



MODULE

4

Planning, Writing, and Revising

Module Outline

- What is the writing process?
- Does it matter which process I use?
- How should I approach business writing?
- I don't have much time. How should I use it?
- What planning should I do before I begin writing or speaking?
- What is revision? How do I do it?
- Can a grammar checker edit for me?
- How can I get better feedback?
- Can I use form letters?
- How can I overcome writer's block?

Review of Key Points

Assignments for Module 4

Polishing Your Prose: Commas in Lists

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading and applying the information in Module 4, you'll be able to demonstrate

Knowledge of

- The activities in the writing process
- How professional writers apply the process

Skills to

- Begin to apply the activities in the writing process
- Begin to identify and analyze your own strategies
- Begin to use revision and editing techniques
- Begin to practise overcoming writer's block

The Conference Board of Canada
Insights You Can Count On



Please see the OLC to preview the key skills from the Conference Board of Canada's *Employability Skills 2000+* covered in this module.



FYI

Writing is a developmental skill highly divergent from speech in its more sophisticated stages. Moreover, “writing aids thinking in ways that speech cannot perform. Writing is a medium where there is time to reflect, to re-think, to use language as a way of shaping thought.”

Source: David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 255.

Skilled performances look easy and effortless. In reality, as every dancer, musician, and athlete knows, they’re the product of hard work, hours of practice, attention to detail, and intense concentration. Like all skilled performances, writing rests on a base of work. Writers themselves agree that writing is like communicating in another language, with its own set of rules and requirements.

The payoff, however, is enormous: being able to write well is a powerful skill. It’s powerful, first of all, because writing is a transferable skill. Good writers write well in every situation, whether crafting a proposal to sell clients on a new product, or sending a letter to their child’s hockey coach to protest a practice time.

Furthermore, the writing process demands the highest-level thinking skills, including analysis, problem solving, organization, critical thinking, and synthesis, among others. Therefore, the more you practise the process, the better you develop these skills.



Writing is rewriting.

What is the writing process?

The process can include eight activities: planning, gathering information, writing, assessing, getting feedback, revising, editing, and proofreading, as described in Table 4.1

No wonder writing is so difficult and takes so much time.

Note, however, that writers do not necessarily follow these activities in order. For example, some writers compose completely in their heads, write a first draft, and then use a reader, revise, edit, and proofread. Other writers constantly interrupt the composition process to revise and edit. Despite experts’ claims, there is no one right way to write.

In her book *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain*, Henriette Anne Klausner argues that the revising, editing, and proofreading activities of the writing process are left-brain, or logical. Composing comes from the right brain: our intuitive, creative side. Our critical, logical side can interrupt our creative side, causing anxiety and writer’s block. Therefore, according to Peter Elbow, writer and expert in teaching students to write, we should get the words down—any words, and as many words as possible—before applying any revising or editing strategies.¹

Freelancer Leslie Butler agrees ... in theory. However Butler “can’t go forward unless [I] go backward: I may write two paragraphs; then I have to go back and reread what I’ve written, over and over again. Sometimes I read and revise and edit the first paragraph twelve to thirty times.”²

Liz Braun, *Toronto Sun* entertainment columnist, also revises and edits as she composes. Braun reads her writing aloud



Liz Braun revises and edits her writing as she composes.

TABLE 4.1
Activities in the Writing Process

Planning	Apply PAIBOC: Identify & analyze the situation; define purpose; identify and analyze audience; consider necessary information, audience objections & benefits, and context; outline; choose a pattern of development, or organization.
Gathering/researching	Get the information: from the initial message; from the client (teacher); from conversations with colleagues; from the Internet; from interviews, surveys or focus groups; from print sources.
Composing/writing	Create: get words down; make lists; free write; mind-map; make drafts.
Assessing	Read and reread: how does it sound? Is it audience-centred? Does it meet the audience's needs? Will they understand it? Will it achieve intended results? Is it courteous, friendly, and complete?
Getting Feedback	Use a reader and ask for comments: writers who want to achieve intended results get a colleague, friend, spouse, parent, or sibling—an interested party—to read and react to the form and content of their documents. Whether beginners or proficient writers, people who want their writing to succeed ask others for feedback, and apply useful advice in their revision and editing activities.
Revising	Adapt, change, and rewrite: writing is rewriting. Revising is rewriting and reworking the document to reflect your own assessment and helpful feedback from others. Revising could mean changing a few sentences, or writing headings; it could mean deleting whole paragraphs, or moving whole sections. Although technology has increased the amount and complexity of writing, software programs like Microsoft® Word have simplified the revision part of the process.
Editing	Focus on the surface of the writing, ensuring appropriate word choice and correct format, spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation.
Proofreading	Check the final copy to ensure it's free from typographical errors.

while she writes. When a word doesn't "sound right," she stops and looks it up in the dictionary. "I never use spell-check. I think it's sloppy; I need to look up the word as a form of discipline; if I look it up enough times, I may learn how to spell the word correctly." Braun also interrupts her composing activity to read, revise, and edit what she has written so far, even though her writing will be read, vetted, and edited by at least three other people, including a lawyer.³

Whatever strategies they use, however, writers always consider the writing process to be a **work in progress**. They understand that they may well have to repeat part or all of the process over and over again. They write, read, and assess what they have written, revise, edit, and then write some more. They know they can change anything right up until the document is published.

