.0	A.
A.	1.1	1.
1.	1.11	a.
2.	1.12	b.
B.	1.2	2.
II.	2.0	B.

Note that the Roman numeral item IA2, the decimal item 1.12, and the alphanumeric item A1b are used to designate the same item in the three outlines. Roman numeral outlines are used widely in schools and industry, decimal outlines are found frequently in engineering and other technically oriented fields, and variations of the alphanumeric outline are used by many governmental organizations. All are valuable aids. The symbol system helps the writer plan in a logical way and is expandable in that additional subdivisions can be created without disrupting the basic outline.

In report writing, most items in the outline ultimately become subheadings in the report itself. These headings are described as "degree" headings as in the following example using the Roman numeral outline:

- I. First degree
    - A. Second degree
        - i. Third degree
            - 1. Fourth degree
            - 2. Fourth degree
        - ii. Third degree
    - B. Second degree
- II. First degree

Each of these degrees in the outline is the result of dividing or classifying. The thing divided or classified is the whole of the information available. For example, an outline of the United States might be prepared by a geographic classification of the individual states as follows:

I. The United States
    A. Northeastern states
        i. Maine
        ii. Massachusetts
        iii. New Hampshire
        iv. Etc.
    B. Northcentral states
        i. Illinois
        ii. Michigan
        iii. Etc.
    C. …

As you divide the whole into comparable parts, you arrive at second-degree classifications. Dividing the second-degree classifications into comparable parts leads to third-degree classifications, and so on. A major principle in outline preparation is that any part must be divided into at least two parts or it should not be divided. For example, if part A does not have at least subheads 1 and 2, it should not be divided. Remember, too, that all but the most elaborate reports probably do not go beyond the third-or fourth-degree headings.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. ______ All business reports should be prepared in informal style.
2. ______ Outlining is a mental process that involves division or classification of items.
3. ______ The following outline contains an error in division:

I.
    A.
        1.
        2.
II.

______ The most useful classification of reports is one that is based on whether the report is to be used inside the business or is to be distributed outside the business.

Answers

1. False. Although some reports should be prepared informally, others require a great deal of formal style in writing and layout. Complexity, report purpose and size, and reader requirements are criteria that assist in determining the degree of formality.
2. True. Jotting down the symbols for an outline is a physical task, but determining the appropriate divisions of subject matter is a mental task. The greater the ability of the writer to classify data, the more effective the outline will be in assisting report preparation.

3. true. Item I contains only one subdivision, A. Therefore it should not be divided at all. Item A is subdivided into two items and is therefore satisfactory. When this error occurs, a review of the material will generally reveal whether item I should stand by itself or whether A, A1, and A2 should become A, B, and C.
4. False. Although internal-external is one possible classification of reports, the formal-informal classification is the most useful to the report writer because it is operational in terms of the report-writing process.

At the most formal level, the report may consist of several parts. The judgment of the person preparing the report will, of course, determine what parts are necessary using the criteria of size, complexity, and reader requirements.

Deductive-inductive organization

The overall report organization will take either a direct, deductive format or an indirect, inductive format. For example, will the report reader be better informed if the conclusions of the report are given first or delayed to the end of the report?

The four-step method of problem solving is an inductive or indirect method. After determining the purpose, using a method of research, gathering and analyzing the findings, the researcher arrives at a conclusion. This process is indirect because it progresses through all the steps before arriving at a conclusion. To write the report in this sequence delays the conclusion to the end. On the other hand, a direct approach would be to present the conclusion at the beginning of the report and support it with the details of the research. Schematically, these two approaches to organization appear as follows:

Deductive or direct	**Inductive or indirect**
Conclusion	Details
Details	Conclusion

You will recall from the chapters on letter writing and planning that favorable information is communicated deductively and unfavorable information is best communicated inductively. The criterion for selecting a report plan is not the same as for letters, however. Whether the news is favorable or unfavorable is not necessarily important to report organization. Executives are busy and want their reading made as easy as possible. In long reports, the deductive plan is achieved by presenting a capsule overview of the report as an introductory part. In short reports, the deductive organization involves simply beginning the report with the conclusion.

Formal report parts

The interoffice memorandum is the simplest of business reports; however, something interesting happens to it. As the memo incorporates more and more material, headings appear, dividing the material into logical sections. When the memo grows to several pages, the writer decides to add a transmittal memorandum as a first page. If he or she deems it helpful, the writer adds a content outline.

At this point, a title page may be developed. Then raw data or bibliography items appear as addenda at the end of the memo. Then the item that began as a simple memo becomes a full-blown report.

All these things are "padding" to make the report impressive; they are incorporated to help the reader. The complete formal report may include the following parts:

1. Letter of transmittal.
2. Title page.
3. Content page.
4. Synopsis or summary.
5. Body.
6. Addenda.

Item 5, the body, is the core of the report. It presents the purpose, method, findings, and conclusion. The other items are all add-ons to assist understanding. It is interesting how the simple memo grew to adulthood.

Another way to look at parts of the complete formal reports is to divide them into preliminary, body, and addenda portions as here:

I. Preliminary parts
    A. Letter of transmittal
    B. Title page
    C. Contents page
    D. Synopsis or summary (when not in the letter of transmittal)
II. Body of the report
    A. Purpose
    B. Method
    C. Findings
    D. Conclusion/recommendation
III. Addenda
    A. Bibliography
    B. Appendix
    C. Index

This outline includes all parts of the complete formal report, but obviously all will not be included in every report. In business, research frequently does not call for bibliography items, reports are usually short enough to eliminate the need for an index, and the transmittal letter often eliminates the need for a summary or synopsis. A brief review of the preliminary and addenda portions is sufficient to provide an understanding of their contents.

The letter of transmittal. Although the letter of transmittal may either precede or follow the title page, the letter is the greeting accompanying the report, as shown in Figure 3. It serves the same purpose as would spoken words if the writer were to hand-deliver the report. The writing style is informal, and the transmittal letter takes the following form:

1. Open directly with a statement establishing the subject as in "Here is the report you requested on May 15 about the possibility of using spot radio advertising."
2. Follow the opening with a brief overall review of the report. If a separate summary page will follow, make the review brief. On the other hand, if the letter is to include the summary, it should include the purpose of the report, a brief statement about the method used, highlights of the findings, and a concise conclusion.
3. Close the letter with a look forward to helping again.

The title page. Title pages should include four items: title, identification of the authority for the report, identification of those who prepared the report, and date as shown in Figure 4. The layout of the title page helps establish the reader's first impression; therefore, special care should be taken in its preparation.

The contents page. Because it reflects the overall report organization and logic, the contents page is an essential part of a long report. This page need not carry the title of the report, and it should be headed "Contents" or "Table of Contents." All first and second-degree headings from the report should be considered minimum for inclusion in the contents, as shown in the sample in Figure 5.

FIGURE 3
Transmittal letter with brief synopsis

June 4, 201__

Mr. Steven C. Miller
Activity Stereo Component Corporation
11689 Santa Monica Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA   90256

Dear Mr. Miller:

As authorized in your letter of December 6, we conducted a survey of the purchasing preferences of stereo users in the Santa Monica area. We are pleased to submit the attached report to you.

The survey was made by use of a questionnaire distributed to over 3,000 customers of retail stores carrying stereo components.

Over 75 percent of those surveyed either own or plan to purchase stereo systems. Quality was their main concern in stereo systems with power as close second. People under 30 years of age appear to be the prime market group, and they indicated $400 to $600 as the most desirable price range. Based on these and other findings included in the report, we recommend that your advertising program be directed primarily to young adults with stress on quality.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist and are prepared to explore any other area which may be of interest to you.

Sincerely,

Raleigh G. Waller

rgw:ss

FIGURE 4
Title page

THE PURCHASING PREFERENCES OF STEREO USERS

Presented to

Activity Stereo Component Corporation

Prepared by

Slonim -Waller Associates

June 4, 200__

FIGURE 5
Contents page

CONTENTS	Page

The synopsis or summary. For long reports, an opening summary part is desirable. It changes the overall report organization from inductive to deductive. Additionally, it indicates the writer's ability to abstract his own work. Although it may seem repetitious because it capsulizes the report, the summary strengthens communication especially for long or complex reports. Would it be more efficient to read a long report twice or a summary and a long report once?

The addenda. Addenda items contain evidence that lends credibility to reports. A bibliography identifies books, newspapers, periodicals, and other sources used either as findings material or as aids in analyzing the findings. An appendix may contain raw quantitative data, samples of forms or questionnaires, copies of letters, and reproductions of important written items included in the bibliography. An index most frequently is used as an addendum in scholarly publications and textbooks. Although not a part of most reports, an index may be desirable in reports such as internal procedures manuals and personnel handbooks. The final test of whether to include material in the addenda is the writer's judgment of the degree to which the material is necessary to support the body of the report and whether the material might later be called for by a reader.

Major Style Manuals

American Psychological Association. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001. Referred to as APA style, this style uses the efficient author-date system of citations.

Campbell, W. G., et al. Form and Style. 6th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982. Used often in colleges, this guide shows both the MLA and Chicago styles of citation and documentation.

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed., New York, Modern Language Association of America, 2003 (www.mla.org). One of' the most popular references for what is referred to as MIA style, it is used frequently for academic writing.

Sabin, William. The Gregg Reference Manual, 10th ed., McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, 2005. A business style manual.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 14th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Referred to as the Chicago style, this style is used frequently in publishing and the academic world.

Turabian, K. L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 4th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973. This manual covers the Chicago style but is smaller than The Chicago Manual of Style.

U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual. Revised ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984. Referred to as the GPO Manual, this guide is particularly useful for documentation of government publications.

Summary

The process of organizing reports is pretty much a matter of logical reasoning and knowledge of outlining methods. Once the body of the report is outlined and written, the supporting parts at the beginning and ending of the report are developed. A good report tends to be repetitious simply because the outline indicates the organization and content of the report, and the transmittal letter and synopsis include information that duplicates report content. This duplication is for reader benefit and permits variation in reviewing report content. Repetition is one way of learning.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Direct organization in formal reports is achieved by placing a summary in the preliminary material.
2. _____ The criteria for selecting an overall report organizational plan are the same as for organization of letters.
3. _____ A summary should never be included in a letter of transmittal.
4. _____ Addenda items to be included in a report depend on the judgment of the writer.

Answers

1. True. In longer reports, the only way to achieve deductive or direct organization is through the use of a separate summary placed in the preliminary material. In short reports, such as memoranda, the conclusion and recommendation may be used as an opening statement, thus achieving a direct organizational sequence.
2. False. Organization of reports is a matter of logical organization using the steps in the problem solving process as a basis. Letters, on the other hand, are planned to appeal to reader reaction to the message. In addition, report planning also involves consideration for the reading and style demands of the reader and the length of the report itself.
3. False. The summary may be prepared either as a separate item or as part of the letter of transmittal.
4. True. A report may be considered complete without any addenda items. Even though we have phrased the question to give full authority to the writer, we assume the writer would consider reader needs and the possible later use of addenda items in arriving at a decision.

Chapter 13 Review Questions

1. Reports that reflect the four steps in the problem solving process should:

   A. Limit the major headings to four categories.
   B. Reflect the four steps in report development using as many headings and subheadings as needed to adequately cover the topics.
   C. Limit the subheadings to four sub-ideas.
   D. Adhere strictly to using the four step report development.

2. A direct or deductive approach would present the conclusion at:

   A. The beginning of the report.
   B. In step two of the method used.
   C. At the end of the report.
   D. In step three with the findings.

Chapter 13 Review Answers

1. Reports that reflect the four steps in the problem solving process should:

A. Incorrect. Reports and report outlines can contain as many major headings as deemed necessary by the writer in order to adequately cover the topic.
B. **Correct.** Reflect the four steps in report development using as many headings and subheadings as needed to adequately cover each topics.
C. Incorrect. Limiting sub-headings reduces the reports ability to efficiently organize common data in units well organized and easily located for use.
D. Incorrect. The four step report development is a useful guideline but should use as many other techniques as required to manage the data and process it into a usable format.

2. A direct or deductive approach would present the conclusion at:

A. **Correct.** A direct approach would be to present the conclusion at the beginning of the report and support it with details of the research.
B. Incorrect. In step two of the method the type of research to be used should include the data collection, treatment and gathering of data for the report.
C. Incorrect. The conclusion at the end of the report is indirect and inductive not direct and deductive.
D. Incorrect. Step three is used to present the findings.

Chapter 14:

Using Graphics in Reports

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the advantages of tables, charts and graphs in a report.
- Define the types of charts and graphs used to present quantitative data.

Although it is probably true that "one picture is worth a thousand words," a picture may be worth many more words than even the thousand. Imagine trying to report in sentence form all the details available in the single picture represented by a modern financial statement for a major corporation. Or picture the difficulty involved in tying a simple bowline knot from a set of spoken or written instructions without the aid of a demonstration or a picture. Much of the material included in reports is only understandable when a written description is accompanied by graphic or tabular aids such as charts, graphs, tables, and pictures.

Using tables

The table is a presentation of quantitative data in column form. Very simply, 3 plus 4 plus 12 plus 9 equals 28 is better presented in a vertical orientation:

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ 4 \\ 12 \\ \underline{9} \\ 28 \end{array}$$

Although the table is not a graphic display in the literal sense of the term graphic, it is included in the group of available visual assists because it combines large amounts of data in a concise way. The arrangement of a table is subject to no single guiding principle. Rather, arrangement is a function of the variety and number of items to be included. Several guidelines, however, are appropriate and the application of these guides is illustrated in the sample table shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Sample table layout

Distribution of Stereo Owners by Occupation

Occupation	Number of Owners	Percent of Owners
White Collar	385	35
Self-employed	271	25
Blue Collar	225	20
Student	153	14
Unemployed	66*	6
Totals	1100	100

*Includes 23 respondents not indicating occupation.

1. All tables along with other illustrations in the report should be numbered to provide easy and accurate reference to them in the text.
2. Each table should be titled in such a way that the reader understands the content. Therefore, do not economize on words in a title. In the sample, the title might well have been longer to indicate the number of stereo owners surveyed as in: Distribution of 1100 Stereo System Owners by Occupation.
3. Each vertical column of figures and each horizontal line of figures should be captioned. In the sample, the captions or column heads for number and percent of owners could have been arranged in the following way with a common caption and two sub-captions:

Owners	
Number	Percent

4. Footnotes should be used to indicate sources—when data were gathered from secondary material—and special instructions. Use asterisks or letters to indicate footnotes. Figures used as indicators may become confused with other figures in the table.
5. Use symbols such as *, %, #, and $ sparingly in captions. Appropriate style is to spell out words in captions and to use $ before the first figure in the column of dollar amounts and before the total. Intermediate dollar amounts need no designation.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Graphic presentation is desirable when relationships of quantitative data are to be presented.
2. _____ Tables should be titled and labeled adequately but should not be so complete that the table is understandable without a textual explanation.
3. _____ A balance sheet is not considered a graphic presentation.
4. _____ Each vertical and horizontal row of quantitative data, except columnar totals, should be captioned.

Answers

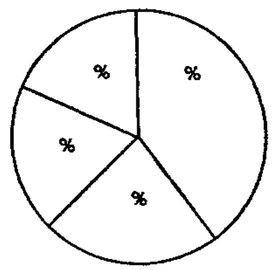
1. True. The key to the decision about whether to use a graphic presentation lies in the need or desire to demonstrate relationships between or among quantitative data. When quantitative data are simply to be presented without demonstrating relationships, a graphic presentation may be counterproductive.
2. False. A table should be able to stand by itself. Even so, the writer may accompany the table with a written interpretation. The written interpretation should reveal the depth of analysis by the writer.
3. False. The balance sheet is actually a table, which, broadly interpreted, is a graphic presentation. Note that a balance sheet incorporates each of the five recommended guidelines.
4. False. Each row-line or column—including totals—should be captioned. Labeling with the word total may seem unnecessary, but it provides a safeguard against possible misunderstanding.

