

CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS WRITING

Outline

1. Conciseness in Business Writing
2. Completeness in Business Writing
3. Effectiveness in Business Writing
4. Positiveness in Business Writing
5. Grammar review: Definite and Indefinite Articles

Main Ideas

1. Conciseness is necessary for efficient use of time in business transactions.

The writer must be aware of the choice of diction, the brevity, and the clarity of the language used in business writing.

2. Completeness is vital to provide the reader with sufficient information in order to make business transactions possible and effective.

3. Effectiveness concerns the writer's courtesy, friendliness and sincerity, so as to create a favorable impression on the reader.

4. Positiveness is an essential element in business writing. The writer should avoid using certain negative terms and try to accent the positive to promote goodwill.

5. Definite and indefinite articles are useful elements of grammar that enhance an effective writing style.

Objectives

Students will be enabled to write business correspondence with

1. Conciseness,
2. Completeness,
3. Effectiveness,
4. Positiveness, and to
5. Use definite and indefinite articles appropriately.

In business, the concept of “time is money” prevails. It is, therefore, necessary that you, the writers of business correspondence, learn to compose any type of business writing in a clear and economical way. In other words, you must follow the four essential disciplines of conciseness, completeness, effectiveness and positiveness. These disciplines are directly involved in making business writers successful in business transactions because they help to convey a direct and clear message, encourage a desirable course of action, and promote goodwill in the reader.

1. Conciseness

Writers of business correspondence need to practice writing with a keen awareness of the selection of wording, the necessity for a brief but complete message and a clear, meaningful sentence structure. Conciseness, in fact, shows the writer's ability and skills to use appropriate diction, to avoid wordiness and to use conversational language. In other words, such ability and skills, are employed to include only relevant details in business correspondence. An important point to remember here is that business people generally have no time to spare for irrelevancies.

The following is a list of wordy expressions that need to be changed or omitted to be more concise. The concise words are provided next to the wordy version.

above-mentioned	=	omit
acknowledge receipt of	=	thank you for, I received
affix (one's) signature to	=	sign
aforementioned, aforesaid	=	this, that, these, those
along these lines, on the order of	=	like, similar to
am (are) in receipt of	=	thank you, I have received
and etc.	=	etc.
as per	=	as, according to
as regards	=	concerning, regarding

as stated above	=	as we have said
as to	=	regarding
attached hereto	=	attached, here, enclosed
at an early date	=	soon, a specific date
at all times	=	always
at once and by return mail	=	at once, immediately
at this point in time,	=	now
at this time, at present,		
at the present writing,		
at the moment		
at your earliest convenience	=	as soon as it is possible
brought to our notice	=	we note, we notice, we see
come to a decision	=	decide
despite the fact that	=	though, although
due to the fact that,	=	as, because, since
because of the fact that		
enclosed please find	=	enclosed, here
express a preference for	=	prefer
for the period of a year	=	annually
for the purpose of	=	for
forward on	=	send
free of charge	=	free
hope for the favor	=	look forward to
I am/I remain	=	omit

I have before me	=	In reply to your
in accordance with	=	according to
in advance of, prior to	=	before
in compliance with	=	as you requested
in regard to/with regard to	=	about
in the amount of	=	for
in the course of	=	during, while
in the event that	=	in case, if
in the near future	=	soon
in view of the fact that	=	because (of), since
in view of the foregoing	=	therefore
of recent date	=	recent
of the opinion that	=	think, believe
pending receipt of	=	until we receive
place an order for	=	order
prepared to offer	=	can offer
receipt is acknowledged	=	we received, we have received
reduce to a minimum	=	minimize
sell at a price of	=	sell for, costs
subsequent to	=	after; since
take the liberty of	=	omit
thank you in advance	=	omit
to all intents and purposes	=	in effect
under separate cover	=	separately

up to this writing	=	until now
with the exception of	=	except, except for

Not only do business writers need to be aware of wordy expressions, they also have to use conversational language in business writing. Big, fancy words may impress your reader in other kinds of writing e.g. legalese, but they are difficult to understand. Big words used in scholarly writing, or “fine writing,” simply do not belong in business correspondence.

The following is a list of words that need to be changed into an everyday language as shown beside them. Some of them may be omitted.

accomplish	=	do
acquire	=	gain, get
advise	=	say, tell, let (us) know
approximately	=	about
ascertain	=	find out
assist	=	help
beg	=	ask, request, hope
commence	=	begin
communicate	=	write
communication	=	information, letter, order
dated	=	omit
deem (it)	=	think, believe, consider

description	=	kind, sort, type
desire	=	wish
diminish	=	reduce
donate	=	give
duly	=	omit
endeavor	=	try
experience	=	feel
herewith	=	omit (except in legal work)
implement	=	carry out
inform	=	tell, report
initiate	=	begin, start
in re or re:	=	regarding, concerning, as to
kindly	=	please
locality	=	place
majority	=	most
materialize	=	occur, take place
party (except in legal work)	=	person (name, title)
peruse	=	read
practically	=	nearly, almost
prevent	=	stop
purchase	=	buy
pursuant to	=	according to, in accordance with
reiterate	=	say again
remunerate	=	reward, pay

render	=	give
request	=	ask
requirements	=	needs
same	=	it, they, them or omit
state	=	say, tell
sufficient	=	enough
terminate	=	end
transmit	=	send
the writer/the undersigned	=	I, we
trust	=	hope, know, believe
utilize	=	use
visualize	=	imagine

To be a successful business writer, you must remember that your word choice always plays an important role in getting your message across to the reader. Bear in mind that time is an essential factor in business transactions and that the faster your reader gets the purpose of your correspondence, the better will be your chance of making that business deal.