■ Does it matter what process I use?

The more you write—and read—the more you'll become aware of what processes work best for you and the more your writing will improve.

Just as athletes can improve their game by studying videotapes and focusing on exactly how they kick a ball or spin during a jump, so writers improve their writing by studying

their own processes. No single writing process works for all writers all the time. However, expert writers seem to use different processes than novice writers.⁴ Expert writers are more likely to do these things:

- Understand that the first draft will be revised
- Have clear goals focusing on purpose and audience
- Read daily
- Write regularly
- Have a large vocabulary
- Break big writing jobs into a series of steps
- Choose and use several different strategies
- Use rules flexibly

Research shows that experts differ from novices in identifying and analyzing the initial problem more effectively, understanding the task more broadly and deeply, drawing from a wider repertoire of strategies, and seeing patterns more clearly. Experts actually compose more slowly than novices, perhaps because they rarely settle for work that is just “passable.” Finally, experts are better at evaluating their own work.⁵

Thinking about the processes you currently use, and trying out experts’ strategies, can help you to become a better writer.

■ How should I approach business writing?

Think KISS. Plan how to make it easy for the reader.

Writing for business means concentrating on your readers’ needs for clarity and completion. In contrast to academic writing (📖📖 Module 1), the best business writing **keeps it short and simple (KISS)**. The best-written documents are those the audience can easily read and understand. These messages are productive because 1) readers do not have to spend time asking for clarification, and 2) the writer doesn’t have to spend time doing it right the second time.

Therefore, when business writing (whether emails, memos, letters, proposals, and/or reports) compose documents that make it easy for your reader to read, understand, and respond to.

■ I don't have much time. How should I use it?

Swiss-cheese the process. Use every opportunity to make notes on your research and thinking. Save plenty of time for rewriting.

Professional writers, those who write for a living, concur on one aspect of the writing process: it takes a lot of time. Writing professionals Braun and Butler, both of whom have been writing for over 20 years, budget hours and sometimes days for their writing tasks. Braun’s weekly 600-word film review can take between one and three hours. A profile or feature story, which involves primary research, can take her up to four eight-hour days (32 hours).



The writing process can include many critical thinking strategies.

Recently, Butler spent 40 hours on a story about school board politics: her research (interviews) took 10 hours; composing, revising, and editing took another 30 hours. Different projects have different lead times, as Figure 4.1 shows.

Writing is time-consuming. However, the task becomes easier when you become conscious of what strategies work for you. Whether beginner, second-language, proficient, or expert, however, writers agree that the best strategy is talking about the task with someone who is interested. At every stage of the process, from planning through composition to proofreading, writers claim they benefit most from discussions with other writers about their work.

■ What planning should I do before I begin writing or speaking?

Do as much planning as you can ahead of time.

Spend at least one-third of your time planning and organizing before you begin to write. The better your ideas are when you start, the fewer drafts you'll need to produce a good document. Start by using the analysis questions from ◀▶ Module 1 to identify purpose and audience. Use the strategies described in ▶▶ Module 2 to analyze audience and in ▶▶ Module 8 to develop reader benefits. Gather information you can use for your document.

If ideas won't come, try the following techniques:

- **Brainstorming.** Write down all your ideas without judging them. Consciously try to get at least a dozen different ideas before you stop.
- **Freewriting.**⁶ Make yourself write, without stopping, for 10 minutes or so, even if you have to write "I will think of something soon." At the end of 10 minutes, read what you've written and identify the best point in the draft. Get a clean paper or screen and write for another 10 uninterrupted minutes. Read this draft, marking anything that's good and should be kept, and then write again for another 10 minutes. By the third session, you will probably produce several sections that are worth keeping—maybe even a complete draft that's ready to be revised.
- **Clustering.**⁷ Write your topic in the middle of the page and circle it. Write down the ideas the topic suggests, circling them, too. (The circles are designed to tap into the non-linear half of your brain.) When you've filled the page, look for patterns or repeated ideas. Use different-coloured pens to group related ideas. Then use these ideas to develop reader benefits in a memo, questions for a survey, or content for the body of a report. Figure 4.3 presents the clusters that one writer created about business communication in Canada and France.
- **Talk to your audiences.** As communications analyst Rachel Spilka's research shows, talking to internal and external audiences helped writers involve readers in the planning process, understand the social and political relationships among readers, and negotiate conflicts orally rather than depending solely on the document. These writers were then able to think about content as well as about organization and style, appeal to common ground (such as reducing waste or increasing productivity) that several readers shared, and reduce the number of revisions needed before documents were approved.⁸