Using Charts

For most business reports, tables are adequate for the presentation of quantitative data. However, when comparative relationships require emphasis, various visual graphic materials may be desirable. The following discussion of types of graphics should not be interpreted to mean that any one type is more desirable than others. The types are discussed in random order, and each has obvious desirability depending on the writer's intended purpose for the display.

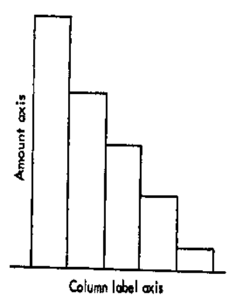
Pie charts. The pie chart, illustrated in Figure 2, provides a dramatic effect when used to show the distribution of parts of a whole. Familiar titles for pie charts are "How Each Dollar of Income Was Distributed," "Distribution of the Average Payroll Dollar," "Percentage Distribution by Countries of World Steel Production," "How Your Tax Dollar Is Used." Picture the pie chart as the face of a clock. The first cut should be made at 12 o'clock; then proceeding clockwise the largest piece of pie should be cut first with the remaining pieces cut in descending order of size. Captions may be placed either within or outside the pie depending on space available, and shadings or color can lend distinction to the various pieces. As a general rule, pie charts should be used only when more than two pieces make up the pie. When two items are being compared, a simple statement should be used in preference to any kind of graphic.

FIGURE 2
PIE CHART



Bar charts. To compare quantities, the bar chart is perhaps the most effective and flexible graphic device. The bar chart is simply a picture of several bars to depict quantities. (See Figure 3.) The bars may run either vertically or horizontally. The column label axis may contain labels to indicate years, products, population, or, in fact, almost any line heading found in tables. In essence, the bar chart is a pictorial table.

FIGURE 3
BAR CHART



Good bar chart construction follows these guidelines:

1. When time periods are used for comparison, the periods should run consecutively from earliest to latest on the column label axis. When items other than time periods are used for comparison, place the items of the greatest magnitude on the left with the others proceeding from left to right in order of decreasing magnitude.
2. Bars should be equal width. Otherwise a short, thick bar may have more mass than a tall thin bar when mass is not the item of comparison.

Line charts. Line charts, similar to that shown in Figure 4, are similar to bar charts. Both have time and amount axes, but the line chart is the more desirable in showing changes in quantitative data over time. Whereas the bar chart shows quantitative data for an entire time period such as total sales figures for a year, the line chart is constructed by connecting points from period to period. In this way, the line may show low and high marks for any single unit of time. When line charts are used, keep in mind these guidelines:

1. Use the vertical axis for amount and the horizontal axis for time.
2. Measure the axis gradations carefully to make certain they are equal. Vertical gradations should be equal, and horizontal gradations should be equal. However, because one axis is time and the other is amount, vertical and horizontal gradations need not be to the same scale.
3. Use reasonable proportions in the size of gradations so the line drawn will be realistic. Dramatic, perhaps unrealistic, lines result from large differences in gradations.
4. Begin both vertical and horizontal axes at 0 on the scale. When the amounts to be shown vertically are so great that the height of the chart would be unwieldy, break the chart as shown in Figure 5. This technique limits the height of the chart without distorting the line.

FIGURE 4
Line Chart

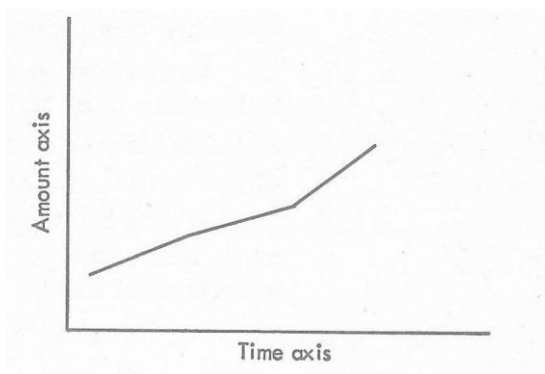
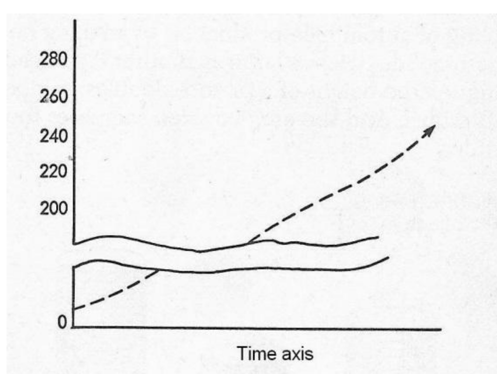


FIGURE 5
Broken scale for Line Chart



Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ A pie chart is desirable when total sales figures for two or more years are being compared.
2. _____ Bar charts provide the best means of depicting changes in quantitative data over time.
3. _____ Line charts may be misleading unless vertical gradations are equal to horizontal gradations.
4. _____ Line charts are effective only when the horizontal axis uses time as its basis, but bar charts may use any item, including time, as a horizontal label.

Answers

1. False. Time is not a satisfactory element for a pie chart. A bar chart is appropriate for comparison of sales figures for two or more years, and if trends are involved, a line chart would be effective. Pie charts should be used to show how the "whole" or 100 percent of something is divided.
2. False. Line charts are the best means of depicting changes over time, although bar charts may be used. Bar charts emphasize quantitative comparisons; line charts emphasize changes or trends.
3. False. Gradations should be realistic to prevent distortion. Because vertical gradations represent amounts and horizontal gradations time, there is no justification for their being equal. However, units such as thousands of dollars and years of time might well be equal if they lead to a realistic line.
4. True. Bar charts are more flexible and can use any label for the horizontal axis. On the other hand, line charts are limited to time as the horizontal item.

Using Other Graphic Techniques

Weekly news magazines often dramatize quantitative comparisons through the use of pictograms similar to the sample shown in Figure 6. Pictures of automobiles, ships, tanks, people, and stacks of dollars are frequently used to assist communication.

The major problem in the use of pictograms is that of maintaining proportions. For example, differences in the quantity of a stack of dollars can be indicated simply by adding or removing dollars. When items such as automobiles are compared, each pictorial automobile should represent a certain number of automobiles. Thus, to show changes, either add or delete a number of pictures. To attempt to show a doubling of automobile production by making one automobile twice as large as another is misleading. As the height of a picture doubles, so does its width, and the area covered increases four times.

FIGURE 6
Pictogram

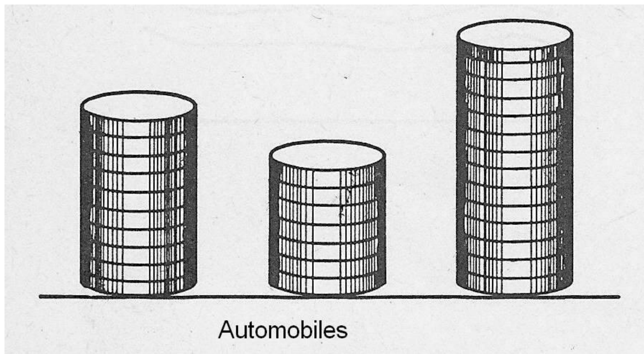
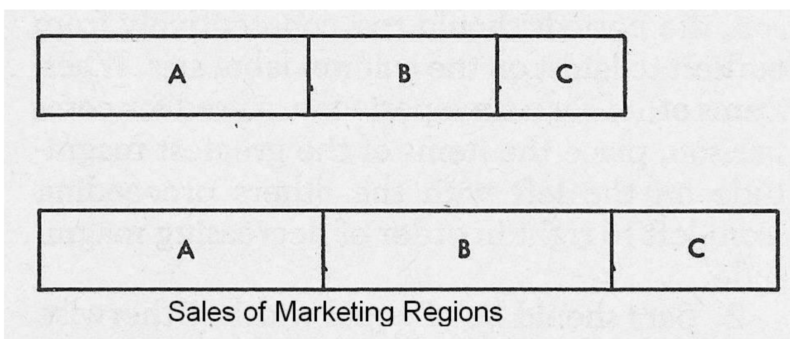


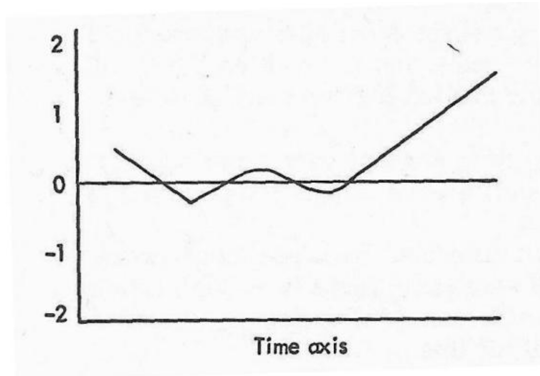
FIGURE 7
Component Bar Chart



Component bar charts are used to show comparisons of wholes and the parts making up those wholes, as shown in Figure 7. One bar represents sales of marketing regions (A, B, C) for one year, and the total size of the bar is the total of all sales. The second bar represents sales by region and total for the following year. The component bar chart is similar to a pie chart, then, because the bar represents division of a whole into its parts. To compare years, however, pie charts would not provide accurate and easy comparison as do component bar charts.

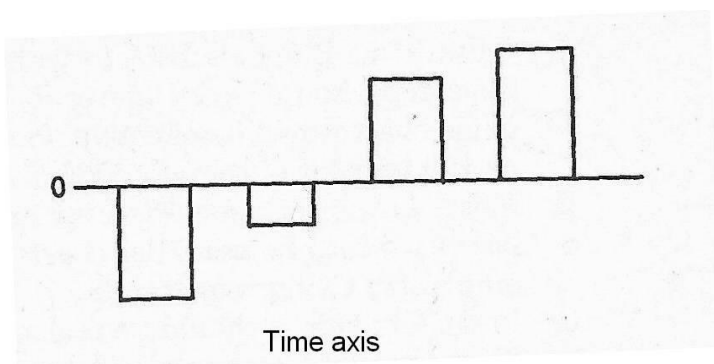
Two techniques are available to accommodate graphic problems when negative amounts are involved. As shown in Figure 8, a line chart may be adapted for use when both negative and positive amounts must be shown by simply placing the zero at an intermediate point on the vertical axis. Then, the line may move from positive to negative and back, and present an accurate picture, for example, of profit figures from year to year.

FIGURE 8
Line Chart for Negative Amounts



A similar technique is possible in the case of bar charts when negative and positive amounts are involved, as shown in Figure 9. Corporate profits and losses and federal surpluses or deficits are examples of items frequently graphed in this way.

FIGURE 9
Bar Chart for Negative Amounts



Introducing graphics in the text

A general principle governing use of pictorial or graphic material in reports is that the reader should never come to an illustration unless it has been referred to in the text. Ideally, the material should be introduced before the reader comes to it, and the illustration should be placed as close to its introduction as possible.

Introduction of graphics in the narrative portion of the text can be accomplished in any of several ways. The best method is to use a phrase at the end of a sentence that includes some analysis of the graphic material as follows:

Two thirds of the new accounts came as the result of our advertising campaign, as shown in Figure 1.

In this example, the reference to the graphic material is incidental to the main idea. When the reference phrase is placed at the beginning of the sentence, it may detract from the main idea, as in:

As shown in Figure 1, two thirds…

The least desirable method is to place the reference in parentheses because it then does not tie itself directly to the main idea.

Two thirds of the new accounts came….(See Figure 1.)

Summary

Tables and graphs can strengthen the content of reports that are based on quantitative data. Additionally, these devices help ease the writing task. For example, tables and graphics are condensations of raw data gathered during research, and they provide the basis for the narrative (written) portion of the report. After the graphics are prepared, organized, and placed in the proper sequence, the writer need only prepare a written presentation of the analysis and implications of the graphic data.

Therefore, while graphics assist the reader, they also assist the writer by simplifying what might otherwise be a difficult task.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Pictograms are generally quite reliable, because as the height of a picture increases, so does its width.
2. _____ Rather than use a bar chart showing negative amounts extending below the base line, it is better practice to start the base line at an amount less than zero, so all bars would extend in the same direction from the base.
3. _____ Component bar charts are more desirable than pie charts in comparing the parts of two "whole."
4. _____ If a graph or chart covers an entire page, it should be placed on the page immediately following its introduction in the text.

Answers

1. False. Well prepared pictograms are generally quite reliable. In the true-false statement, however, the reason for reliability is not true. Because the width increases as the height increases, doubling the height of a picture increases the area four times, thus greatly exaggerating size comparisons.
2. False. To have both negative and positive amounts extending the same direction from the base line may give the impression that all amounts are positive. The negative bar chart with negative amounts extending below the base line contributes to a faster and clearer distinction.
3. True. The length of bar charts makes a clear distinction between total amounts, and components of each bar are easily compared. Two pie charts would have to have a difference in total size, and percentage portions of the two pies would be difficult to compare.
4. True. Graphics should follow their introduction as closely as possible. When several items are introduced on a single page, as in this chapter, the problem is complicated because all graphics may not be accommodated on the following page.

Chapter 14 Review Questions

1. The most effective and flexible graphic device to depict quantities is:

   A. Tables.
   B. Line charts.
   C. Pie charts.
   D. Bar charts.

2. When introducing reference graphs in the narrative portion of a text, the best method of placement is to:

   A. Use a reference stating the “graphic material” to follow.
   B. Include the graphic material at the end in an index.
   C. Include the graphic material at the beginning of a sentence.
   D. Place the reference in parenthesis.

Chapter 14 Review Answers

1. The most effective and flexible graphic device to depict quantities is:

A. Incorrect. Tables are not graphic displays.
B. Incorrect. Line charts are more desirable in showing changes in quantitative data over time.
C. Incorrect. Pie charts show the distribution of parts to a whole.
D. **Correct**. To compare quantities the bar chart is the most effective and flexible graphic device; bar charts show quantitative data for an entire period of time.

2. When introducing reference graphs in the narrative portion of a text, the best method of placement is to:

A. **Correct.** The best method is to use a phrase at the end of a sentence that includes some analysis of the graphic material as follows: Two thirds of the new accounts came as the result of our advertising campaign, as shown in Figure 1.
B. Incorrect. Ideally the graphic material should be placed as close as possible to the text and not in an index.
C. Incorrect. There is a lack of support and "tie-in" if the graphic material appears at the beginning of a sentence.
D. Incorrect. The least desirable method to present graphic material is to place the reference in parenthesis. This procedure does not tie the graphic material directly to the main idea.

Chapter 15:

Writing the Report

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Define an objective writing style.
- Recognize the proper tense, accurate nouns and pronouns.
- State the effectiveness of using common language.
- Recognize useful devices for good transitions.

After going through the steps in problem solving, condensing and refining data, and outlining the report, the rest should be easy-all one has to do is put it all in written form. Not surprisingly, most people enjoy doing the field work but dislike the task of writing. A couple of suggestions are appropriate for the insecure writer. First, prepare whatever graphics--tables, pictures, charts--you think you'll need. Writing is much easier when you can see what you are writing about. Second, use the outline as a tentative guide, because you can always make minor changes. Then, begin your writing with any item in the outline. Start with the thing you are most familiar with even if it might be the conclusions or recommendations, which will ultimately appear at the end of the report. In other words, proceed from the familiar to the unfamiliar-from those things you feel secure about to those things less secure in your mind.

Using Impersonal Style

One of the striking things about report-writing problems is the difficulty writers often have in writing naturally. Because they have become accustomed to writing in first-person style and using personal pronouns such as you and I, writers fail to achieve the degree of objectivity they think a report should profess. We seem to operate under the idea that reports should eliminate pronouns completely and appear so antiseptic that humans had nothing to do with them. Such need not be the case. The personal pronoun can be eliminated and the report can still be natural and unstilted.