Activity 1

Shorten the following statements to be simpler, clearer, and more concise.

1. It is not considered that a detailed cross-examination is necessary.

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2. The following is a report indicative of the sales representative's findings and recommendations.

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3. If the occasion should arise, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if we can be of assistance in similar circumstances.

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.....

4. According to our files, we do not have any record of having received payment.

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.....

5. We are of the belief that the system presently in use is basically sound and that indications for change to the system lie in the area of financial regulations and interest rates.

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2. Completeness

You have now learned that the language used in business writing must be clear and concise. However, do not mistakenly believe that brevity means a short message. On the other hand, it does mean "brief" but complete. Consider receiving an order letter from your customer with this information:

"Please send me a raincoat advertised in the Bangkok Post last Saturday."

How could you possibly fill this order? A lot of questions arise: what size does this person need; what color; what type or style; and what type of material is needed?

The above letter is clearly concise or brief, but it fails to convey a complete message. In fact, this kind of letter causes unnecessary delays because the recipient has to write back for more details. Providing complete and necessary information is helpful and time-efficient.

Activity 2

Rewrite the following sentences to make them clear and complete.

1. You are invited to hear Mrs. Parks on Wednesday.

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2. Where did you buy your plant?

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.....

3. Send me some samples.

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4. Can you attend the meeting?

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.....

5. Please send me a copy of your magazine.

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.....

3. Effectiveness

Business correspondence that gets the results aimed for is considered effective. Not only do the writers have to write concisely, but they also need to show courtesy, friendliness and sincerity in the tone of their writing.

The following are some ways to make business correspondence effective:

a. Be reader-slanted or customer-oriented. Pay attention to the reader's needs or benefits. Bear in mind that everyone prefers being treated with some

importance. Do not overemphasize the writer's point of view. In any event, show the reader the advantages he or she will gain from the business transaction.

ex. - You will receive an informative magazine filled with a variety of creative ideas for your outdoor activities when you return an enclosed postage-paid reply card to us.

- Please join our health program for a better and healthier body.

- Our unique, durable, and prestigious sports car is specially designed for you, a different, daring, and challenging individual.

- We are glad to offer you a complete range of our new products.

b. Use personal terms. The "I" and "We" pronouns are preferred in business correspondence because they indicate a warm and personal tone. Use "I" when referring to yourself, and use "We" when referring to the company. In other words, the reader will feel more comfortable reading correspondence from a friendly person than from a building or a company.

ex. - As you know, we have newly opened another branch in your locality. We wish you to enjoy our services with a relaxed care free way.

- We are pleased to learn that

- We are happy to

- We appreciate receiving your reply so promptly.

c. Show good intention and sincerity. The writer may show his/her sincerity by admitting mistakes or errors willingly. Do not use any impolite language or inappropriate vocabulary that may create misunderstanding.

ex. - Thank you for

- You are entirely right in saying

- You were very thoughtful to

- Certainly, you have every right to expect better service, and I

- I agree that three weeks is too long to wait for your new shipment, but I

d. Be correct in every detail. Be careful not to make any typographical errors or any messy corrections. Consult any reference sources as necessary to avoid incomplete or inaccurate information. In other words, be aware that effective

business correspondence creates a favorable first impression. Remember that the neatness of the typing, the quality of stationery, the attractiveness of the letterhead and the cleanliness of the whole correspondence count.

e. Ensure that your correspondence is well paragraphed and flows smoothly. Follow the basic principles of paragraph writing and outline your thoughts before beginning to write any business correspondence. Be aware of the correct usage of connecting words, or any expressions that can serve as a transition of your thoughts.

The following is a list of useful words of transition:

accordingly	also	anyhow	as a result
at any rate	at the same time	besides	consequently
finally	for example	furthermore	hence
however	in addition	indeed	in fact
in other words	instead	in the first place	likewise
meanwhile	moreover	nevertheless	next
of course	on the contrary	on the other hand	otherwise
still	then	therefore	thus

f. Use active voice in sentence construction. Sentences with active voice construction convey a strong meaning; while, the passive voice construction weakens the meaning of the sentences. In business letters, it is important that the writer

provide the reader with a clear idea of who should take the action and what action he or she is referring to.

ex. - Passive: The shipment will be delivered from our factory on Saturday.

- Active: We will deliver the shipment from our factory on Saturday.

- Passive: It is suggested that the order be filled immediately.