**Cluster Ideas
On-Screen**

FIGURE 4.1
Time Lines for Various Documents (your actual times may vary)

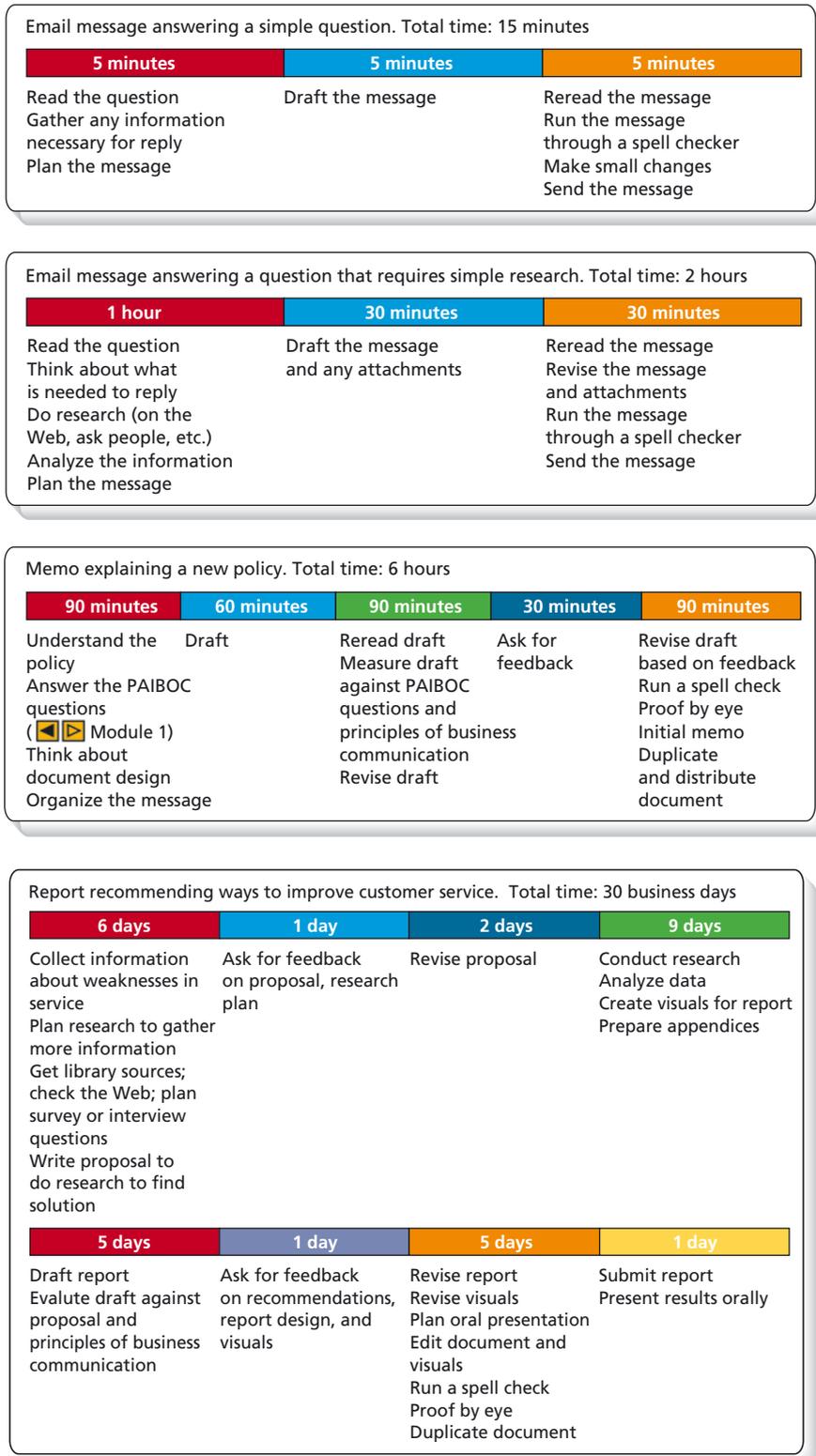


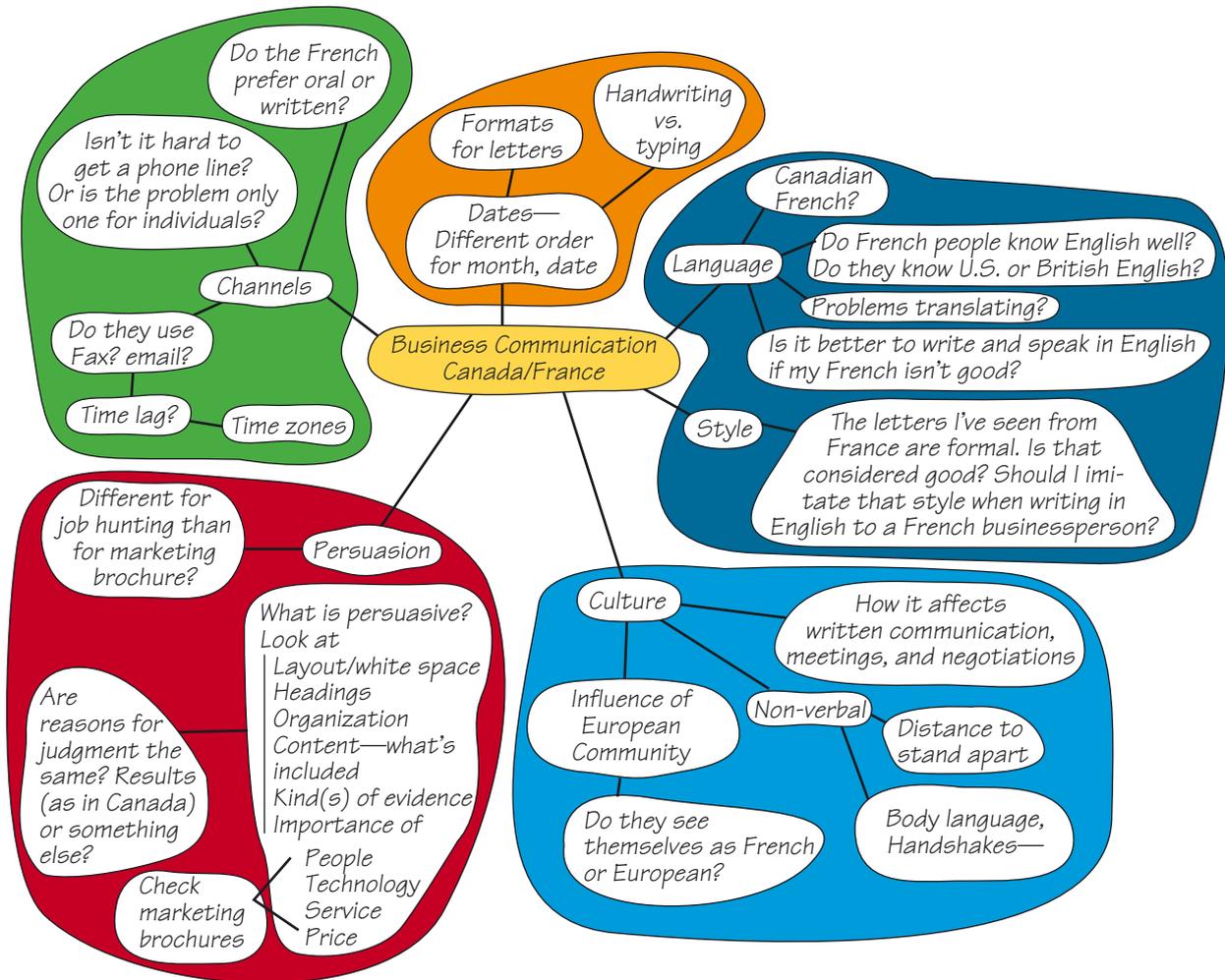
FIGURE 4.2

P A I B O C
Questions for Analysis

Use the PAIBOC questions to analyze business communication problems:

- P** What are your **purposes** in writing?
- A** Who is your **audience**? How do members of your audience differ? What audience characteristics are relevant to this particular message?
- I** What **information** must your message include?
- B** What reasons or reader **benefits** can you use to support your position?
- O** What **objections** can you expect your readers to have? What negative elements of your message must you de-emphasize or overcome?
- C** How will the **context** affect reader response? Think about your relationship to the reader, the morale in the organization, the economy, the time of year, and any special circumstances.

FIGURE 4.3
Clustering Helps Generate Ideas



Thinking and talking to others about the content, layout, or structure of your document can also give you ideas. For long documents, *write out the headings you'll use*. For anything that's shorter than five pages, less formal notes will probably work. You may want to jot down ideas that you can use as the basis for a draft. For an oral presentation, a meeting, or a document with lots of visuals, use your presentation software to create a **storyboard**, or make your own paper storyboard with a rectangle representing each page or unit. Draw a box with a visual for each main point. Below the box, write a short caption or label.