Sentences beginning “It is believed…” or “It is submitted…” leave the reader confused about the subject it. In informal report writing style, “I believe…” is quite appropriate. As the report approaches the formal end of the continuum, however, personal pronouns become undesirable. You can develop skill in avoiding the personal pronouns while still writing interesting and natural messages. Recasting sentences is a skill all good report writers develop. Note the following sentences which all say the same thing:

> *Using the pronoun*: I distributed questionnaires to 300 workers.
>
> *Recasting the sentence*: Questionnaires were distributed to 300 workers; or Distribution of questionnaires was made to 300 workers; or Three hundred workers completed questionnaires.

In the example using the pronoun *I*, some writers would eliminate *I* by saying “The author distributed questionnaires….” This technique leads to great awkwardness and may be a lie if taken literally. The important thing to remember is that you can recast a sentence in several ways.

The pronoun *you* tends to increase interest, because it brings the reader into the story. However, *you* also tends to be persuasive and may decrease the desired objectivity. In introductory remarks such as “You will notice the contrast between…,” the *you* can be avoided and action improved by simply saying “Notice the contrast between….”

Company practices vary in the degree of formality in reports and in the use of personal pronouns. A little practice will enable you to adopt effective impersonal style when necessary.

Using active sentences

Because reporting usually involves writing about some kind of action, active writing is often appropriate. In the following example, passive voice is converted to active by recasting the sentence:

> *Passive*: The contract was reviewed thoroughly by the attorney.
> *Active*: The attorney thoroughly reviewed the contract.

In the passive example, the subject *contract* did nothing-took no action. In the active example, the subject *attorney* took some action-*reviewed* the contract. In active voice, the subject is the doer of the action. In passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action. The writer must decide whether active or passive should be used to emphasize the proper elements. In the example above, *contract* receives emphasis in the passive sentence and *attorney* in the active sentence, because the subject of the sentence is always the key part.

Passive sentences always use some form of the verb *to be* such *as is, was, have been*, and *are*. To attempt to eliminate them would be foolish. However, should you find that all your sentences have passive verbs, you should attempt to achieve balance. About one active sentence out of every four or five is adequate to maintain this balance. You will recall from earlier chapters the discussion of sentence organization and ways to vary it. The emphasis given here is to use the techniques in achieving an objective report-writing style.

Using proper tense

Anyone who has read many master's or doctor's degree theses is aware that passive voice coupled with past tense verbs leads to deadly reading. To avoid this problem, simply keep in mind that anything done before writing the report is reported in past tense. You *developed* a plan of attack, you *gathered* data, and you *reached* a conclusion. As you direct the reader through the report, you call attention to a table that shows information. You may remind the reader that a preceding chapter showed something. In other words, write about things as they occur, and you should have few problems.

Using accurate nouns and pronouns

An abundance of references such as *it, those, their, these*, and *aforementioned* will help lose the reader quickly. Sooner or later the reader will look for an antecedent and find none, two, or singular and plural. Because a pronoun is a word that stands for a noun, it should not stand for a sentence, a paragraph, or an idea. When in doubt, repeat the noun rather than attempt to get by with a nebulous pronoun. For example, when you are tempted to write: "Procedures have been modified. These account for the delay," simply repeat the noun by saying "Procedures have been modified. These modifications account for the delay." In the first example, "These" may refer to either the procedures or the modifications. In the second, the meaning is definite. Fix your meaning.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Using personal pronouns is taboo in all formal report writing.
2. _____ "Bill wrote to Bob" is an active-voice revision of "Bob received a letter from Bill."
3. _____ "The writer discovered…" is a satisfactory revision of "I discovered…" to eliminate the use of "I."
4. _____ "Notice the chart on page 15 which…" has an implied subject for the verb "notice" and is written in passive voice.
5. _____ "This shoe is popular with college students because of their strong arches and firm leather uppers" contains a faulty pronoun reference.

Answers

1. False. Using personal pronouns is a matter of preference from firm to firm and from executive to executive. To master techniques of avoiding personal pronouns, however, is important to any report writer.
2. True. Even though the exact wording was not used, the revised sentence expresses the same thought as the original and uses active voice.
3. False. "The writer" is only a substitute for "I" and did not result from a recasting of the sentence.
4. False. "You" is the implied subject for the verb, but the verb also denoted action and, thus, is written in active voice.

5. True. The pronoun “their” is faulty. As the sentence is written, “their” takes college students as its antecedent. The strong arches and firm leather uppers definitely refer to the shoe. Substitute “its” for “their” to clarify the statement.

Using common language

Because most reports contain discussion of some form of quantitative data, some language should be used to make complicated data understandable to a variety of readers. Take, for example, a report to stockholders saying sales for the current year were $77,985,676 and for the previous year amounted to $62,432,771. Very few can visualize amounts of those sizes, nor can many rapidly calculate the increase of some $15.5 million. Most people do understand percentages and ratios. We could say sales increased $15.5 million or 20 percent. We could even write that for every $4 of sales last year we had $5 in sales this year.

Common language use enables the writer to reduce large amounts to understandable terms. The place for common language is in the written analysis of data shown in tables and other graphic presentations. Common language in the narrative report is a written description of the meaning one gathers when reviewing a graphic presentation.

Symbols such as $, %, and # are part of our common language. Almost everyone understands the meaning of certain symbols. Within an industry, “jargon”--the language of the trade--becomes common language. To use jargon when communicating with people outside the industry, however, is to ensure poor communication.

Economic changes make the dollar sign a shaky common language for comparative purposes, too. Manufacturing industries speak in terms of units: automobiles produced, freight car loadings, and passenger miles. Report writing is at its communicative best when difficult-to-understand concepts and figures are reduced to concise, common-language statements.

Using tabulations

Frequently listing several items is necessary in reports. Notice the difference between the following paragraphs:

> Therefore, the Hi-Bubble Cola eight-bottle package should be converted to a six-bottle package because of a lower shelf price, a competitive price with other packages, easier handling by consumers, and an appearance conducive to single-bottle sales.

The improved version:

Therefore, the Hi-Bubble Cola eight-bottle package should be converted to a six-bottle package for the following reasons:

1. A lower shelf price.
2. A competitive price with other packages.
3. Easier handling by consumers.
4. An appearance conducive to single-bottle sales.

The improved version uses tabulations and enumeration to emphasize the four reasons for the recommendation. The lead-in statement for the revised version could also have used the phrase "because of" as a substitute for "for the following reasons." However, the lead-in phrasing preceding tabulations represents one of the difficult areas in report writing. If each tabulated item does not read easily with "because of," an awkward series results. Such awkwardness can detract from the reader's understanding of the statements. To check parallel construction in a tabulated statement, read each item separately with the lead-in phrasing.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ To use inches, feet, yards, and miles in a report to Europeans would be a good use of common language.
2. _____ Common language not only enables masses of data to be reported in understandable terms but also may contribute to economy of language through the use of symbols.
3. _____ The following statement uses enumeration but also violates the principle of parallel construction: The purposes of the meeting were to (1) communicate personnel policies, (2) encourage participation in in-service training programs, and (3) to introduce several new employees.
4. _____ An advantage of tabulations and enumerations is that the number of items enumerated becomes pronounced, thus contributing to improved communication.
5. _____ The following statement violates the principle of parallel construction in tabulations: We went to the mountains to: (1) go fishing (2) go hiking (3) golf.

Answers

1. False. European countries use the metric system; thus, common language for measurements should deal with the same system.
2. True. Symbols constitute an important part of nonverbal communication and provide economy in the use of words. Highway traffic signs for such things as curves, crossroads, and deer crossings often make use of symbols to convey ideas that may not be totally clear when described in words.

3. True. The statement uses enumeration, but violates the principle of parallel construction. The lead-in phrase "…were to" reads smoothly with items 1 and 2 but item 3 repeats "to" which is not parallel with the other items. Incidentally, the statement incorporates enumeration but not tabulation. Tabulated items are listed one under the other.
4. True. When items are enumerated, the number of items is emphasized; and frequently, the communicator intends for the exact number to be a critical part of the message. When enumeration is combined with tabulation, emphasis on number is even more pronounced.
5. True. In a strict sense, parallel construction requires that item 3 be "go golfing," or that items 1 and 2 be "fish" and "hike." At the same time, all items in the example are verbs and read satisfactorily with the lead-in phrase; thus the series could be loosely described as following the principle of parallel construction.

Using definitions

Frequently a writer feels an obligation to define terms used in the report. Definitions are rather easy to construct when the concept of dividing and classifying (discussed in Chapter 13) is kept in mind. The process of outlining contributes to the elements in a good definition.

Three elements are included in definitions: (1) The term to be defined, (2) the family to which the term belongs, and (3) the differentiation that makes the term different from all other members of the family. In the outline of the United States used in Chapter 13, Massachusetts was classified as a Northeastern state. To write a definition of Massachusetts, then, using the three elements, we have:

The term: *Massachusetts*.
The family: *United States*.
The differentiation: *Northeastern*.

Thus, Massachusetts is one of the United States and is located in the Northeast. The basic definition could then be embellished with further distinguishing characteristics: Massachusetts is one of the fifty United States and is located in the Northeast bordered by Vermont and New Hampshire in the north and Connecticut and Rhode Island on the south.

In the following definition, the elements are shown in italics: *Discount house* is a retail *establishment* where merchandise is sold at a *price lower than the common retail price*. Determining the elements before beginning writing can greatly clarify definitions.

Using headings

As mentioned earlier, all headings in the report are listed in the contents table. As the original outline is prepared, the writer should keep in mind, too, that items in the outline will probably be headings in the report. Therefore, even at the outline stage, the good writer can visualize the format of the final report.

The only reason for a heading in the report is to assist the reader. Therefore, a good rule to follow is "make the heading say something about its section of the report." Too often we economize on words in a heading when that is the very point where more words pay off in communication. Many writers prefer to use "talking" headings such as those in this chapter. In this section, for example, "Using Headings" is more descriptive of the content than simply "Headings." For a section of findings indicating that trading stamps encourage customer traffic, the report heading "talks" when written "Trading Stamps Encourage Customer Traffic." This heading is more revealing than one saying "Trading Stamps as an Inducement." Both are better than "The Use of Trading Stamps" and infinitely better than "Findings" or "Findings about Trading Stamps."

No hard-and-fast rule exists for the physical placement of headings in a report. However, consistency should be the guiding principle. You will recall the discussion of headings of various degrees from Chapter 13. Consistency occurs when all report headings of the same degree take the same physical placement in the report format. A suggested heading format is shown in Figure 1. Notice how the format reflects through placement of headings what might as well be a Roman numeral outline. Both the format and the outline reflect report organization.

Using transition

Because the report is written in sections, the good report writer will develop a repertoire of devices to tie the sections together. Just as paragraphs in a composition must be related, so must sections of a report. Here are some of the acceptable devices.

Repetition of words. Notice how the transition from one paragraph to the next occurs in the following example despite an intervening heading.

> …and lengthy sentences are deterrents to understanding in reports.
>
> Difficult Wording
>
> Although lengthy sentences are deterrents, difficult wording…

Repetition of an idea. In the above example, repetition of words led to transition. Notice how the following sentences are tied together by repeating the idea but not the exact words.

> …as a result of the practice of polygamy. On the other hand, plural marriages…

Reference to something to come. A statement at the end of one section similar to the following will ensure transition:

> In the following section, attention will be focused on…

Use of transitional words or phrases. Here are some examples of transitional words or phrases that can be of help when other devices seem difficult to incorporate:

Time transitions	**Contrast and similarity transitions**
Further	similarly
furthermore	in the same way
Next	the same
for example	likewise
for instance	however
in other words	on the other hand
specifically	on the contrary
meanwhile	nevertheless
the latter	But
as mentioned	Yet
Then	While
as suggested	in contrast
in the first place	although
in the second place	in the different vein
finally	despite

Other helpful words and phrases

therefore	in conclusion
in summary	not only
as a result	moreover
since	provided
because	consequently
at the same time	briefly
hence	conversely
thus	

Business Plans

A business plan is a detailed report describing the nature of a business, the target market, what the company offers that its competitors do not, the budget required to turn a profit, and the resources and qualifications of the owner(s). Business plans are generally required of new businesses seeking funding, as well as of existing businesses needing outside funding to expand their operations. Most bankers and potential investors want to examine a business plan to evaluate the idea's potential for success and the likelihood that the investment or loan will be repaid.

Most business plans fail in providing such reassurance, however, because they are incomplete and not specific. Their writers don't understand the kinds of information and the level of detail required. Although business plans are usually no longer than 12 pages (10 pages are the ideal), they include a great deal of information, such as:

1. *Executive summary with product or service description*. Begin with a two- or three-page overview of the proposed venture. Concisely describe the key elements of the project and its major goals and objectives. What makes the product or service better, more unique, or more desirable than competitors' products or services? Supply patent information (if applicable).
2. *Company background* (for existing businesses only). Provide previous balance sheets, income and expense statements, cash flow statements, and so forth. Describe the industry (showing that it is flourishing or likely to do so soon) and the company's position within it.
3. *Management*. Supply brief resumes of the entire management team and the consultants (if any) who will provide skills that management lacks. Explain each person's responsibilities. Describe his or her expertise and experience in critical areas such as planning, product development and pricing, distribution, promotion and marketing, management, production and operations management, accounting, and finance. Explain each key person's level of commitment (financial and time) to the business. Letters of reference and personal financial statements may be included in an appendix.
4. *Financial plan*. Provide a realistic, conservative five-year projection of income and expenses. If you are seeking funding to manufacture a product, tie projections to the stages of the product's life cycle (introduction. growth, maturity, and decline). Explain briefly how the figures were derived (generally, with assumptions based on known trends). Mention all sources of funding, personnel requirements, and accounting procedures. Identify the factors that might affect projections. Sketch best-case and worst-case scenarios.
5. *Capital requirements*. State exactly how much money is needed for the project and how the funds will be used. Describe the financial commitment of the owner(s). If possible, offer a personal guarantee of the loan.
6. *Marketing plan*. Provide sales forecasts for a five-year period. Set a price for the product or service (based on research), and compare its weaknesses and strengths with those of its competition. Describe planned marketing research, promotional activities, and advertising campaigns. Analyze the target market and market size. Summarize all the marketing research that has already been conducted (copies of sources and/or a bibliography may be included in an appendix).
7. *Manufacturing plan* (if appropriate). Describe the production capacity of the plant, plant size, inventory on hand, inventory control method, personnel required, machinery and computers required, quality control efforts, and so on.
8. *Location*. Verify that the location is accessible and desirable to the target market. Analyze traffic patterns and parking availability. Provide a demographic analysis of area consumers. Describe competitors' locations.

Once you have written your business plan, have an accountant or financial analyst verify the accuracy of your figures and financial analyses. Ask him or her to make sure that totals are correct and consistent throughout the plan. For example, the marketing costs specified in the marketing plan section should agree with the projections for marketing listed in the financial plan; the machinery called for in the manufacturing plan should be listed in the financial plan. If the numbers do not add up, your business plan is likely to be turned down. Careless errors such as these imply that the owner will be careless in other aspects of the business.

By preparing a business plan before you meet with a banker or venture capitalist, you increase your chances of success. To further increase your chances, take an accountant with you. Bankers will want to speak to you to make sure that you are both passionate and realistic about the new venture; however, they don't expect you to have the financial or accounting background necessary to answer all their questions in these areas.

