Topic
**Professional &
Personal Development**

Subtopic
Communications
Skills

THE
GREAT
COURSES®

Written Communications
Being Heard and Understood

Course Guidebook

Professor Allison Friederichs
University of Denver, University College

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Allison Friederichs, PhD

Associate Teaching Professor
University of Denver, University College

Allison Friederichs is an Associate Teaching Professor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Denver, University College. She earned her PhD in Communication Studies from the University of Denver. Dr. Friederichs has taught communications courses for more than 20 years and has earned the University College's Master Teacher designation for continued professional development.

In the academic sector, Dr. Friederichs serves as a curriculum design consultant. She delivers keynote presentations and workshops on how the adult brain learns, brain-based learning for teaching and curriculum development, and brain-based learning for improved communication. Her keynote, workshop, and curriculum design clients have included the University of the Pacific, the Montana University System, the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP), and the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA). Dr. Friederichs has also been published in academic and trade publications, including *UNBOUND*, *TD* magazine, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

In addition to her role in academia, Dr. Friederichs provides training to private-sector companies, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations on how the adult brain learns, focusing on training, business writing, and communication skills. Her current and former clients include the Denver Public Library, Pinnacol Assurance, American Innovations, the US Department of Housing

and Urban Development, and the government of Douglas County, Colorado. Dr. Friederichs also served her community through her position on the board of directors for Freedom Service Dogs of America.

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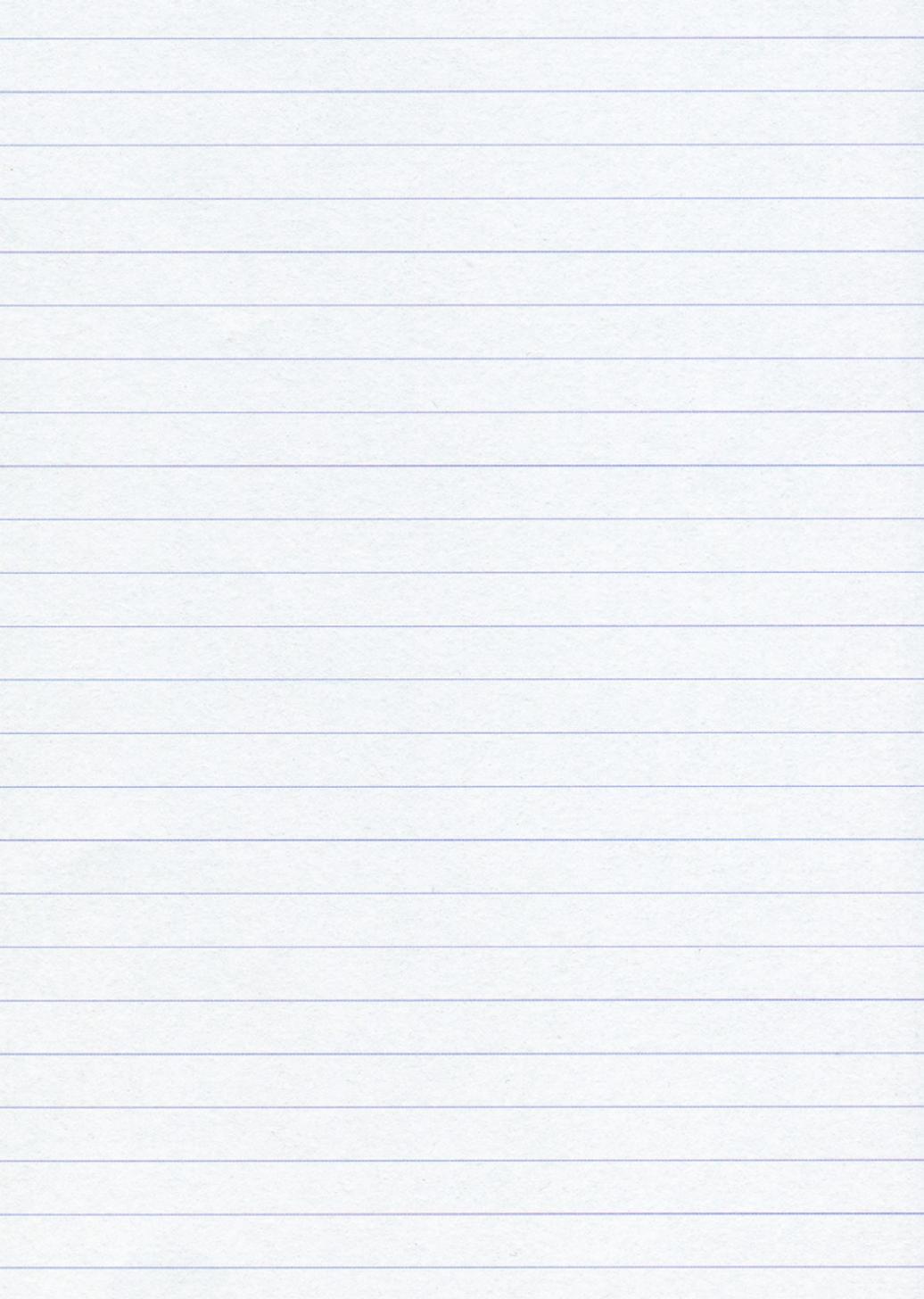
Written Communications: Being Heard and Understood

This course aims to make you a more impactful writer. It is interactive, and it will ask you to examine your writing habits and engage in activities to perfect your writing skills so that others see you as an effective communicator through your writing.