Letters and memos will go faster if you choose a basic organizational pattern before you start. ◀▶ Modules 10, 12, and 13 give detailed patterns of organization for the most common kinds of letters and memos. You may want to customize those patterns with a **planning guide**⁹ to help you keep the big picture in mind as you write. Figure 4.4 shows planning guides developed for specific kinds of documents.

FIGURE 4.4
Customized Planning Guides for Specific Documents

<p>Planning guide for a trip report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Big Picture from the Company's Point of View: We Can Go Forward on the Project • Criteria/Goals • What We Did • Why We Know Enough to Go Forward 	<p>Planning guide for a proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer's Concern #1 Our Proposal or Answer • Customer's Concern #2 Our Proposal or Answer • Customer's Concern #3 Our Proposal or Answer
<p>Planning guide for an email message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Purpose • Points I Want to Make • Document(s) to Attach • Next Steps 	<p>Planning guide for a credit rejection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason • Refusal • Alternative (Layaway/Co-signer/Provide more information) • Goodwill Ending

Source: Email and proposal guides based on Fred Reynolds, "What Adult Work-World Writers Have Taught Me About Adult Work-World Writing," *Professional Writing in Context: Lessons from Teaching and Consulting in Worlds of Work* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 18, 20.

■ What is revision? How do I do it?

Revision means "re-seeing" the document from the reader's point of view.

Good writers make their drafts better by revising, editing, and proofreading from the reader's point of view.

- *Revising* means making changes that will better satisfy your purposes and your audience.
- *Editing* means making surface-level changes that make the document grammatically correct.
- *Proofreading* means checking to be sure the document is free from typographical errors.

When you're writing to a new audience or solving a particularly difficult problem, plan to revise the draft at least three times. The first time, look for content and clarity. The second time, check the organization and layout. Finally, check style and tone, using the information in  Modules 14 and 15. Figure 4.5 summarizes the questions you could ask.

Often you'll get the best revision by setting aside your draft, getting a blank page or screen, and redrafting. This strategy takes advantage of the thinking you did on your first draft without locking you into the sentences in it.

FIGURE 4.5**Checklist for Thorough Revision****Content and Clarity**

- Does your document meet the needs of the organization and of the reader—and make you look good?
- Have you given readers all the information they need to understand and act on your message?
- Have you organized your message for optimal positive audience impact? (◀▶ Modules 2 and 11)
- Is all the information accurate?
- Is each sentence clear? Is the message free from apparently contradictory statements?
- Are generalizations and benefits backed up with adequate supporting detail?

Organization and Layout

- Does the design of the document make it easy for readers to find the information they need? Is the document visually inviting?
- Are transitions between ideas smooth? Do ideas within paragraphs flow smoothly?
- Are the most important points emphasized?
- Are the first and last paragraphs effective?

Style and Tone

- Does the message build goodwill?
- Is the message easy to read?
- Is the message friendly and free from biased language?

FIGURE 4.6**Checklist for Light Revision**

- Are the first and last paragraphs effective?
- Does the design of the document make it easy for readers to find the information they need?
- Have I told the reader what to do?

As you revise, be sure to read the document through from start to finish. This is particularly important if you've composed it in several sittings or if you've used text from other documents. Researchers have found that such documents tend to be well organized but don't flow well.¹⁰ You may need to add transitions (◀▶ Module 14), cut repetitive parts, or change words to create a uniform level of formality throughout the document.

If you're really short on time, do a light revision (see Figure 4.6). The quality of the final document may not be as high as with a thorough revision, but even a light revision is better than skipping revision.

Can a grammar checker edit for me?

No. You have to decide whether to make each change.

Grammar checkers are good at finding missing halves. For example, if you open a parenthesis and never close it, a grammar checker will note that a second one is needed. Of course, you have to decide where it goes. In terms of other errors, all a grammar checker can do is to ask you about what you have done. A grammar checker can tell you that you've used a passive verb (◀▶ Module 14) and ask whether you want to change it. But you have to decide whether the passive is justified. If it finds the word *well*, the grammar checker can tell you that *good* and *well* are sometimes confused. But you have to decide which word fits your meaning (◀▶ Module 15). You still need to know the rules so that you can decide which changes to make.

Check to be sure that the following are accurate:

- Sentence structure
- Subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement
- Punctuation
- Word usage
- Spelling—including spelling of names
- Numbers

You need to know the rules of grammar and punctuation to edit. Most writers make a small number of errors repeatedly. If you know that you have trouble with dangling modifiers or subject-verb agreement, for example, specifically look for them in your draft. Also look for any errors that especially bother your boss and correct them.