Summary

Although the style of writing used in reports is far more formal than the natural, conversational style used in letters, report writers can develop a natural formal style. The art of recasting sentences to avoid personal pronouns and still retain action and interest can be developed by following some of the suggestions in this chapter. In addition to achieving a tone of objectivity through writing style, writers can add credibility to their reports by applying appropriate mechanical and expository techniques discussed in the next chapter.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The following statement is an effective definition: Salesmanship is when one person convinces another of the need for a product or service.
2. _____ "Public Undecided on Strip Mining" would be a satisfactory talking heading for a section of a report containing data on a consumer poll which showed that 30 percent of those polled favored permission to strip mine coal, 40 percent were opposed, and 30 percent were undecided.
3. _____ First-degree headings should always be centered on the page and second-degree headings placed on the margin a double space above the narrative.
4. _____ Repetition of an idea without repeating key words is the best way to achieve transition.
5. _____ Transitional words or phrases should only be used when it is impossible to use one of the other devices.

Answers

1. False. The definition omits the second element, the family to which the term belongs. If salesmanship is a persuasive skill or technique, a proper definition would be: Salesmanship is a persuasive skill used by one person to convince another of the need for a product or service. Of course, you can argue with this definition in terms of what the skill may be used for, but the definition is correct in terms of form.
2. True. The heading talks to the very point of the content by using the term “undecided.”
3. False. As stated in the chapter, no set rules apply to the format position of headings. Many attractive reports place headings in the margin to make them distinctive; others may place headings inside ruled rectangles. The key guide, of course, is to be consistent with headings of the same degree.
4. False. Repetition of an idea is a very effective transitional device, but so are the other mentioned. Good writers will probably use a number of devices to maintain interest.
5. False. Very often, a transitional word or phrase will be the most effective transitional tool. For example, “on the other hand” reveals immediately to the reader that a contrasting thought is about to be presented.

Chapter 15 Review Questions

1. The only reason for a heading in the report is:

   A. To use in listing the table of content.
   B. To assist in preparing an index of terms.
   C. To assist the reader.
   D. To embellish the report.

2. Most business plans fail because they:

   A. Include an executive summary and description of products or services.
   B. Are incomplete and not specific.
   C. List the management team.
   D. List the capital requirements in specific amounts needed by the business.

Chapter 15 Review Answers

1. The only reason for a heading in the report is:

A. Incorrect. Often the headings economize on words and are not descriptive enough for the table of content.
B. Incorrect. Headings do not use many key terms that are required listing in an index of terms and names.
C. **Correct.** The only reason for a heading in the report is to assist the reader.
D. Incorrect. Reports should be short and communicate a clear and simple message without needless embellishment.

2. Most business plans fail because they:

A. Incorrect. Product and service descriptions are included in most good reports along with an executive summary.
B. **Correct.** Most business plans fail because they are incomplete and not specific.
C. Incorrect. Brief resumes of the entire management team should be included in a good report describing each person's responsibilities and expertise.
D. Incorrect. Most bankers want to know exactly how much money is needed for an investment or loan.

Chapter 16:

Finishing the Report

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Define the factors that contribute to a finished report.
- Recognize objectivity in a report.
- Identify proper use of documentation and footnotes.

Previous chapters have dealt with the report process, research, outlining, use of graphics, and writing style. Before putting the report in its final form, the writer should keep in mind several factors which contribute to the finished product.

Using Objectivity

Writing effectively involves the intelligent use of statements that explain or reveal the analysis that went into the development of the topic. When decisions are to be made by management, the report should be objective enough to permit decisions to be free of the subjective opinion or biases of the writer. Objective writing is characterized by (a) avoidance of emotional terms, (b) recognition of assumptions and opinions, and (c) use of only requested judgments and inferences.

Emotional terms are words or phrases which are persuasive in meaning and which generally cannot be supported by research data. Such words as *shocking, startling*, and *amazing* should not be used in discussions of research findings in reports. In oral presentations such terms may be used as spontaneous comments. But with the amount of thought that goes into problem solving and report preparation, such terms only detract from the presentation. What is amazing to one person may be only humdrum to another. Let readers make their own emotional appraisals.

Assumptions are an important part of most research. When sampling is used for surveys, we make the assumption that the sample of the population surveyed is representative of the population. If the assumption is that the findings should be related only to the group surveyed and not to a larger population, the reader should be told about it. Therefore, review your research carefully to make sure all your assumptions are apparent. Put them in the report; otherwise, the reader may not arrive at the same conclusion you did.

Opinions are often easier to recognize than assumptions. An opinion is a conclusion or inference about something but falls short of positive knowledge. The doctor, dentist, accountant, real estate appraiser, and other professionals often give opinions which, in the absence of positive knowledge, are considered the nearest thing to fact. When you are inclined to include an opinion in the report, give the reader the privilege of being informed. Simply say “In my opinion” or “In the opinion of counsel.”

A *judgment* is the writer’s opinion about the good or bad of something. Smoking may be detrimental to health. Excess fat in the diet may contribute to heart disease. Such statements as these are the results of research. But notice how the wording stays within the findings of research because not all people who smoke and eat fat suffer from those activities. However, most of us have drawn our own judgments about the good or bad of such activities. Judgments in reports should be avoided unless they have been requested.

Judgment implies decision making and, thus, touches on a very sensitive area of business. The right and responsibility of making decisions is inherent in the lines of authority and responsibility of the organization structure. The good report writer reviews the authority given for the report. Was a recommendation requested? Or were findings and conclusions all that were necessary? Don’t go beyond the purpose of the study.

An *inference* is a close relative of a judgment. Inferences are statements about the unknown based on the known. Because we can’t see into the future with great accuracy, any statement about the future lies in the area of an inference. At the same time, business relies heavily on its ability to predict the future. It attempts to gather as much evidence as possible, analyze it from many viewpoints, and make predictions with an accuracy far better than chance. The same admonition applies to inferences, then, as apply to the other terms discussed. Stay within the confines of the problem. If an inference is called for, give it-but also recognize it for what it is.

“Weasel” words are frequently used by good writers to reveal the degree to which they are willing to stand behind their findings. Such words as *indicate, suggest, point, show*, and *hint* are helpful. When data do not prove a point, they often suggest or indicate possible conclusions. Statements such as “The data indicate a potential consumer move in…” may be far more objective than “A consumer move in…” simply because the data do not indicate a certainty. Although no hierarchy of strength or objectivity exists for the use of weasel words, a possible strength sequence might be *show, indicate, point, suggest*, and *hint*. Coupling any of these with such terms as *possibility* or *potential* may further modify the degree to which the writer wants to “stick out his neck.” At any rate, “weasel” words should be used cautiously.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The essence of objectivity in report writing is to provide enough evidence and enough information on factors leading to the writer's interpretation of the evidence so that the reader could arrive at the same conclusions on his own.
2. _____ Assumptions, according to the dictionary, are those things taken for granted. Therefore, the report need not detail them.
3. _____ If a study on sales of men's shoe sizes revealed that twice as many shoes were sold in D and E widths as in A, B, and C widths, a conclusion that men's feet are getting wider would be classed as a judgment.
4. _____ The use of "weasel" words in reports should be avoided, because they are imprecise.

Answers

1. True. Stating assumptions and identifying opinions provide information on how the writer bridged gaps in factual data. Using the same assumptions and opinions, the reader should then be able to analyze the data and arrive at similar conclusions.
2. False. Assumptions should be identified in the report for the reasons given in item 1. At the same time, because another knowledgeable person will be aware of some assumptions without being told, routine, internal reports very often omit them without leading to miscommunication.
3. False. The recommendation would be classed as an inference-a statement about the unknown based on the known. A judgment, in this case, would be the writer's statement about whether a great number of D and E widths was good or bad.
4. False. "Weasel" words are imprecise. They are used to show a degree of impreciseness surrounding data. However, they enable us to make rather precise statements about the soundness of data, and thus, they should be used when desirable.

Using Documentation

Documentation in a report is accomplished in several ways. Essentially, documentation is the process of "giving credit where credit is due." Using footnotes, bibliographies, and textual references to sources are generally accepted methods of documentation. Although these methods may assist the reader, they serve the writer in many more ways:

1. Protect the writer against plagiarism. In general practice, quoted or paraphrased material of two or three lines may be referenced by a footnote without requesting permission. When material is to be circulated widely, as in a text or article, and is also sizable, permission should be sought from the original source. Government publications may be quoted freely, however.
2. Protect the writer's professional integrity. In other words, don't quote excerpts from the work of others and claim it as your own.

3. Support the writer's statements. If recognized authorities say the same thing you do, your work takes on reliability. Documentation enables your work to be verified.

Using footnotes. Footnotes shown at the bottom of the page are referred to by citation numbers in the text as in this example.1

> 1 Jae K. Shim and Joel Siegel, *The Vest-Pocket CFO*, 2nd ed.(Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005), p.173.

In academic work, the bottom-of-page footnote is most used. In business reports, a faster and simpler method is the terminal reference. All sources are listed in the bibliography in alphabetical order and each is given a number. In the text, a notation such as (4:16) is made immediately following the material to be cited. In this example, (4:16), the 4 refers to the fourth item in the bibliography, and the 16 refers to the page number from which the material was taken.

In the sample footnote, notice that the author's given name came first. This same entry shown in a bibliography would have the surname first.

Footnote entries may also be used to explain formulas, document interviews or other sources of unwritten information, and for information that is difficult to incorporate in the text.

Preparing bibliographies. Bibliography entries differ in two respects from footnotes. First, bibliography entries refer to the entire work cited rather than to specific pages. Second, as noted previously, given names come first in footnotes, and surnames come first in bibliography entries. Author "John Doe" in a footnote becomes "Doe, John" in a bibliography. All literature appearing as footnotes also appears in the bibliography. Here are some suggestions for handling bibliography items:

1. When only a few items will appear, simply list them all-books, periodicals, government reports-in alphabetical sequence. If large bibliographies, say of several pages, are to be used, group them by categories.
2. Government publications are listed under "U.S. Department of…" in the bibliography with the departments followed by the title determining the alphabetical sequence. In footnotes, the title of the publication comes first.
3. Your primary concern in a bibliography is to tell your reader what you've used and where to find it. Such things as newspaper items and annual reports may well be included.

Here are some forms of proper bibliography entries:

For a book:

Jae K. Shim and Joel G. Siegel. *Dictionary of Accounting Terms*. 5th Ed., Hauppauge, NY. Barron's, 2010, 523 pages.

For an article:

Jae K. Shim. "Financial Planning for Nonprofit Organizations," *The Journal of Accounting, Taxation and Finance for Business*, Volume 6, No. 4, Spring 2007.

For an internet publication:

Doug Stanglin (September 13, 2011). "School district accused of spying on kids via laptop webcams". *USA Today*. http://content.usatoday.com/communities/ondeadline/post/2010/02/school-district-accused-of-issuing-webcam-laptops-to-spy-on-students/1. Retrieved September 13, 2011, 2011.

Using textual references. Frequently, statements can be supported by parenthetical references to sources. For example, "According to a recent commitment by the Board of Directors, the company will issue discount coupons to…" is a statement preceded by the phrase documenting the authority for the statement. The same thing would apply in the following: "in a speech to the Commonwealth Club last week, Secretary Hooper gave support to…." In such cases, footnotes or bibliography references are unnecessary.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Plagiarism is the act of saying something untrue about another.
2. _____ Footnotes place the author's given name first while bibliographies place the surname first, because normally footnotes are in chronological order throughout the text with no need for alphabetizing and bibliographies contain many entries on a page, thus creating the need for an alphabetic finding order.
3. _____ Terminal footnoting simplifies documentation, because it essentially combines footnotes and bibliographies.
4. _____ Bibliographies list the total number of pages in a book and the page numbers of periodical articles, but footnotes indicate only the pages containing cited material.
5. _____ Textual references are substitutes for footnotes and bibliographies.

Answers

1. False. Plagiarism is stealing written material from others. Documentation of most items will avoid charges of this nature. Libel is the act of saying something untrue about another in published or graphic material.
2. True. The reason for alphabetized bibliographies is ease of location material. Normally with only a few footnotes to a page at the most, no need exists for a surname first sequence.
3. True. The terminal footnote method makes it possible to find complete footnote documentation in the bibliography and also simplifies the typing and format task by eliminating complete footnotes from the body of the report.
4. True. The purpose of a footnote is to pinpoint the reference. Bibliographies contain entries for the entire work.
5. False. Normally textual references cover items not needed in bibliographies and, thus, not in footnotes. Textual references add authority to statements that might otherwise appear unfounded.

Writing parts of the report body

The following suggestions are intended to ease the task of beginning each part of the report body.

Writing the introduction. The introduction of a report, whether it be a memorandum or a long formal presentation, should include at a minimum a statement of purpose and a description of the method used. In longer reports, many writers like to end the introduction with a brief statement of the organization of the remainder of the body. Therefore, an outline of the introductory section which begins on the first page of the body would appear as follows:

Introduction
- Purpose
- Method(s) used
- Organization of the report

Normally, a report should not have two consecutive headings without intervening writing. Therefore, the heading “Introduction” should have some remarks following it before the subheading “Purpose” appears, as shown in Figure 1, a sample introductory page. The material following the introductory heading may simply establish the importance of the subject studied or it may go to great lengths to provide background for the study.

The easiest way to state the purpose of the study is to begin with “The purpose of this study was to analyze…” or “The purpose of this report is to present an analysis of….” As you write this section, remember that “studies analyze” and “reports present.” Reports can’t analyze, but people can.

Following a heading for method, the first few words may well be "To gather data, a questionnaire survey was conducted…." Within the method section, list sources of information. How many people were surveyed? What was the population? If sampling was used, why is it reliable?

If a section on organization of the report is to be used, a statement such as the following is appropriate: "following parts of the report present in order the cost, size, power, and comfort analyses of the three aircraft. The final section contains conclusions and recommendations."

As mentioned in Chapter 13, the headings "introduction," "purpose," "methods," and others used in the introductory section of a report may be omitted because readers expect the initial part of a report to be an introduction. Compare the first page shown in Figure 1 to the first page in Figure 2 that omits the introductory headings. In this second version, the title of the report is generally placed at the top of the page.

Writing about the findings. As the report leaves the introductory portions and enters the findings, a first degree heading should appear. A major weakness of reports is that they often rely on headings for thought. Actually, a report should stand by itself without the use of headings. In other words, if all headings were removed, would the report still be understandable? For example:

Cost Favors the Bobcat This factor was studied by gathering data from all three manufacturers and comparing….

Note that the sentence following the heading would not make sense if the heading were removed, because "This factor…" relies on the heading for sense. If the sentence began "The cost factor…," then the sentence is understandable even without the heading. Don't hesitate to establish the proper subject even if it is repetitious of the heading.

When tables are involved, languages such as "Table I shows the comparative cost factors" is really wasted because the title of the table says the same thing. Improved language would be similar to the following: "The Bobcat has a 12 percent cost advantage, as shown in Table I." Make each sentence in the findings sections say something about the analysis of data.

As a final word about presenting findings, review the material about transition in Chapter 15. Attention to transition from section to section will make the report coherent and assure smoothness for the reader.

Writing about conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions arrived at are generalizations about the findings. Therefore, a statement beginning with "Based on the findings, the following conclusions were…" provides an appropriate lead-in to a presentation of one or more conclusions.

Recommendations grow out of conclusions and should appropriately follow them. In some reports, a recommendation is placed immediately following the conclusion on which it is based. In others, all conclusions are presented, and then all recommendations are presented as a group.

FIGURE 1

Sample first page

INTRODUCTION

Television news broadcasting is one of the most competitive branches of the broadcasting industry. Time of day, format, and personalities are competitive elements that lead to viewer popularity.

Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study were to determine the following information: (1) the viewer popularity ratings of personalities on local, non-national, television newscasts, and (2) the influence of other factors leading to viewer popularity. Channel 8 plans to use the results of this study to assess its status in the news field.