- Active: Our manager suggest that we fill the order immediately.

- Passive: The payment must be sent to us at once; otherwise, legal action will have to be taken.

- Active: You must send the payment to us at once; otherwise, we will have to take legal action.

Activity 3 A

Rewrite each sentence to be reader-slanted.

1. We want you to come to our spring sale.

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2. Please give me a job so I can support my family.

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.....

3. We need your order as soon as possible.

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.....

4. Please send us \$5, so we will be able to send you our magazine.

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.....

5. We are opening another branch here.

.....
.....

Activity 3 B

Rewrite these sentences to show goodwill and courtesy.

1. Your letter lacked the information we needed.

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2. It is too late for you to receive the discount.

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.....

3. We can't grant you credit until you have lived here longer.

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.....

4. We have lost your letter, write to us again.

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.....

5. Everybody else's washing machine is giving good service.

.....
.....

Activity 3 C

Rewrite the following passive sentences as active sentences.

1. A copy of our latest catalog is being sent to you today.

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.....

2. It should be noted that the shipment will be sent from our factory on March 1.

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3. The canceled check was returned by us to you on Friday by registered mail.

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4. Delivery of the goods can be made in three days' time.

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.....

5. A comment on the company's buying practices has already been made in this report.

.....
.....

4. Positiveness

A writer of business correspondence must take care to avoid using negative statements in the writing. Negative terms may imply criticism, resentment, or both. To convey goodwill and a willingness to serve your customers, you should try to use only positive terms.

ex. Negative: You didn't tell us where to send the consignment.

Positive: Please tell us where we should send you the consignment.

Negative: We cannot grant you credit.

Positive: It is our policy to grant credit to customers who live in this area for at least one year.

Negative: Do not ship any large-sized cartons again.

Positive: Please send us only small-sized cartons.

Negative: You failed to install the equipment properly.

Positive: We would appreciate your reinstalling the equipment.

Negative: You forgot to indicate the sizes you needed.

Positive: Please let us know the sizes you need.

Activity 4

Rewrite the following negative statements into positive ones.

1. Do not neglect to send my order on time.

.....
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2. Because of the strike, we cannot deliver your order by train.

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.....

3. I have never been able to understand your credit policy.

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.....

4. Do not take shortcuts at the cost of quality.

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.....

5. Do not lose customers by spending too little time with them.

.....
.....

5. Grammar Review: Definite and Indefinite Articles

A good writer of business correspondence must master fundamental grammatical elements in order to convey an effective message. The basic element we will concentrate on in this chapter is the usage of definite (the) and indefinite (a, an) articles. It is important that you review the rules of using definite and indefinite articles before doing the following exercises.

Activity 5 A

Put a, an, the, or blank in the appropriate place.

1. Ann is looking for job in big company in order to get high pay.
2. I'd like to speak to manager, please. I have appointment at 1.00 p.m.
3. Frank is supervisor in department store in city center next to City Hall.
4. George has part-time job. He works three mornings week.
5. I've applied for position in company in Netherlands.
6. president of our company is staying at Station Hotel near Tower of London on Thames.

7. Every morning, John buys newspaper to read business news and entertainment section.
8. language of social business letter must strike delicate balance between personal and professional, friendly and formal.
9. Minutes are written record of everything that transpires at meeting.
10. Members of Legal Department will meet tomorrow, August 19, to make decision on new secretary.

Activity 5 B

Put a, an, the, or blank in the following letter.

Dear Ms. Jones:

I'm writing to you on behalf of (1) Managing Director, to inform you that you have been accepted as (2) candidate for (3) post of (4) bilingual secretary. Please come to our office for (5) interview at 9.30 a.m. on 18 June. Prior to (6) interview, there will be (7) Italian and (8) French translation test.

I've enclosed (9) map showing you how to get here. There are many trains from (10) Downtown Station. Get off in front of (11) Memorial Hospital next to (12) Post Office. Our office is between (13) Park Street Church and (14) Town Hall. Please telephone me at 915-0230 to confirm that you will be able to attend, or to arrange (15) new date if this is not convenient.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Jane Adams

Jane Adams

Personnel Manager

Enclosure

The language of business writing is unique in its conciseness, completeness, effectiveness and positiveness. The writer of any business correspondence must learn how to choose words or sentences that convey the meaning clearly and effectively. In other words, the language of business writing is an everyday language with a conversational tone. In addition to a careful selection of wording, the writer must master the basic grammatical usage in order to write smoothly, and meaningfully as well.

Writing well is a matter of conviction. You learn in school by exercises, of course; and exercises are best when taken as such, as body-builders, flections and extensions for the real contests ahead. But when you are convinced that what you write has meaning, that it has meaning for you—and not in a lukewarm, hypothetical way, but truly—then your writing will stretch its wings and have the whole wide world in range. For writing is simply a graceful and articulate extension of the best that is in you. Writing well is not easy. It does not come naturally, though your natural endowments will certainly help. It takes unending practice . . .

Sheridan Baker

The Complete Stylist, 10.