Grammar checkers frequently include an option for checking the **readability** of a selected passage. Microsoft Word's grammar checker will indicate readability based on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (corresponding to years of education required to comprehend the material) and a Flesch Reading Ease score (assessing the difficulty level based on the average number of words per sentence and the average number of syllables per word). Table 4.2 sets out guidelines for interpreting these results.

Try to edit *after* you revise. There's no point in taking time to fix a grammatical error in a sentence that may be cut when you clarify your meaning or tighten your style. Some writers edit more accurately when they print out a copy of a document and edit the hard copy. But beware: laser printing makes a page look good but does nothing to correct errors.

I use a spell checker. Do I still need to proofread?

Yes.

Proofread every document both with a spell checker and by eye to catch the errors a spell checker can't find.

Proofreading is hard because writers tend to see what they know should be there rather than what really is there. Since it's always easier to proof something you haven't written, you may want to swap papers with a proofing buddy. (Be sure the person looks for typos, not for content.)



TABLE 4.2
Interpreting Flesch Readability Scores

Flesch Reading Ease	Difficulty	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Example
0–29	Very difficult	Post-graduate	
30–49	Difficult	College	32: Harvard Law Review 40–50: standard score for insurance documents required by law in several U.S. states
50–59	Fairly difficult	High school	52: Time
60–69	Standard	Grade 8 to 9	60: “plain English” (20 words per sentence, 1.5 syllables per word) 65: Reader’s Digest
70–79	Fairly easy	Grade 7	
80–89	Easy	Grade 5 to 6	
90–100	Very easy	Grade 4 to 5	

Source: Tom McArthur, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 407.



INSTANT REPLAY

Writing is a complex, time-consuming process that includes **planning, researching, composing, assessing, getting feedback, revising, editing,** and **proofreading**. Writers do not follow these activities in order, although the most successful writers focus their time on **planning, researching, revising,** and **proofreading**.

To proofread, follow these steps:

- Read once quickly for meaning to see that nothing has been left out.
- Read a second time, slowly. When you find an error, correct it and then *reread that line*. Readers tend to become less attentive after they find one error and may miss other errors close to the one they’ve spotted.
- To proofread a document you know well, read the lines backward or the pages out of order.

Always triple-check numbers, headings, first and last paragraphs, and the reader’s name.

How can I get better feedback?

Ask for the kind of feedback you need.

Revising documents is a fact of life in business, government, and non-profit organizations.

To improve the quality of the feedback you get, and of your revisions, tell people which aspects you’d especially like comments about. For example, when you give a reader the outline or planning draft,¹¹ you might want to know whether the general approach is appropriate. After your second draft, you might want to know whether reader benefits are well developed. When you reach the polishing draft, you’ll be ready for feedback on style and grammar. Figure 4.7 lists questions to ask.

It’s easy to feel defensive when someone criticizes your work. If the feedback stings, put it aside until you can read it without feeling defensive. Even if you think that the reader has misunderstood what you were trying to say, the fact that the reader complained means the section could be improved. If the reader says “This isn’t true” and you know that the statement is true, rephrasing the statement, giving more information or examples, or documenting the source might make the truth clear to the reader.



EXPANDING A CRITICAL SKILL

Revising after Feedback

When you get feedback that you understand and agree with, make the change.

If you get feedback you don't understand, ask for clarification.

- Paraphrase: "So you're asking me to give more information?"
- Ask for more information: "Can you suggest a way to do that?"
- Test your inference: "Would it help if I did this?"

Sometimes you may get feedback you don't agree with.

- If it's an issue of grammatical correctness, check this book (sometimes even smart people get things wrong).
- If it's a matter of content, recognize that something about the draft isn't as good as it could be: something is leading the reader to respond negatively.

- If the reader thinks a fact is wrong (and you know it's right), show where the fact came from "According to...."
- If the reader suggests a change in wording you don't like, try another option.
- If the reader seems to have misunderstood or misread, think about ways to make the meaning clearer.

Your supervisor's comments on a draft can help you improve that document, help you write better drafts the next time, and teach you about the culture of your organization. Look for patterns in the feedback you receive. Are you asked to use more formal language, or to make the document more conversational? Does your boss want to see an overview before details? Does your company prefer information presented in bulleted lists rather than in paragraphs?

Can I use form letters?

Yes, but make sure they're good.

A **form letter** is a pre-written, fill-in-the blank letter designed for routine situations. Some form letters have different paragraphs that can be inserted, depending on the situation.

FIGURE 4.7

Questions to Ask Readers

Outline or Planning Draft

- Does the plan seem to be on the right track?
- What topics should be added? Should any be cut?
- Do you have any other general suggestions?