Method and Sources

To obtain data for the study, a questionnaire survey was conducted by mail to 1,200 selected persons. The population surveyed was within range of Channel 8 and its competitors. Individuals were selected on geographic, economic, occupation, and sex bases. Of the 1,200 questionnaires mailed, 934 were returned and deemed usable. A copy of the questionnaire and transmittal letter are included in Appendix A, page 27.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of this presents in sequence on analysis of the popularity of anchormen, analysis, and sports.

FIGURE 2

Sample first page without headings

STATUS OF CHANNEL 8 IN NEWS BROADCASTING – 2013

Television news broadcasting is one of the most competitive branches of the broadcasting industry. Time of day, format, and personalities are competitive elements that lead to viewer popularity.

The purposes of this study were to determine the following information: (1) the viewer popularity ratings of personalities on local, non-national, television, newscasts, and (2) the influence of other factors leading to viewer popularity. Channel 8 plans to use the results of this study to assess its status in the news field.

To obtain data for the study, a questionnaire survey was conducted by mail to 1,200 selected persons. The population surveyed was within range of Channel 8 and its competitors. Individuals were selected on geographic, economic, occupation, and sex bases. Of the 1,200 questionnaires mailed, 934 were returned and deemed usable. A copy of the questionnaire and transmittal letter are included in Appendix A, page 27.

The remainder of this report presents in sequence an analysis of the popularity of anchormen, analysts, sports

Summary

Finishing the report should be a satisfying job-it marks the culmination of a major effort. Yet, writing the final draft is often a painstaking, almost unbearable chore for most writers. It needn't be so when writers understand the report process and can visualize how the final product will look. Because the report consists of rather distinct parts, begin writing with the part that seems most familiar. The pieces can then be put together using transitional techniques. Above all, write rapidly; and set aside large enough time blocks for writing so that you can accomplish something. Rapid writing of the rough draft enables you to keep up with your thought processes, and the long writing period permits you to do more than simply get your mind "warmed up." Do not do any editing until you have a complete rough draft prepared. Then, set the draft aside for a while before you attempt to edit for final typing. These guides for writing carry an implication that the good report writer establishes a time schedule for the process. Work your schedule back from the due date of the report so you have time to work comfortably. Last-minute rush crises will almost always have a negative effect on report quality.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ "The purpose of this report is to analyze…" is appropriate wording to introduce the purpose.
2. _____ All headings in a report should be followed by text material: i.e., reports should not have two consecutive headings without intervening writing.
3. _____ Because headings guide the reader through the report, the writer should rely heavily on them for content meaning.
4. _____ A sentence introducing a table should give more information than simply invite the reader to look at the table.
5. _____ Logically, conclusions should precede recommendations.

Answers

1. False. Reports can't analyze; they can present an analysis. Appropriate wording, then, would be: The purpose of this study was to analyze, or The purpose of this report is to present. Notice the shift from past tense to present tense in the two examples. Analysis took place prior to the writing. Presentation, however, is taking place at the present.
2. True. Keep in mind, though, that a report may begin with purpose as the first first-degree headings, thus doing away with the need for Introduction as a heading. In this case, Method would also become a first-degree heading.
3. False. A report should make sense even if headings were removed.
4. True. Introductions to all graphic material should be interpretive of the content.

5. True. Recommendations grow out of conclusions. Conclusions grow out of findings, and findings grow out of method. Method grows out of purpose. This “growing out” provides the framework for report sequence-purpose, method, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 16 Review Questions

1. Objective writing is characterized by:

   A. Emotional terms.
   B. Freedom from subjective opinions or biases of the writer.
   C. Use unrequested judgments.
   D. Use unrequested inferences.

2. Documenting a report by using footnotes, bibliographies, and textual references serves the writer by:

   A. Embellishing the writer's text.
   B. Taking away from the writer's central theme.
   C. Protecting the writer against plagiarism and protects the writer's integrity as well as supporting the writer's statements.
   D. Gives the writer credit for other people's work.

3. Plagiarism is defined as:

   A. An act of saying something untrue about another person.
   B. Stealing written material from others.
   C. Footnoting your sources.
   D. Listing entries used for the entire work.

Chapter 16 Review Answers

1. Objective writing is characterized by:

A. Incorrect. Objective writing is characterized by the avoidance of emotional terms.
B. **Correct.** Objective writing permits decisions to be free of the subjective opinions or biases of the writer.
C. Incorrect. Objective writings only use requested judgments not unrequested judgments that offer little or no relevance to the writing.
D. Incorrect. Objective writings only use requested inferences not unrequested to avoid bias opinions and unsubstantiated data.

2. Documenting a report by using footnotes, bibliographies, and textual references serves the writer by:

A. Incorrect. Documenting your work by citations, references and bibliographies verifies and enhances the integrity of the report and writer.
B. Incorrect. Documenting the report supports the writer's statements and gives it reliability based on recognized published authorities.
C. **Correct.** Documentation protects the writer against plagiarism and protects the writer's professional integrity and adds to the credibility of the report.
D. Incorrect. Documentation recognizes other writer's contributions that support your statement and give you credibility.

3. Plagiarism is defined as:

A. Incorrect. Libel is the act of saying something untrue about another person.
B. **Correct.** Plagiarism is stealing written material from others.
C. Incorrect. Footnoting your entries is used to pinpoint the sources of references/
D. Incorrect. Listing entries for the entire work is creating a bibliography that is required of every professional publication.

Chapter 17:

Preparing Memorandums and Short Reports

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- Recognize the characteristics of a memorandum and short reports.
- Identify the useful application of memos and shorter reports.

A century ago, American industry was characterized by small businesses. One- and two- person businesses were the rule rather than the exception, and internal communication was simple. The proximity of management and employees was conducive to two-way, face-to-face communication. With the growth of large businesses, however, management developed an increasing need for a flow of information not available through oral means. Thus, the internal memorandum and short report once became the primary tools of non-oral communication. Today, employees use memos primarily to convey confidential information, emphasize ideas, introduce lengthy documents, or lend importance to a message. Memos are especially appropriate for explaining organizational procedures or policies that become permanent guidelines. In many organizations, electronic media such as email and instant messaging have replaced most paper memos, Thanks to Adobe's portable document format (PDF), many memos and documents are now easily transferred electronically.

Characteristics of Internal Reports

The memorandum is the most used report in business. Perhaps the best distinction between a memorandum and a short report is that the short report is longer than a memorandum. At the same time, memorandums flow upward, downward, and laterally in organizations. Short reports tend to flow upward as a rule. Thus, some characteristics of reports are that they

1. Flow upward because most reports are requested by a higher authority in the organization.
2. Stress objectivity through the writer's attention to planning and physical layout.
3. Are usually written for a small readership-often only one person.
4. Follow the problem-solving steps.
5. Contribute to the management decision-making process.

Memorandums, as distinguished from reports, flow in various directions, may incorporate letter-planning style to anticipate reader reaction, and do not necessarily require much attention to planning and physical layout. Therefore, writers must use their good judgment to determine when the message content should be prepared as a simple memorandum and when it should take on some of the planning and layout characteristics of reports. The subject, the needs of the reader, the complexity of the material, and the ultimate use of the message are criteria to be considered.

Writing Methods

Electronic media have replaced most internal printed memos in many companies, but you may have occasion to send printed memos from time to time. The primary purpose of memorandums is to contribute to clear organizational communication. Very simply, when people know what is going on and how they fit into the total picture, their performance generally is improved. To play its role, the memorandum incorporates qualities from letters as well as from reports.

In writing style and tone, the memorandum is similar to letters. In overall organization and presentation methods, it takes qualities from formal reports. In any case, the memorandum assumes, as suggested earlier, a plan of presentation and a degree of formality based on ultimate use, reader needs, and complexity of material.

A typical format feature of the memorandum, as well as the short report, is the to-from-subject-date heading shown in Figure 1. In most firms, memorandums follow a consistent format which provides control over accuracy by placing all items in the same position each time. This is often assured by using printed forms.

The sample memorandum in Figure 1 incorporates several helpful guides for writers:

1. Use the subject line for two purposes: (a) to assist the reader by making the subject clear, and (b) to assist the writer by forcing him or her to develop a clear understanding of the problem. If a person cannot prepare an appropriate subject line, how can he or she write effectively about the subject?
2. Use the first sentence to restate the subject. The content of a message should not rely on the subject line, or other headings, for thought. References such as "the above subject," "the aforementioned subject," and "this subject" should be avoided. Write the body of the memorandum as though the subject line did not exist. In this way, you prepare the body of the report as a complete composition; and you hit the reader with a repetition of the major purpose,

even though you do not use the identical words. Advertising provides evidence that repetition is an effective way of communication.

3. Use the introductory paragraph as an introduction to the report. In the sample memorandum, the first paragraph includes both the purpose and the methods used to achieve the purpose just as does the introductory portion of a formal report.
4. Use subheadings when desirable to indicate organization and to separate distinct topics.

Each of these guides is also applicable to formal reports. In the case of the sample, it could be described as a short report because of the incorporation of these guiding suggestions. Also note that the sample is organized in inductive or indirect sequence by proceeding through the problem solving steps to arrive at conclusions and recommendations. Ordinarily, however, the deductive sequence is desirable for informational reports. In a deductively organized report, the first paragraph would serve as a total summary and would include the conclusion, as would the summary at the beginning of a formal report.

FIGURE 1

Memorandum report

To: Arnold Tucker Date: February 7, 201_

From: M.W. Welds

Subject: Future of the Ontario Speedway

I have completed the analysis of scheduling and operating problems of the Ontario Speedway as you requested. Schedules were reviewed, information gathered on the present financial condition of the speedway was analyzed, and an attempt was made to estimate future possibilities.

<u>2X12 Schedule</u>

The 2X12 schedule does not include any additional major events. It is unlikely that additional racing events can be scheduled at this late date.

Outdoor concerts are a big financial risk, and it is doubtful whether any of the tentative or scheduled concerts will in reality become major events.

<u>Financial Position</u>

As explained in the attached clipping from the Los Angeles Times of January 10, the California 500 race on March 9 may determine the future of the present management of the speedway. The present group may default on their lease after the California 500 race. From my information, the advance sales are not keeping pace with those of previous years.

<u>Future Possibilities</u>

If the present leaseholders default, the speedway will probably be closed for only a short time. Because of the investment of the bond holders and the obligations of the City of Ontario, every effort will be made to negotiate an operating agreement with a new group.

Recommendations
Arrange a meeting as soon as possible with the present management to discuss the future of the Hi-Bubble California Grand Prix.
Prepare alternate plans for promotion if we cannot sponsor the Grand Prix.

Summary

The distinction between memorandums and short reports is a fine one. “Drop into my office, Joe, on your next trip west. I’d like your views on restructuring the marketing staff” could be the content of a simple memorandum. On the other hand, the memorandum could take the form of the sample used in this chapter and, thus, be described as a short report.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Memorandums should be written and planned in the same way letters are rather than follow report methods.
2. _____ In an inductively organized memorandum, the first paragraph serves the same purpose as an introduction section of a report.
3. _____ In a deductively organized memorandum, the first paragraph serves the same purpose as a summary serves at the beginning of a formal report.
4. _____ After a report has been typed in final form, the writer should read it aloud to locate areas that should be rewritten because of awkwardness or other shortcomings.
5. _____ Memorandums and short reports differ in degree of subject complexity, reader needs, and ultimate use; a true distinction is often difficult.

Answers

1. False. Memorandums take qualities from both letters and reports. Many memorandums can benefit from the use of tables, headings, and addendum items which are not part of the usual letter writing practices.
2. True. The first paragraph of an inductive memorandum should establish the subject or purpose and mention the method if applicable. Notice how the sample memorandum in Figure 17-1 follows the purpose-method-findings-conclusions sequence.
3. True. When conclusions or recommendations are placed at the beginning of a memorandum, the sequence is deductive, and first paragraph serves the same purpose as a summary which gives the long report its deductive pattern.

4. False. Reading aloud should occur at the rough draft stage prior to final typing. Nothing upsets a typist more than to be called on to make major changes in final copy because the writer failed to review the rough draft properly.
5. True. Memorandums evolve into short reports as the subject increases in complexity, as the reader's needs become more formalized, and when the ultimate use of the information calls for more formal presentation. In any case, true distinction is difficult because the format of the two is similar-one person might call the communication a memorandum and another might call the same item a short report.

Chapter 17 Review Questions

1. Memorandums are characterized by:

   A. They flow upward to higher authorities.
   B. They stress objectivity and attention to planning and layout.
   C. They flow in various directions.
   D. They are usually written for small readerships, often one person.

2. Reading a report silently as opposed to reading it aloud:

   A. Is a revealing practice.
   B. Reveals awkward wording.
   C. Reveals lack of coherence and gaps in logic.
   D. May not be a good editing practice.

Chapter 17 Review Questions

1. Memorandums are characterized by:

A. Incorrect. Reports not memorandums flow upward to higher authorities.
B. Incorrect. Reports not memorandums stress attention to planning and physical layout.
C. **Correct.** Memorandums as distinguished from reports flow in various directions.
D. Incorrect. Reports not memorandums are usually written for a small readership, often one-person.

2. Reading a report silently as opposed to reading it aloud:

A. Incorrect. Reading a report aloud is a revealing practice that can assist in locating some types of errors.
B. Incorrect. Reading aloud can often reveal awkward wording that may interfere with the reader's comprehension of the report.
C. Incorrect. Reading aloud can reveal a lack of coherence or gaps in logic that may seem to be either carelessness or a lack of understanding on the writer's part.
D. **Correct**. Reading aloud has several advantages including awkward writing styles, poor wording placement, and disruptions. Silent reading doesn't achieve the same ends.

Chapter 18:

Listening and Making Oral Presentations

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- State the principles of effective listening.
- Identify detrimental listening habits.
- Describe the four types of speaking styles.

In this chapter, you'll study listening, first as a basis for developing skills in making oral presentations.

Study after study on how adults spend their time have shown that communication occupies us about three fourths of our awake hours. We spend 45 minutes of every awake hour either reading, speaking, writing, or listening. Although only ten or fifteen percent of our communicative time is spent writing, writing is a communicative skill operating at the one-way, or least effective, communication level. At the other extreme, time-wise, is listening-a skill occupying about half of all our communicative time. The purpose of this chapter is to review methods of improving the active, two-way skill involved in oral communication-listening and speaking.

Perhaps the greatest key to effective face-to-face communication is the listener's willingness, followed by his ability, to listen. We all probably speak well enough to be understood if we know what we want to say. On the other hand, we all have the listening equipment--eyes, minds, and ears--to listen for understanding. Often, though, we find ourselves and others simply hearing and not listening.

If you can recall the schematic presentation of the communication process shown in Chapter 1, the destination of a message is the mind of the receiver. The mind is an extremely active place. Unchallenged it creates its own challenges. When listening is going on, the mind has a tendency to do other things-day-dream, solve problems, develop messages for us to send, and, in general, keep busy doing things that turn our listening process into one of hearing only. Hearing is a physical process. It picks up sounds. Listening is both a physical and a mental process.

Detrimental Listening Habits

Really good listeners are rare. They have the ability to block out all distractions and focus eyes, and minds on the sounds coming to them. Poor listeners, or average ones for that matter, have developed one or more bad listening habits that plague human communication. Good speakers can hold a listener's attention for long periods, it's true; but not enough of the messages coming to us are delivered by fascinating platform speakers.

As we listen to someone talking, we are accepting messages being delivered at about 125 to 150 words a minute on the average. Unfortunately, we have the ability to read two to ten times that fast. And our minds operate at thousands of words a minute in terms of thought. Therefore, the listener's mental equipment is moving at many times the rate of the message. The mind has lots of spare time to do other things unless it is disciplined. As a result of these differences in speed and of our own ego involvement--concern for our own affairs--we have developed habits detrimental to good listening. Let's review some of these detrimental habits.