The course begins with an exploration into what makes for impactful writing, and it then moves into a self-assessment of your current writing knowledge and skills. This informs a discussion of a new habit you'll need to form to become a more impactful writer.

Next comes an exploration of the intersection of language and culture. This exploration offers an understanding of the holistic nature of language and the way in which language and culture affect one another—an understanding that is critical to becoming a stronger writer. This information will offer you some surprises about language, particularly its history and unique usage over time and across cultures.

From there, the course moves to skills, beginning with the all-important focus on punctuation. The punctuation-focused lecture will teach you the specifics of punctuation in fun and interactive ways to ensure that you understand how to use punctuation correctly and why it's used the way it is. This will cement your learning so that you never again have to ask, "Where does this comma go?"

After that, the course dives into grammar and usage lectures. These lectures will focus on cementing your knowledge of which words to use, where to use them, and how to use them correctly.

The next four lectures cover the ACE business-writing process. ACE stands for analyze, craft, and edit. Examined first is the analysis phase, which is a step that most writers overlook. That is a mistake that often leads to writing errors and miscommunication. The analysis phase in the ACE process can and should be applied to documents of any length.

The next lecture explores the C in the ACE process: craft. You'll learn why the focus is on the verb *craft* as opposed to *write*. And you'll learn how to leverage the information gleaned from the analysis phase to craft a well-written document that accomplishes what you want it to.

After that comes the final phase in the ACE process, which is editing. Editing is much more than simply proofreading, and you'll learn why. This lecture will teach you how to edit your documents to ensure that once they leave your fingertips, you can have the utmost confidence that they represent you and the quality you want to be associated with and that they also accomplish what you intended in writing them.

The next lecture focuses specifically on applying the newly learned ACE process to two types of documents: business memos and newsletter articles. You'll put the ACE process to work to cement your understanding of how to engage the process and to experience how the ACE process can be applied to any type of document.

The final two lectures of the course move to slightly more advanced topics. The course looks first at the topic of standards and styles

when writing for organizations. It also examines consistency of voice—that is, ensuring that when you write different types of documents for different audiences, your voice remains consistent. Additionally, the concept of consistency in voice applies to how to collaborate with others on a document and ensure the document has one consistent voice throughout.

The concluding lecture explores how you can use writing to build stronger relationships, in particular when emailing. So much of today's communication takes place via email that many people with whom you communicate only know you through your emails. Therefore, if you wish to be a masterful communicator, you must leverage the power of a concept called communication competencies to ensure that your emails accomplish tasks and help build strong relationships with their recipients.

All in all, this course will afford you an understanding of the power of words and the skill to use them impactfully.

1

Impactful Writing

The vast majority of the documents you write in a professional setting are written with a goal in mind. This lecture begins the work of examining how to craft professional documents that achieve what you want them to achieve and that, in turn, cultivate your reputation as an effective communicator. The lecture does so by providing three self-assessment activities that provide substantial benefits, including clarity about improvement opportunities.

Activity: Identify Your Barriers

The first activity involves creating a list of what you think your current barriers to producing impactful writing are. To identify these barriers, imagine that you are sitting down to write a professional document. Think about your writing process. What are your challenges? What are your roadblocks? If you're having difficulty identifying these, asking yourself the following questions about common barriers may help:

• Are you unsure of how and when to use technical jargon effectively?

• Do you feel a lack of confidence in your writing skills?

• Do you feel pressure or stress when you have to write something important?

• Have you cultivated some bad writing habits over the years, such as writing when you're emotional or relying too much on spell check?

• Do you experience frustration over having to revise or explain things because they weren't written well the first time?

• Do you procrastinate when you have something to write? Does this result in hurrying to finish a document, causing stress or frustration?

• Do you feel a general lack of knowledge about how to write well?

• If pressed, would you say that you just hate writing?

Next, take a minute or two to consider whether there are any other weaknesses or barriers to your writing that were not in that list of questions. Finally, create a second list. It will remain blank for the moment, but you can fill it in as you go through this course. Helpful questions for the second list include:

• What weak spots or challenges did you discover in taking this course?