Revised Draft

- Does the message satisfy all its purposes?
- Is the message adapted to the audience(s)?
- Is the organization effective?
- Are any parts unclear?
- What ideas need further development?
- Do you have any other suggestions?

Polished Draft

- Are there any problems with word choice or sentence structure?
- Did you find any inconsistencies?
- Did you find any typos?
- Is the document's design effective?

For example, a form letter admitting students to university might add additional paragraphs for students receiving financial aid.

Boilerplate is language—sentences, paragraphs, even pages—from a previous document that a writer includes in a new document. In academic papers, material written by others must be quoted and documented. However, because businesses own the documents their employees write, text from those documents may be included without attribution.

In some cases, boilerplate may have been written years ago. For example, many legal documents, including apartment leases and sales contracts, are almost completely boilerplated. In other cases, writers may use boilerplate they themselves have written. For example, a section from a proposal describing the background of the problem could also be used in the final report after the proposed work was completed. A section from a progress report describing what the writer has done could be used with only a few changes in the methods section of the final report.

Writers use form letters and boilerplate to save time and energy and to use language that has already been approved by the organization's legal staff. However, reusing old text creates two problems:¹²

- Using unrevised boilerplate can create a document with incompatible styles and tones.
- Form letters and boilerplate can encourage writers to see situations and audiences as identical when, in fact, they differ.

Before you use a form letter, make sure that it is well written and that it applies to the situation in which you are thinking of using it.

Before you incorporate old language in a new document,

- Check to see that the old section is well written.
- Consciously look for differences between the two situations, audiences, or purposes that may require different content, organization, or wording.
- Read through the whole document at a single sitting to be sure that style, tone, and level of detail are consistent.

■ How can I overcome writer's block?

Talk and practise.

Whether learners or professionals, writers claim that talking about the task facilitates it. During the planning and composition stages, talking with interested colleagues helps people get ideas, find sources, and identify reader benefits and organizational patterns.¹³

Writing teachers and experts like Peter Elbow suggest that writers can reduce anxiety and overcome writer's block by

- freewriting
- writing daily
- writing as if you were speaking to your audience
- focusing first on creative or composing processes
- applying the critical or revising processes only after you have written
- using others as readers.

Remember that writing becomes easier the more you do it. And it helps to talk to other people about your writing.

Employability Skills 2000+

The Conference Board of Canada
Insights You Can Count On



Please see the OLC to preview the key skills from the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ covered in this module.

Review of Key Points

1. What eight activities are involved in the writing process?
2. What is different about business writing?
3. What strategies do expert writers use?
4. Why do some writers finish composing before using revising and editing strategies?
5. What kind of feedback should you ask for? When?
6. What are four strategies you can use to overcome writer's block?

Assignments for Module 4

Questions for Critical Thinking

- 4.1 Of the processes that expert writers use, which do you already use? How could you modify your process to incorporate at least one more on the list?
- 4.2 Of the people who have seen your writing, which one(s) have given you the most useful feedback? What makes it useful?
- 4.3 In which areas are you best at giving feedback to other people? How could you make your feedback even better?
- 4.4 Think about the form letters you have received. How do they make you feel? If they have flaws, how could they be improved?

Exercises and Problems

4.5 Interviewing Writers About Their Composing Processes

Interview someone who writes for a living about the composing process(es) he or she uses. Questions you could ask include the following:

- What kind of planning do you do before you write? Do you make lists? formal or informal outlines?
- When you need more information, where do you get it?
- How do you compose your drafts? Do you dictate? draft with pen and paper? compose on screen? How do you find uninterrupted time to compose?
- When you want advice about style, grammar, and spelling, what sources do you consult?
- Does your supervisor ever read your drafts and make suggestions?
- Do you ever work with other writers to produce a single document? Describe the process you use.
- Describe the process of creating a document that you felt reflected your best work.
- Describe the process of creating a document that you found difficult or frustrating. What sorts of things make writing easier or harder for you?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Share your results orally with a small group of students.
- b. Present your results in an oral presentation to the class.
- c. Present your results in a memo to your instructor.
- d. Post an email message to the class discussing your results.
- e. Share your results with a small group of students and write a joint memo reporting the similarities and differences you found.

4.6 Applying Your Revision and Editing Strategies

Apply your revision and editing strategies to the following memo. As you read the memo 1) write down your reactions as they occur to you; 2) write down your reasons as you revise; 3) identify whether you are revising or editing as you make changes. Be prepared to present your results, including the notes on your own processes, to your teacher in a memo.