First, we are fakers of attention. Haven't you had the experience of listening--or supposedly listening--to someone only to discover later that you have no idea what was said. In the office, the club, the home? You look at the speaker, smile with him, nod assent, even lean forward wide-eyed, but you are faking. You fake the speaker into thinking you are listening. Hopefully, from your point of view, you won't have to provide sensible feedback, because you can't.

Second, we criticize delivery and physical appearance. If the speaker doesn't come up to our standards of what makes a good speaker or of what constitutes a satisfactory physical appearance, we turn off our listening equipment just as though it were controlled by an electric on-off switch. Even little things have the capacity to turn us off. A mole on a cheek, unusual dress, awkward gestures, and even unshined shoes are things that can capture attention to the point of disrupting listening.

Third, we listen to what we want to listen to. We can rationalize poor listening by claiming the subject was uninteresting. Therefore, we treat subjects just as we do speakers; we blame them for our listening failures.

A fourth bad habit is over-listening. This occurs usually when we are determined not to miss a word of a lecture or speech. As the speaker proceeds through the presentation, we try to remember every detail, every statistic, and every anecdote. We are so busy fixing these in our minds that when major points are made, we aren't listening because our minds are occupied with the task of recording the minor items used to support the major points. The good listener knows the structure of a speech, which we'll come to later in this chapter.

Last, of course, we develop laziness. We avoid listening to something that may appear too difficult. We can blame modern technology for this. Television provides us with several options. If a program is too difficult, we can change channels to search for something less challenging.

Because listening is obviously a responsibility of the listener, we can't blame speakers. The task of channeling our entire receiving apparatus on a message requires significant discipline, both mental and physical. Let's review some suggestions for developing this discipline.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Listening is our most frequently used communicative skill.
2. _____ The ear is the key instrument in effective listening.
3. _____ The speed at which oral messages are delivered would not be a factor in listening if people would slow down their speaking rate.
4. _____ Speakers have nothing to do with activating bad listening habits.
5. _____ Intense concentration on the content of a speech is bound to improve listening ability.

Answers

1. True. Listening occupies about half of all our communicative time.
2. False. The mind is the key instrument. Incidentally, the average ear, properly trained, can accept messages in excess of 300 words a minute.
3. False. If anything, more rapid speech would help improve listening concentration. In reality, the range of speed at which most people speak is so narrow that speed would not be a critical factor in any case.
4. False. Speakers have much to do with activating bad listening habits through dress, other factors of appearance, and delivery characteristics.
5. False. Concentration is fine, but intense concentration may result in over-listening to the point where details absorbed would be a detriment to recognizing major points.

Effective Listening Suggestions

Perhaps the primary suggestion for improving listening is "take the time to listen." In our face-to-face communication activities such as conversing and interviewing, we have a tendency to spend much time formulating in our own minds what we are going to say when it's our turn to talk. Often this is done at the expense of effective listening. Carl Rogers, an advocate of the nondirective counseling technique, has said that therapeutic counseling should take the form of listening more than of talking. Given an opportunity to talk about their problems, people will resolve them for themselves most of the time. Many times when people think they have problems, the opportunity to talk about them will reveal that they had no problem at all. They simply wanted to "get something off their chests."

People have a primary need to be heard, appreciated, and wanted. By taking the time to listen, a person can satisfy the other person's need. Aren't many of your own best friends also good listeners? Therefore, good listening can be classed as a valuable social grace as well as an asset in our business lives.

The office desk is a barrier to effective listening, because it not only separates the speaker and the listener, but it also holds papers and other distracting items. Nothing is more distracting to a visitor than for the person on the other side of the desk to attempt to read items on the desk during the discussion. Of course, nothing is more disconcerting to the host than to have the visitor also attempt to read mail on the desk-even upside down. Therefore, for effective office interviewing, try to eliminate the desk as a barrier. If side chairs are available, retreat to those. You'll be surprised how much more effective the communications and how much faster the interview goes.

When listening to a speech or lecture, of course, you don't have the privilege of providing oral feedback to the speaker or problem of elimination barriers such as the desk. As a result, you are on your own to get as much from the speech as possible. As with any other kind of effective listening, try these suggestions.

1. Watch the speaker. We listen as much with our eyes as with our ears. The nonverbal aids to communication such as facial expressions and arm gestures add much to the spoken word. You can detect when the speaker is deadly serious, casual, or humorous.
2. Listen between the lines. Frequently, through a combination of words and nonverbal aids, the listener can identify meanings not apparent in the words alone. In addition, a series of statements may imply something not apparent in any of the statements taken individually.
3. Think along with the speaker, then attempt to anticipate what the presentation is leading to and what conclusions will be drawn. In this way, the good listener has his mind tuned in to the presentation. He can weigh the evidence presented in terms of his own logic, detect weaknesses in arguments, and, in general, separate small talk from major points.
4. Occasionally, review the organization of the presentation in your own mind. You might even be able to construct a mental outline of the talk after a little practice.

As you study the remainder of this chapter on making oral reports, keep the listening discussion in mind. The better you understand the habits, good and bad, of your audience, the better you are able to adapt your oral presentations.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ The availability of nonverbal aids and prompt feedback make face-to-face conversing the most effective level of communication.
2. _____ People would rather listen than talk.
3. _____ A good listener always anticipates what will come in a talk and does not dwell on what has passed.
4. _____ Good listeners never mentally argue with the speaker.

5. _____ Good speakers avoid gestures so listeners can concentrate on the content of the speech.

Answers

1. True. The most effective level of communication is two-way, face-to-face communication, and this level results in the ability of participants to engage in instant feedback and to observe nonverbal aids.
2. False. Human nature is to talk. We stifle others when we don't let them talk and when we don't listen.
3. False. Although good listeners do attempt to anticipate, they also review past content.
4. False. Good listeners weigh evidence, and in this process, they essentially argue mentally with the speaker.
5. False. Gestures contribute to communication by providing nonverbal assistance and provide listener help in "listening between the lines."

Speaking styles

We all remember a dynamic speaker we heard at one time. But how many of us remember the topic after only a short time. Public speaking, for most professional speakers, is really an act--half is content and half is showmanship. The typical business person is not a professional speaker. Nevertheless, business people must from time to time appear before colleagues, professional societies, civic organizations, and other groups. As they move up the ladder in their organizations, people will definitely have to make oral presentations before members of their own organizations. The speaking roles we'll discuss are those described as public speaking and as oral reporting. Public speaking occurs outside the firm; oral reporting is part of the firm's internal communication process and occurs between the reporter and his or her colleagues.

In either case, speakers will use one of four styles: impromptu, extemporaneous, memorized, or written-and-read. The *impromptu* speech occurs when the speaker is called on to speak but has no forewarning. This can be a frightening experience for beginners. *Extemporaneous* speaking is done with the use of a few notes, but it is a style that most good speakers use. They know in advance that they will speak and are able to prepare and practice. By being familiar with their material and using few notes, they are able to benefit from and adapt to audience reaction. *Memorized* speeches are familiar to all of us through our experiences in school, church, and organizations. Memorizing has limitations. The speaker is unable to adjust to audience feedback, temporary memory blocks are embarrassing, and speaker body motions appear to be unnatural. The *written-and-read* speaking style is appropriate for many technical or complex presentations. Again, the speaker has difficulty adjusting to the audience and is often stuck so tightly to the speech manuscript that he or she fails to make eye contact with the audience.

As you review these four types, you should agree that the extemporaneous style is something to work toward. Your first efforts may consist almost entirely of written-and-read talks; then as you gain confidence, you can move into the extemporaneous style. If you write your speech, follow these guides:

1. Write your notes large enough so that you can easily read them, and leave wide spaces between lines so you don't lose your place.
2. Use simple words and avoid unusual words. It's easy to stumble over words you don't usually use.
3. Prepare your notes as though you were telling a story. Use first person, active voice, and contractions to add a natural tone and make delivery easy.

As you move into the extemporaneous style, try these suggestions:

1. Anticipate that you'll be nervous. Good speakers admit to being nervous and claim a little anxiety helps them perform better.
2. As you address the audience, try to make eye contact with only a few people. Select about six scattered widely in the room. Then talk to each of the six one at a time. As you do so, you'll give the impression of speaking to the entire audience. It's easy to talk to one face at a time and often try to look at the entire audience.
3. Don't overdo your gestures. Let them come naturally, but avoid excess hand motion.
4. Insist on a podium for your notes. The podium is also something to hold when your hands might otherwise tremble.
5. Work to avoid -you know, OK, er, - and other sounds such as throat clearing that will distract from your presentation.
6. Don't use jokes unless you are good at telling them. Jokes are only good when they are used to focus the attention of the audience on a particular topic.
7. Try to develop strong openings and closings. These are the most important part of your talk. The opening gets attention and sets the stage, and the closing summarizes and is the thing your audience will most remember.
8. Dress appropriately and carefully. Appearance and grooming have significant effects on the audience.
9. Try to appear confident and give the impression that you are enjoying yourself.

Indicate whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. _____ Memorized speeches are the easiest to give.
2. _____ Ability to give good written-and-read speeches can lead naturally into the development of effective extemporaneous style.
3. _____ Nervousness is a sign the speaker is a beginner.
4. _____ A podium can serve as a speaker's "security blanket."
5. _____ People will focus more on the content of the speech that on the delivery style.

Answers

1. False. Memorized speeches may be the most difficult because of the lack of notes on which to rely.
2. True. As one gains confidence through written-and-read style, he or she can develop skill in the things effective in extemporaneous styles.
3. False. Good speakers often attempt to work up a little anxiety if they feel they are too calm.
4. True. A speaker can use a podium to hold notes and to hang on to if hands should begin to tremble.
5. False. Public speaking is at least one-half showmanship. People admire able public speakers not so much for what they say but also for how they perform.

Making an oral report

Oral reports differ from stand-up speeches in several ways. First, the oral report is generally given to an audience familiar to the speaker. The audience and the speaker know quite a bit about each other. Too, the audience will generally be much smaller and the surroundings more intimate for the oral report. In addition, questions are more likely to be asked during the oral report. Obviously, then, the extemporaneous style should be preferred over more formal memorized or written-and-read verbatim presentations.

More often than not, oral reports will be based on formal written reports; they will probably follow the steps in the report process and be organized around a statement of the purpose; a discussion, including research methods and findings; and a summary including the conclusion and implications. Among the reports that can be planned around this outline are reviews of economic conditions; development of new practices or policies; progress reports; personnel, resource, and financial studies; and reports of research.

Visual aids are extremely important tools in oral reports. You can select from a variety of visuals to enhance oral presentations. Don't overlook -old-school" technologies such as overhead transparencies, chalkboards, whiteboards, and flipcharts—they can all have value in the right circumstances. However, the medium of choice for most business presentations is an electronic presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, Google Documents, or similar software. Electronic presentations are easy to edit and update; you can add sound, photos, video, and animation; they can be incorporated into online meetings, webcasts, and *webinars* (a common term for web-based seminars); and you can record self-running presentations for trade shows, websites, and other uses.

Electronic presentations are practically universal in business today, but their widespread use is not always welcome. You may have already heard the expression "death by PowerPoint," which refers to the agonizing experience of sitting through too many poorly conceived and poorly delivered presentations. Nonetheless, presentations can be an effective communication medium and an experience that is satisfying, and sometimes even enjoyable, for presenter and audience alike. Start with the mindset of *simplicity* (clear ideas presented clearly) and authenticity (talking with your audience about things they care about, rather that talking at them or trying to be a "performer"), and you'll be well on your way to becoming an effective presenter.

Perhaps the most important design choice you face when creating slides is whether to use conventional, bullet point-intensive *structured slides* or the looser, visually oriented *free-form slides* that many presentation specialists now advocate.

In the presentation to a board of directors, for example, your time allotment will probably be short; and you should stay within the time limits. Therefore, prepare your presentation well in advance and then practice, practice, practice. Your future may depend on this kind of preparation. Although you should attempt to prepare yourself to answer anticipated questions, do not try to make your oral report so thorough that you answer every conceivable question. If you do, you may lose the audience. A sophisticated audience for an oral report may think well ahead of what is being said. Your task will be to get your major points out before someone in the audience makes them for you.

Summary

Listening is our most frequent communication activity; yet, it is one of the most neglected in terms of training. For people preparing to give stand-up speeches or oral presentations to smaller groups, a knowledge of people's bad and good listening habits is helpful. When speakers understand audiences, their ability to communicate is enhanced.

For most oral presentations--speeches or reports--an extemporaneous speaking style is preferred. We should not confuse extemporaneous speaking, however, with impromptu or "off the cuff" speaking. Extemporaneous speeches are planned and rehearsed to the point where the speaker appears to have a natural style and considerable self-confidence. Again, nervousness should not necessarily be associated with lack of self-confidence. Good speakers work up anxiety just so they will perform at their peak level.

Oral report presentations concentrate more on content than on speaking style. Yet, speaking style is important. The skillful blending of content, visual displays, and speaking style can build a person's image in the minds of colleagues and superiors. People who are excellent technicians in their own disciplines may never rise to the attention of superiors unless they develop effective speaking abilities.

Indicate whether each of the following items is true or false.

1. _____ Making public speeches and making oral reports are identical activities.
2. _____ Well-developed visual aids can provide the basis for the oral report.
3. _____ Because good visual aids are self-explanatory, a speaker need not refer to specific parts of them during a presentation.

4. _____ Written-and-read speaking style is most effective in oral reporting because the speaker will then not omit anything.
5. _____ Oral presentations may be organized around the familiar steps in the research report process.

Answers

1. False. Although they are similar activities, public speaking and oral reporting differ. Oral reporting usually takes place between a speaker and audience familiar with each other in more intimate surroundings and within a tighter time frame. Showmanship is less important in oral reporting.
2. True. Preparing visual aids might be a first step in getting ready for an oral report.
3. False. By pointing to specific items in a visual aid, the speaker can focus the attention of the audience on critical items.
4. False. Written-and-read speaking style inhibits the naturalness of the speaker and makes oral presentation interruptions difficult to handle.
5. True. The purpose-methods-findings-conclusion sequence can be used effectively in planning oral reports.

Chapter 18 Review Questions

1. Good listeners have the ability to:

   A. Fake attention.
   B. Criticize delivery and physical appearance.
   C. Block out all distractions and focus on the speaker's message.
   D. Listen to what they want to hear.

2. One of the most neglected communication activities is:

   A. Making an oral speech.
   B. Presenting an impromptu speech.
   C. Delivering a memorized speech.
   D. Listening.

3. Effective listening suggestions will not include:

   A. Watching the speaker.
   B. Listening to only what we want to hear.
   C. Listening between the lines.
   D. Thinking along with the speaker.

4. Public speakers normally use one of four styles such as when a speaker is called on to speak but has no forewarning. That is:

   A. Written-and-read.
   B. Impromptu.
   C. Memorizing.
   D. Extemporaneous.

Chapter 18 Review Answers

1. Good listeners have the ability to:

A. Incorrect. Poor listeners often fake attention through boredom or lack of concentration.
B. Incorrect. Poor listeners often criticize the delivery and the physical appearance of the speaker due to their inability to focus on the speaker's message.
C. **Correct.** Good listeners are rare. They have the ability to block out all distractions and focus their eyes and mind on the sounds coming to them.
D. Incorrect. Poor listeners usually listen to what they want to hear and often are thinking about their response and not fully comprehending what they are hearing.