• What did you discover you've been doing right all along?

• Was there something that you knew was right, but you couldn't quite explain why until taking this course?

By keeping these lists, at the end of the course you'll be able to see how much you've progressed regarding your challenges and how you've built on the knowledge you already had coming in.

Technology and the Pace of Life

Two other common barriers to impactful writing are technology and the pace of life. In fact, these barriers are informed by one another. Research bears this out. For example, one study found that the pace of life in urban areas, where technology use is more prolific, is much faster than in rural areas.

Technology creates a barrier in the sense that people seem to feel comfortable "hiding" behind the electronic medium. A writer may never meet the recipient of his or her writing face-to-face, so there is less chance of having to face consequences if something doesn't land well with that person. Additionally, the electronic medium in which most people write feels informal. Individuals sometimes report that it doesn't seem to call for attention to good writing.

More specific to time than technology, people seem to be busier and busier. In fact, the Economic Policy Institute reports that since 1973, the average American's productivity has gone up more than 70 percent. Because people are busier, they typically attend to more things with less attention to detail. It's no surprise that people may feel frustrated by the short attention spans of their readers, and they may use a hurried schedule as a reason to overlook attention to detail in their writing.

Changing the Lens

Despite the aforementioned challenges, there is some good news: To become a truly impactful writer, you need only to cultivate two new habits, one of which this lecture covers. The first new habit you'll need to cultivate is to change your lens. Impactful communication

isn't about you; it's about your reader. To be an effective writer, you must shift your focus from yourself to your reader.

Impactful writing involves changing the focus from what you want to say to what your audience needs to know. The best way to change your focus is to change your lens, which means shifting your thinking.

The writer's intention is irrelevant in writing, especially in today's fast-moving society. The reader's perception is his or her reality. No amount of after-the-fact explaining will ever change a person's first impression about a written document, especially if it was negative.

Activity: Shifting Your Perspective

This lecture's second activity asks you to put yourself in the reader's shoes. Try to recall the last time you read something that didn't sit well with you. For example, was it an email from a loved one or a colleague? Was it an opinion piece or a news article? Pinpoint a specific example.

Once you have done so, identify exactly which words didn't sit right with you. Next, identify your specific reaction to those words. Based on this reaction, is it safe to say you assumed negative intent on the part of the writer? Alternatively, perhaps you didn't consider intent at all and focused only on how their message landed with you.

For a moment, set aside your reaction and assume positive intent on the part of the writer. Under that assumption, imagine two possible positive motives the writer had for writing what they did. Consider if that was difficult for you. Did you resist the idea that the writer's motive was different from what you perceived?

This activity is an exercise in empathy. It is possible that the writer's intention was positive, but you likely didn't assume that when the message landed badly with you. This is a perception error that most, if not all, humans make. It's called the fundamental attribution error. This concept suggests that we tend to assign deliberate intent to others' actions but consider extenuating circumstances when considering our own.

The best writers can do is to try to avoid being on the receiving end of this bias. This means shifting the lens toward the reader's perspective from the start. The reader's perspective is where you must begin every single time you write. From this day forward, you should never again endeavor to write what you want to say. Instead, strive to write what your reader needs to know.

Activity: Review Your Writing

A helpful activity for examining your tone and approach is to examine 10 examples of your professional writing. Try to find different types of examples, such as reports, proposals, emails, and so on. Also try to find examples written to different audiences.

There are two ways to approach this activity. The first option is to give these 10 writing samples to a neutral third party and ask: How would you receive these? Don't ask the third party to edit your writing. Instead, focus on the overall approach and the resulting tone. How does it come across? Is it terse or too wordy? Is the main point unclear? In other words, request some general feedback about his or her first impressions as the hypothetical recipient.

If you don't have someone you can ask to do this, a self-review is also an option. You'll have to put yourself in your reader's shoes for this exercise. One way to help do that is to print out the writing

samples rather than read them on the same computer from which you sent them. Then, ask yourself the aforementioned questions.

Whether you or someone else reviews your writing samples, take note of the evaluation. What's your general approach? Do you dance around your point or obfuscate it? What about your tone? Could it be read as terse (or even rude)? Keep in mind that communicating professionally means putting your reader-centric lenses on each and every time you write for a professional context.

Questions to Consider

1. Since we talk about the challenge of cultivating new habits in this lecture, it might be worthwhile to consider habits you've successfully cultivated and perhaps some you tried but were unsuccessful at cultivating. What lessons learned from both groups can you extrapolate to cultivating the new habit of changing your lens?

2. Since changing your lens means more proactively considering your reader, are there are other areas in your life where you've had to become more focused on someone else rather than yourself? How might your experience there be applied to this context?