November 10, 2005

Memo to: Bartenders, wait servers and busing staff

Memo From: Omar

Re: Christmas

While we're planning our Christmas party we should also be thinking about what we're going to do about who's going to be responsible for cleaning up and locking up after the party. If we start partying after closing time at 1 A.M. on the 21st, and we party until 3 or 4, that's fine with the managers, but we need people to stay to clean up and set up for the next day's lunch crowd. Also, somebody has to take the day's receipts and money for safekeeping, and bank it the next day.

Can you let me know who will volunteer to do that?

4.7 Analyzing Your Own Writing Processes

Save your notes and drafts from several assignments so that you can answer the following questions:

- Which of the eight activities in the writing process discussed in Module 4 do you use?
 - How much time do you spend on each of the eight activities?
 - What kinds of revisions do you make most often?
 - Do you use different processes for different documents, or do you have one process that you use most of the time?
 - Which practices of good writers do you follow?
 - What parts of your process seem most successful? Are there any places in the process that could be improved? How?
- What relation do you see between the process(es) you use and the quality of the final document?

As your instructor directs,

- a. Discuss your process with a small group of students.
- b. Write a memo to your instructor analyzing in detail your process for composing one of the papers for this class.
- c. Write a memo to your instructor analyzing your process during the term. What parts of your process(es) have stayed the same throughout the term? What parts have changed?

4.8 Checking Spell Checkers and Grammar Checkers

Each of the following paragraphs contains errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Which errors does your spelling or grammar checker catch? Which errors does it miss? Does it flag as errors any words that are correct?

1. Answer to an Inquiry
Enclosed are the tow copies you requested of our pamphlet, "Using the Internet to market Your products. The pamphlet walks you through the steps of planning the Home Page (The first page of the web cite, shows examples of other Web pages we have designed, and provide a questionnaire that you can use to analyze audience the audience and purposes).
2. Performance Appraisal
Most staff accountants complete three audits a month. Ellen has completed 21 audits in this past six months she is our most productive staff accountant. Her technical skills our very good however some clients feel that she could be more tactful in suggesting ways that the clients accounting practices could be improved.
3. Brochure
Are you finding that being your own boss crates it's own problems? Take the hassle out of working at home with a VoiceMail Answering System. Its almost as good as having your own secretary.

4. Presentation Slides

How to Create a Web Résumé

- Omit home address and phone number
- Use other links only if they help an employer evaluate you
- Be professional

- Carefully craft and proof-read the phrase on the index apage

How to Create a Scannable Résumé

- Create a “plain vanilla” document
- Use a “Keywords” section. Include personality traits as well as accomplishments
- Be specific and quantifiable

Polishing Your Prose

Commas in Lists

Use commas in lists to separate items:

At the office supply store, I bought pens, stationery, and three-ring binders.

Commas show distinctions between items in a list. Technically, the comma before the coordinating conjunction *and* is optional, but the additional comma always adds clarity. Use commas consistently throughout your document. Missing or improperly placed commas confuse readers:

We bought the following items for the staff lounge: television cabinet computer desk refrigerator and microwave oven.

Does television describe cabinet or is it a separate item? Is computer desk one item? Or are computer and desk two separate things? Inserting commas makes the distinction clear:

We bought the following items for the staff kitchen: television, cabinet, computer, desk, refrigerator, and microwave oven.

Semicolons replace commas in lists where the items themselves contain commas:

Our company has plants in Moncton, New Brunswick; Flin Flon, Manitoba; and Lethbridge, Alberta.

Exercises

Use commas to make these lists clearer.

1. Please send the “fruit of the month” in April May June and July.
2. At the weekly staff meeting we will be joined by Mr. Loomis Ms. Handelman Ms. Lang and Mr. Kim.
3. The special parts division is opening offices in Brampton Ontario Fredericton New Brunswick and Big Salmon Yukon.
4. Buy small medium and large paper clips at the office supply store.
5. I need to telephone Mary Frank and Paul to finish my report and mail copies of it to Ted Sam and Latanya.
6. Applicants should send copies of their résumés to Mr. Arthur Bramberger human resource director Ms. Tina Ramos vice president of marketing and Ms. Ellen Choi administrative assistant in marketing.
7. The weather affects our offices in Montreal New York City and Philadelphia.
8. Interns will be rotated through the receiving claims adjustment customer service and shipping departments.
9. Elizabeth Tyrone Mark and Sara presented the team’s recommendations.
10. We are open until 9 P.M. on Mondays Wednesdays Fridays and Saturdays.

Check your answers to the odd-numbered exercises on page 571.

Online Learning Centre



Visit the Online Learning Centre at www.mcgrawhill.ca/olc/locker to access module quizzes, a searchable glossary, résumé and letter templates, additional business writing samples, CBC videos, and other learning and study tools.