2. One of the most neglected communication activities is:

A. Incorrect. Oral speaking is one of the most practiced communication activities since most people are nervous when speaking in public.
B. Incorrect. Presenting an impromptu speech often requires a knowledge of the subject matter and confidence that is usually found in professional orators.
C. Incorrect. Delivering a memorized speech requires memorizing and practicing the delivery as often as it is required to reduce the speaker's nervousness and give an inspired and confident delivery.
D. **Correct**. Listening is our most frequent communication activity. It is also one of the most neglected in terms of training and practice for good listening.

3. Effective listening suggestions will not include:

A. Incorrect. Watching the speaker offers a non-verbal aid to effective communication.
B. **Correct.** We tend to rationalize when we do not understand the speaker.
C. Incorrect. By listening between the lines we can often identify implied meanings.
D. Incorrect. Thinking along with the speaker is evidence that we are weighing the message of the speaker to establish his credibility.

4. Public speakers normally use one of four styles such as when a speaker is called on to speak but has no forewarning. That is:

A. Incorrect. Written-and-read techniques are used for technical oral reports with complex presentations.
B. **Correct.** Impromptu is adlibbing the speech or giving one without preparation.

C. Incorrect. Memorizing is often used in schools or churches to learn and present well-known literary or religious passages.
D. Incorrect. Extemporaneous speech often uses few notes, but is a prepared speech often pre-practiced.

Chapter 19:

New Technology in Business Communication

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter you will be able to:

- State how new technology is used to communicate.
- Identify how the Internet and telecommunication services impact business communications.
- Identify internet resources.
- Recognize newer technologies such as blogs, podcasts, Webcasts, and wikis.
- Identify and define LAN and WAN networks.

New electronic technologies are dramatically affecting the way workers communicate. In our always-connected, everything-linked world, we exchange information and stay in touch by using e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, smartphones, PDAs, fax, voice mail, cell phones, powerful laptop computers, satellite communications, wireless networking, and even by “tweeting.” Through teleconferencing and videoconferencing, we can conduct meetings with associates around the world. The rapid development of social software such as weblogs, wikis (multiuser weblogs), and peer-to-peer tools makes it easier for workers to communicate online and wirelessly almost instantaneously. One complaint about e-mail is that messages and documents with pertinent information are limited to senders and receivers. The latest software, however, enables people in different offices to work on projects using a single Web calendar, a to-do list, and online discussion rooms. To share information graphically, presenters use sophisticated presentation software.

All businesspeople today rely heavily on the Internet and the Web to collect information, serve customers, and sell products and services. To use these new resources most effectively, you must develop a tool kit of new communication skills. You will want to know how to select the best communication channel, how to use each channel safely and effectively, and how to incorporate the latest technologies and search tools efficiently. All of these topics will be covered in coming chapters.

Computer Networks

Only a few years ago, each desktop computer stood alone, and data were transferred on disks. However, today all computer devices such as desktop, laptop, smartphones and tablets can communicate directly via computer networks, allowing information to be shared effortlessly. There are two types of networks: the local area network (LAN) that links users in a single office; and the wide area network (WAN) that links remote users. Such networks now allow workers to share files easily among offices in nearby buildings and in some instances across the country. Advanced systems such as telepresence allow people around the world to work as if they were in the same room.

Internet and Telecommunication Services

The Internet is a worldwide collection of computers in university labs, business offices, and government centers—all interconnected, all filled with massive amounts of information, and all accessible for free (or nearly so) to anyone with an Internet account. The ability to access this information stored in thousands of computers worldwide and to chat with anyone around the globe at any hour of the day bestows tremendous power on anyone who knows how to retrieve, evaluate, and share that information.

Internet Resources

Older forms of discussion groups on the Internet developed to allow people to participate in interactive, ongoing discussions on a particular topic with people all over the world. A mailing list is a discussion group in which messages are sent directly to members via e-mail. On the Internet, these mailing lists are called listservs. To become a member, people first subscribes to the list (typically by sending an e-mail message to the listserv). From then on, any messages posted to the list were automatically sent to your e-mail address. Listservs are usually created to enable members to exchange information and views about a particular topic.

Then came the development of newsgroups. A newsgroup is a discussion group in which messages (called articles) are posted at the newsgroup site. Anyone can connect to the site via an Internet Usenet connection as frequently as desired to read any newly posted articles. News-groups differ from mailing lists in that newsgroup members had to “visit” the newsgroup site to see any new messages, whereas new messages are automatically sent as e-mail to mailing-list members. The news administrator determines how long old articles remain archived (and, therefore, available for searching).

The world has moved on. The Internet has spawned a vast array of communication forums, ranging from simple product reviews, to social media, to mobile connectivity via smartphones and hotspots. People now live in a world with instant connectivity and instant connections. They use multiple websites and technologies – voice, text, email, posts, images, RSS, and more.

Browsing and Searching the Internet

Nobody "owns" the Internet; that is, there is no one governing authority that can make rules and impose order. Thus, it should not surprise you that the massive amount of information available on the Internet is not neatly and logically organized for easy search and retrieval.

Fortunately, a variety of search sites are available on the Internet to make accessing Internet resources if not painless, at least more pleasant and productive. Basically, these sites fall into two categories—directories for browsing the Internet and indexes for searching for specific information.

Browsing the Internet Web directories are hyperlinked lists of websites, hierarchically organized into topical categories and subcategories. Clicking your way through these lists will lead you to website links for the subject you're investigating. Use these directories when you need to find common information that can be easily classified. If you aren't looking for something very specific, try moving down through the general categories listed to reach a more specific category (in computer language, to "drill down"). In this way, you can narrow your search.

Searching the Internet Web indexes are massive, computer-generated databases containing information on millions of webpages and articles. By entering keywords or phrases, you can retrieve lists of webpages that contain your search term. The lists are created by Web crawlers (also called *robots or spiders*), software programs that roam the Web, looking for new sites by following links from page to page. Once your query executes, the Web search site displays the list of hits as a page containing the URLs (Universal Resource Locators, or Internet addresses) that are hyperlinked.

The success of your Internet search will depend on how skillfully you choose your keywords (or *search terms*). Remember that the computer makes a very literal search; it will find exactly what you ask for—and nothing more. If you use the search term secretaries, many search indexes will not find citations for the words *secretary* or *secretarial*. Some indexes have a feature known as truncation, which allows you to search for the root of a term. Thus, a search for secre would retrieve *secret, secretarial, secretaries, secretary, secretion*, and so on. You would then choose the entries appropriate for your purpose.

One of the most common mistakes people make is to use too few keywords in their searches or to use the wrong kinds of keywords. (Too many hits is just as unhelpful as too few hits.) Generally, try to identify three or four keywords—and use nouns. The only time you generally need to use adjectives or adverbs is if the term itself contains one—such as World Wide Web. Most indexes also allow the use of logical search operators (called *Boolean logic*) in the keywords. There are four basic search operators—AND, OR, NOT, and NEAR—and they are always typed in all capitals.

Sharing Electronic Information

Technology helps us not only access information but also share it with others. You will often incorporate the information you access electronically into your own electronic communications—correspondence, reports, phone calls, and the like—using a variety of technological innovations.

E-Mail and Instant Messaging

E-mail has changed the way people communicate. It improves the efficiency of communications by reducing interruptions from the telephone and unscheduled personal contacts. Also, messages can be distributed to multiple recipients easily and quickly without the inconvenience and delay of scheduling meetings. Because past messages can be saved, they can be reviewed later. And because messages are received at a time convenient to the recipient, the recipient has time to respond more clearly and to the point. Many people have multiple e-mail addresses, for work, home, personal and business.

For large organizations whose operations span a country or the world, e-mail allows people to work around time zone changes. Some users of e-mail estimate that they eliminate two hours of verbal communications for every hour of e-mail use.

The federal government and some states are now proposing legislation to block unwanted e-mail. The U.S. Congress passed a federal law, called *Controlling the Assault of Non Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN SPAM),* to reduce spam sent by companies in the United States. Unfortunately, legitimate e-mail can get lost.

Instant messaging (IM) is online, real-time communication between two or more people who are connected to the Internet. With instant messaging, two or more screens open up. Each screen displays what one person is typing. Because the typing is displayed on the screen in real time, it is like talking to someone using the keyboard.

A number of companies offer instant messaging, including Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft, and you can find it within Facebook. Twitter in some ways is an advanced form of instant messaging and text messaging. In addition to being able to type messages on a keyboard and have the information instantly displayed on the other person's screen, some instant messaging programs are allowing voice communication or connection to cell phones. With this technology, someone on the Internet can use instant messaging to communicate with someone on a cell phone anywhere in the world. Apple has added audio and video to its instant messaging service, called *Messages*. The *FaceTime* camera can be used to transfer visual images through instant messaging.

Instant messaging services often use a *buddy list* that alerts people when their friends are also online. This feature makes instant messaging even more useful. Instant messaging is so popular that it helps Internet service providers and online services draw new customers and keep old ones.

Smart Phones and Handheld Computers

Increasingly, cell phones, handheld computers, and other devices are being connected to the Internet. Smart phones, for example, can be connected to the Internet to allow people to search for information, buy products, and chat with business associates and friends. A sales manager for a computer company can use her cell phone to check her company's Internet site to see whether there are enough desktop computers in inventory to fill a large order for an important customer. Using Short Message Service, people can send brief text messages of up to 160 characters between two or more cell phone users. The service is often called texting.

Most cell phones also come equipped with digital cameras, video games, and small color screens to improve view ability. Using multimedia messaging service (MMS), people can send pictures, video, and audio over cell phones to other cell phones or Internet sites. An insurance investigator can use MMS to send photos of a car accident to a central office to process an insurance claim. Of course, cell phones can also be used to send e-mail messages to others. .

A new generation of lightweight, handheld devices provide phone, e-mail, Web browsing, and calendar options anywhere there's a wireless network. Smartphones such as the iPhone, BlackBerry, and Android phones now allow you to tap into corporate databases and intranets from remote locations. You can check customers' files, complete orders, and send out receipts without returning to the office. Increasingly businesses are issuing Smartphone's to their workforce, abandoning land lines completely.

Web Logs (Blogs), Podcasts, and Wikis

A Web log, also called a blog, is a Web site that people can create and use to write about their observations, experiences, and feelings on a wide range of topics. A blogger is a person who creates a blog, while blogging refers to the process of placing entries on a blog site. A blog is like a journal. When people post information to a blog, it is placed at the top of the blog. Previous entries on the blog are pushed down. Blogs can be used by anyone or any organization to publish and share information.

Blogs exist in a wide variety of topics and areas. Venture capitalists can use **www.ventureblog.com** to investigate Internet or dot.com companies. Blog sites, such as **www.blogger.com** and **www.technorati.com** can include information and tools to help people create and use Web logs. Blogs are easy to set up. You can go to a blog service provider, such as **www.livejournal.com** , create a username and password, select a theme, choose a URL, follow any other instructions, and start making your first entry. Businesses use blogs to keep customers and employees informed and to receive feedback Company developments can be posted, updated, and categorized for easy cross-referencing. When the writer adds audio and video, the blog becomes a podcast.

A podcast is a digital media file that is distributed over the Internet and downloaded on portable media players and personal computers. Podcasts, also called *netcasts* or *webcasts*, are distinguished by their ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, or downloaded automatically when new content is added. In business, podcasts are useful for improving customer relations, marketing, training, product launches, and viral marketing (creating online buzz about new products). Podcasting can be used to replace existing audio and video messages as well as for one-way teleconferences and training.

A *wiki* is a Web site that allows multiple users to collaboratively create and edit pages. Information gets lost in e mails, but blogs and wikis provide an easy way to communicate and keep track of what's said.

Most companies are still trying to figure out how to make Twitter profitable for business. However, tech-savvy individuals already send tweets, short messages of up to 140 characters, to other users to issue up to date news about their products, to link to their blogs and Web sites, or to announce events and promotions.

Financial or Money blogs

There are more specialized blogs such as financial blogs. For example, if you think about whether to dump your IBM stock, you can go to the technorati page (www.technorati.com) and search for the keywords you want. You'll get a list of blogs mentioning those words, with links to the right spot. Depending on how carefully you choose your keywords, that could save you time. Here are some spots that list most financial blogs.

- http://seekingalpha.com . The mother of all investment blogs with links to everything stock market, **venture capital and economics.**
- www.pfblog.com. It is full of personal-finance and investing tips, well organized, with links to many, many other money blogs.
- www.fivecentnickel.com. Short and sweet and focused on family finances.

Chat Rooms

A chat room is an older facility that enables two or more people to engage in interactive "conversations" over the Internet. When you participate in a chat room, dozens of people from around the world might be participating. Multi-person chats are usually organized around specific topics, and participants often adopt nicknames to maintain anonymity. One form of chat room, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), requires participants to type their conversation rather than speak. Voice chat is also an option, but you must have a microphone, sound card and speakers, fast connection, and voice-chat software compatible with the other participants.

Internet Phone, Video Phones, and Web Meeting Systems

Internet phone service enables you to communicate with others around the world. This service is relatively inexpensive and can make sense for international calls. With some services, it is possible to make a call from someone using the Internet to someone using a standard phone. Voice mail and fax capabilities are available. Some cable TV companies are offering cable TV, phone service, and caller ID for a fee.

Using *voice-over-IP (VoIP)* technology, network managers can route phone calls and fax transmissions over the same network they use for data—which means no more separate phone bills. Gateways installed at both ends of the communications link convert voice to IP packets and back. What is especially interesting about VoIP is the way voice is being merged with video and data communications over the Web or a company's data network. In the long run, it's not the cost savings that will boost the market; it's the multimedia capabilities it gives us and the smart call-management capabilities. Customer service agents could use voice and video over the Internet to discuss technical problems; Web merchants could use it to show merchandise and take orders; and customers could show suppliers specific needs for their products. Higher-end VoIP systems now support unified voice mail, e-mail, click-to-call capabilities, and softphones (phones using computer networking). Free or low cost internet telephony sites, such as the popular Skype, are a so increasingly used by businesses. Using advanced video compression technology, video phones transmit real--time audio and video so that communicators can see each other as they collaborate. With a video phone, people can videoconference anywhere 'n the world over a broadband P (Internet Protocol) connection without a computer or a television screen.

Videoconferencing, which supports both voice and visual communications, is another important Internet application. Most computers allow webcams, an inexpensive and easy way for people to meet and communicate on the Web. The Internet can also be used to broadcast sales seminars using presentation software and videoconferencing equipment. These Internet presentations are often called *Webcasts* or *Webinars*. Hardware and software are needed to support videoconferencing. The key here is a video codec to convert visual images into a stream of digital bits and translate back again. The ideal video product will support multipoint conferencing, in which multiple users appear simultaneously on multiple screens. In web conferencing, with services such as GoToMeeting, WebEx, and Microsoft Live Meeting, all you need are a PC and an internet connection to hold a meeting (webinar) with customers or colleagues in real time, Although the functions are constantly evolving, Web conferencing currently incorporates screen sharing, chats, slide presentations, text messaging, and application sharing.

Group Support System (GSS) Software

GSS software, often called groupware or workgroup software, helps with joint workgroup scheduling, communication, and management. One popular package, Lotus Notes, can capture, store, manipulate, and distribute memos and communications that are developed during group projects. Some companies standardize on messaging and collaboration software, such as Lotus Notes. Microsoft Exchange is another example of groupware. This software allows users to schedule group meetings, and use e-mail in a group setting. NetDocuments Enterprise can be used for Web collaboration. The groupware is intended for legal, accounting, and real estate businesses. The software also permits digital signatures and the ability to download and work on shared documents on handheld computers. Other GSS software packages include Collabra Share, OpenMind, and TeamWare. All of these tools can aid in group decision making.

In addition to stand-alone products, GSS software is increasingly being incorporated into existing software packages. Today, some transaction processing and enterprise resource planning (ERP) packages include collaboration software. Some ERP producers for example, have developed groupware to facilitate collaboration and to allow users to integrate applications from other vendors into the ERP system of programs. Today, groupware can interact with wireless devices. Virtually every smartphone supports video messaging and access to group information, meeting schedules, and other services that can be directly tied to groupware and servers. In addition to groupware, GSSs use a number of tools discussed previously, including the following:

- E-mail and instant messaging
- Videoconferencing
- Group scheduling
- Project management
- Document sharing

Social Networking for Business

With the growing use of social networking by business professionals, there is a growing number of social networking sites focused on business users and meeting their needs. For example, LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is one of many social networking sites for entrepreneurs, business owners and professionals that are worth a look. Popular social networking sites are Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and others. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as their own e-mail and instant messaging.

The Local Area Decision Network

The local area decision network can be used when group members are located in the same building or geographic area and under conditions in which group decision making is frequent. In these cases, the technology and equipment of the GSS approach is placed directly into the offices of the group members. Usually this is accomplished via a local area network (LAN).

Web Meeting Technologies

A variety of meeting technologies have helped spur the emergence of virtual teams, whose members work in different locations and interact electronically through virtual meetings. Instant messaging (IM) and teleconferencing (telephone conference call) are the simplistic forms of virtual meetings. Videoconferencing lets participants see and hear each other, demonstrate products, and transmit other virtual information. Telepresence technologies enable realistic conferences in which participants thousands of miles apart almost seem to be in the same room. The ability to convey nonverbal subtleties such as facial expressions and hand gestures makes these systems particularly good for negotiations, collaborative problem solving, and other complex discussions. The most sophisticated web-based meeting systems combine the best of real-time communication, shared workspaces, and videoconferencing with other tools, such as virtual whiteboards, that let teams collaborate in real time. Such systems are used for everything from spontaneous discussions among small groups to carefully planned, formal events such as customer training seminars or press conferences. Technology continues to create intriguing opportunities for online interaction. For instance, one of the newest virtual tools is online brainstorming, in which a company can a company can conduct "idea campaigns" to generate new ideas from people across the organization.

The Wide Area Decision Network

The wide area decision network is used when the decision frequency is high and the location of group members is distant. In this case, the decision makers require frequent or constant use of the GSS approach. Decision makers located throughout the country or the world must be linked electronically through a wide area network (WAN). The group facilitator and all group members are geographically dispersed. In some cases, the model base and database are also geographically dispersed. This GSS alternative allows people to work in virtual workgroups, in which teams of people located around the world can work on common problems.

The Internet is increasingly being used to support wide area decision networks. A number of technologies, including videoconferencing, instant messaging, chat rooms, and telecommuting, can be used to assist the GSS process. In addition, many specialized wide area decision networks make use of the Internet for group decision making arid problem solving.

Other Innovative Communication and Collaborative Schemes

We are also seeing a gradual progression from basic capabilities, such as e-mail and calendaring, to deeper functionality, such as remote database access, multifunctional devices, and Web-based collaborative applications. These are outlined below.

Computer Intranets

To share insider information, many companies provide their own protected Web sites called intranets. An intranet may handle company e-mail, announcements, an employee directory, a policy handbook, frequently asked questions, personnel forms and data, employee discussion forums, shared documents, and other employee information.

Multifunctional Printers

Stand-alone copiers, fax machines, scanners, and printers have been replaced with multifunctional devices. Offices are transitioning from a “print and distribute” environment to a “distribute and print” environment. Security measures include pass codes and even biometric thumbprint scanning to make sure data streams are not captured, interrupted, or edited.

Open Offices

Widespread use of laptop computers, wireless technology, and VoIP has led to more fluid, flexible, and open workspaces. Smaller computers and flat-screen monitors enable designers to save space with boomerang-shaped workstations and cockpit-style work surfaces rather than space-hogging corner work areas. Smaller breakout areas for impromptu meetings are taking over some cubicle space, and digital databases are replacing file cabinets.

Electronic Presentations

Business presentations in PowerPoint can be projected from a laptop, tablet or posted online. Sophisticated presentations may include animations, sound effects, digital photos, video clips, or hyperlinks to Internet sites. In most industries, PowerPoint slides (“decks”) have replaced or supplementing traditional hard-copy reports.

Presence Technology

Presence technology makes it possible to locate and identify a computing device as soon as users connect to the network. This technology is an integral part of communication devices including smartphones, laptop computers, and tablets. Collaboration is possible wherever and whenever users are online.

Chapter 19 Review Questions

1. A(n) ______________________ is a Web site that people can create and use to write about their observations, experiences, and feelings on a wide range of topics.:

A. Blog.
B. E-mail.
C. FAX machine.
D. LAN.

2. Software used with computers to produce printed documents is known as

A. Grammar and style checkers.
B. Word processing software.
C. Group software.
D. Voice recognition software.

3. Communication that uses new technology can include all the following except:

A. Telegraphs.
B. Computer networks.
C. Wiki.
D. Blog.

Chapter 19 Review Answers

1. A(n) ______________________ is a Web site that people can create and use to write about their observations, experiences, and feelings on a wide range of topics.:

A. **Correct**. A Web log or a blog is a Web site that people can use to write about their observations on a wide range of subjects. It is a personal journal published on the Web consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed. Blogs are usually the work of a single individual, occasionally of a small group, and often are themed on a single subject.
B. Incorrect. E-mail is the electronic transmission of messages from one person's computer to another person's computer.
C. Incorrect. FAX machines send exact copies of documents over telephone lines.
D. Incorrect. LANs are local area networks use to send e-mail messages to others in the system.

2. Software used with computers to produce printed documents is known as

A. Incorrect. Grammar and style checker's software are used to produce printed documents.
B. **Correct.** Word processing software is used with computers to produce documents. The most common software programs are Microsoft Word and WordPerfect.
C. Incorrect. Group software is used with computers to produce documents.
D. Incorrect. Voice recognition software is a safety and or security feature to identify a speaker.

3. Communication that uses new technology can include all the following except:

A. **Correct.** Telegraphs are one of the oldest used technology communication systems.
B. Incorrect. Computer networks such as LANs and WANs are modern technological advancements.
C. Incorrect. A wiki is a Web site that allows multiple users to collaboratively create and edit pages.
D. Incorrect. A blog is a Web site that people can create and use to write about their observations, experiences, and feelings on a wide range of topics.

Appendix

How to write a Press Release

Free advertising? It is possible if you know something about public relations — especially how to write a short article that can get your organization's name mentioned, and even featured, in a newspaper or magazine.

These communications used to be called press releases, but with so many different media vehicles available, most people now refer to the one- or two-page stories coming directly from a company or organization as a "news release."

The first thing to keep in mind, unfortunately, is that editors (especially in big city newspapers and national magazines) may receive thousands of releases every month. So how do you get yours published?

News releases are evaluated on the basis of writing quality, accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. You will need to write your release just like a reporter would write a news story — and then, maybe, you will get parts of it published. Editors rarely print a release verbatim, but you still have to write your release like they will.

That means your paragraphs should be kept short. Most will be only one or two sentences (like this article), although you may have a few longer paragraphs thrown in for variety.

Generally, an editor knows within the first 30 seconds of looking at a release whether he or she will use it. That makes your title and first paragraph extremely important. After an attention-getting headline, you will usually write what is called a "summary lead": this is usually a 20-30 word sentence that answers as many of the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY, and HOW questions as possible.

If you haven't answered all the 5 W's and 1 H in the first paragraph of your release, then try to give that information in the second paragraph. News stories — and, therefore, news releases — are usually written in an "inverted pyramid" style. That means you don't ever save the important facts for your closing paragraphs. Readers (and editors) may not get that far.

You may wonder if there is a way to "guarantee" that some information will be stated exactly the way you want it, and you will be happy to know there is. While editors often like to change around the words or structure of your story, they will not tamper with your quotes. Make certain, however, that the quotes (a) sound natural, (b) include interesting remarks, and (C) are attributed, that is — name the speaker and his or her job title.

Here are some additional writing guidelines:

1. Stick to the present tense.

2. Use the active voice, rather than passive.
3. Use concrete words that readers will know; no jargon.
4. Avoid clichés and vague phrases.
5. Check spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
6. Brevity is valued; be concise; do not repeat yourself or use unnecessary words.
7. Make certain that all statements of fact have been double-checked for accuracy.

How about photos? Editors do like visuals. The subject matter should be logical and interesting with a caption that adds a bit more information than what is readily seen. Captions are often the most well-read part of any article.

It is important to know who should receive your release and whether or not an E-mail is acceptable. If you submit a hard copy, you should use the following format: double space on 8-1/2”x 11” paper with your margins set at 1-1/2” for easy editing. Try not to exceed two pages. If you do have two pages, then write “more” at the end of the first page and “-30-” or “# # #“ at the end of the second page to indicate the end of your story.

Additionally, you will want to identify the contact person and the release date. Therefore the name of the sender, the address, and both business and home phone numbers are included in a box at the top left-hand corner. In the right-hand corner, you will write “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” or a specific date in the future.

Contact Name

Address:

Business Phone:

Night Phone:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
By Dick Young

One of the biggest reasons that news releases do not get published is because the people writing them don’t know what they are doing. But now YOU do ... and you are on the road to your free advertising.

The secret to successful news releases is getting an editor to see the “news” value of your story. Events or information that can impact local readers is an important component in what makes something newsworthy and of benefit to readers. You may not realize all the interesting “newsworthy” information you have to report, but here is a list to get you thinking:

- Newly hired managers with impressive backgrounds from well-respected organizations or other interesting credentials,
- Added categories or types or products and/or services now offered.
- Special promotions for a specific time period, either co-branded with a supplier or entirely on your own.
- New or enhanced reward and discount loyalty programs for customers.
- Recognition of awards given by respected organizations.
- Introduction of a Web site or new features on the site.
- Be careful on this one: a “position statement” from an owner or operator about a controversial issue affecting the industry.

Tips on writing e-mails

E-mail is easily misunderstood. Its most attractive attributes – speed and convenience – are linked to its chief drawbacks. Operating within its culture of quickness and immediacy, writers tend to fire off hastily composed messages that are disorganized, incomplete and ambiguous.

Imagine, for example, that you have received an e-mail message from your boss requesting you to present a proposal at next week's staff meeting. You don't mind the assignment, but you're preoccupied with other matters at the moment, so you respond by simply typing "Fine" and hitting the send button. On opening your message, your boss sees your one-word response and interprets your tone as sarcastic, as in "Fine. Just what I wanted – another assignment. As if I don't already have enough work to do."

By its nature, e-mail communication encourages a personal, informal style of writing, a feature most people view as attractive. Writers get into trouble, however, when they assume that readers can actually hear the inflection of their voices. Although e-mail may be more like oral communication than traditional forms of written communication, it's still writing, not speaking.

To guard against this type of misunderstanding, take this simple precaution: Include a goodwill statement in every message you send. Rather than "Fine," write "Fine. Happy to do it." Rather than write "Please come prepared to discuss the report," add another sentence: "As always, I value your experience and insight." Rather than "Well, you did it again. Would you mind adapting your presentation for our board?" write "Well, you did it again. Great job! Would you mind adapting ..." A goodwill statement is like an insurance policy. It protects you from being misunderstood. Including it reduces the risk of miscommunication when you are writing quickly.

Here are some additional tips to help you use e-mail effectively:

- *Write in short paragraphs*. Nearly everything you write can be divided into three parts: introduction, body, closing; or – to use the three-step memo approach – purpose, background, proposed action. To communicate in chunks of unbroken text is discourteous to your reader.

- *Don't write in anger*. It's a lose-lose endeavor. You risk appearing foolish, and you are likely to elicit an angry response from your reader. Don't let the ease of using e-mail tempt you to fire off a hot one.
- *Don't write anything you don't want the whole world to* see. E-mail is notorious for the speed and ease with which confidential information can be disseminated – often to just the wrong people. Remember, in online communication there's no such thing as privacy.
- *Proofread your writing*. Although occasional typographical errors might be tolerated by your reader, always read over what you have written at least once to check for clarity and accuracy. In today's frantic workplace, speed is a virtue, but sometimes slowing down a little is the surest way to reach your destination.

Glossary

Blog—See Web blog.

Business plan— a detailed report describing the nature of a business, the target market, what the company offers that its competitors do not, the budget required to turn a profit, and the resources and qualifications of the owner(s).

Claim letter— a request for an adjustment.

Metacommunication—a message that, although not expressed in words, accompanies a message that is expressed in words.

Active sentence—one in which the subject does the acting.

Channel—the route of a message; the medium.

Classifying—the process of div g a whole into its parts.

Coherence—the quality that binds sentences together that causes one sentence to lead naturally to the next.

Data sheet—personal profile accompanying a letter of application.

Decoding—the process of extracting meaning from another's words.

Deductive organization—a sequence of development proceeding from a general conclusion to the specific details.

Destination—the point at which a message becomes meaningful.

Electronic bulletin boards—computer systems that allow the posting of information so it may be accessed and read by many other people in the system.

Teleconferencing—telephone conference calls for meetings.

Electronic mail (e-mail)—the electronic transmission of messages from one person to another using computers.

Encoding—the process of selecting words for conveying ideas.

Experimental research—the test-tube research conducted in a laboratory.

Expletives—words without meaning.

Feedback—reaction of a receiver.

Grammar and style checkers—analyze documents created with standard word processing programs.

Groupware (workflow software) — software designed to improve the productivity of work groups.

Hierarchy of communication levels—the effectiveness of communication based on the availability of feedback and non-verbal aids.

Imperative sentences—words that convey a command.

Inductive organization—a sequence of development proceeding from specific details to a general conclusion.

Inference—a statement about the unknown based on the known.

Information—a property of a signal that conveys something meaningful.

Kinesic communication—messages conveyed through actions. A wink, a frown, a smile, a sigh, a nod - they all convey messages.

Mechanics—any of the problems encountered in putting words on paper (such as spelling, typing, and punctuating).

Message—a transmissible combination of information.

News release—See press release.

Normative survey research—a method used to determine the status of something at the time of the research-hence, the term “normative” which describes norms or standards.

Observational research (statistical research)—a method used to describe research involving statistical analysis of data.

Organizing—the process of dividing a large unit into smaller units and arranging them in a systematic sequence.

Parallel construction—the technique of employing the same grammatical form for expressing each unit in a series.

Pie charts—provides a dramatic effect when used to show the distribution of parts of a whole.

Plagiarism—the crime of using anther’s words without giving credit to the other person.

Press release— a short article that can get your organization’s name mentioned, and even featured, in a newspaper or magazine.

Problem-solving process—a four-step method basic to research.

Receiver—any device capable of accepting a message.

Redundancy—a word that unnecessarily repeats an idea conveyed by the preceding word.

Reports—written or oral messages conveying information.

Role—part a person plays in the communication process.

Sentences—meaningful combinations of words.

Status—officially prescribed duties and rights.

Stereotyped expressions—worn-out wording.

Superlatives—words that label extreme units in series.

Decoding—the process of interpreting the message.

Theory X—the traditional style of management with strong control, concern for the job to the exclusion of concern for the individual; motivation derived primarily from external incentives.

Theory Y—the newer and developing style of management with a balance between control and individual freedom. As the individual matures, the need for external motivation decreased; concern of management is for the individual first and the job second.

Transition—moving smoothly from one section of a composition to another section, summarizing one section while at the same time leading a reader to expect the next section.

Transmitter—any device capable of moving a message from the sender.

Weasel words—words that relieve the writer of responsibility for what is being said.

Web log— also called a blog, a Web site that people can create and use to write about their observations, experiences, and feelings on a wide range of topics.

Word processing software—software used with computers to produce printed documents.