2

How Language Mirrors Culture

**H**ave you ever stopped to consider the intrinsic relationship between language and culture? Their relationship is at the same time both symmetrical and dependent. Language and culture complement one another and simultaneously rely on and shape each other. That relationship is the subject of this lecture, which begins by considering an age-old issue about the nature of language: the descriptive/prescriptive debate.

Descriptive versus Prescriptive

The words *descriptive* and *prescriptive* are the adjectives of the root words meaning, respectively, "to describe" and "to prescribe." In the grammar and linguistic worlds, these terms are surprisingly contentious.

Prescriptivists argue that there are rules about how language should be used; grammatical rules exist to tell people how to use words and write sentences. Descriptivists argue that language morphs and changes over time in tandem with and/or in response to culture. Because culture is always shifting, so is language. In this view, it is simply the job of linguists and grammarians to capture how language is being used—not to prescribe how it should be used.

For example, think about the dictionary. Many people think of the dictionary as the source for correct information about our language: the correct spelling, parts of speech, and usage of words. Thus, the assumption is that the dictionary—and its authors—are prescriptivists.
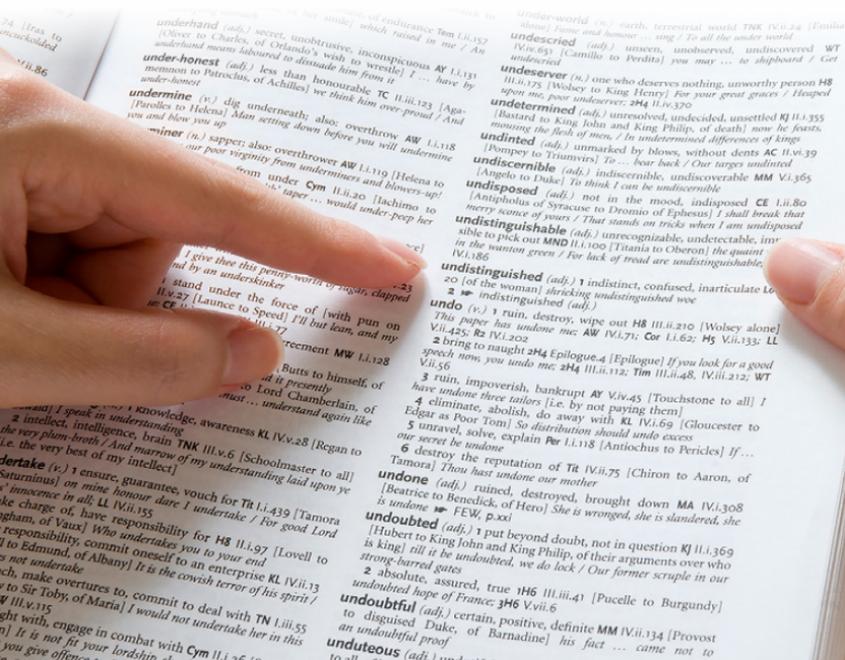
However, the dictionary is in fact a reflection of the usage of common words. Each year, new words make it into the dictionary. For instance, in 2017, the dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster added words such as *ghosted*, meaning "to cut off all contact with someone," and *binge-watching*, meaning "to watch many or all episodes (of a TV series) in rapid succession."

The average speaker only uses about 1.75 percent of the approximately 171,000 words available in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. If that sounds dismal, you may be a prescriptivist. However, in what sounds like a more descriptivist argument, linguistics professor Stuart Webb argues that people only need to know 800 root words to carry on everyday conversations and 3,000 words to understand more complex things like articles and television shows. That sounds like a descriptive argument. The prescriptive/descriptive debate is the grammarians' version of nature versus nurture. The debate is constantly present.

Additionally, certain words meant very different things decades or centuries ago. For example, the word *nice* used to mean "ignorant," and the word *vulgar* meant "ordinary." These examples demonstrate that language does change. It does so as a reflection of—and as reflected by—our culture.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and Changes over Time

For many people, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis brings to mind the well-known example of the fact that Eskimos have so many different words for snow. However, that is not exactly correct. It's not the case that Eskimos have so many words for snow; it's that they have so many words for types of snow, including wet snow, light snow, big-flake snow, and so on.

Even though some people oversimplify it, the example does do an adequate job of illustrating the essential perspective of this theory. The gist of the theory is that it's not just that different cultures have different languages; rather, it's that the language reflects the culture. There is an intrinsic, ever-present, symbiotic relationship between language and culture.

The intersection between language and culture is not simply relegated to the fact of whether a particular culture has many terms for a concept that's important to them. This relationship is also illustrated in syntax—that is, how words are used and how sentences are formed.

All cultures and subcultures demonstrate the language/culture intersection. Religious groups, fans of different music or literary genres, political groups, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and so on all have unique subcultures and symbiotic languages.

Regarding how language morphs over time, it's interesting to look at some of the ways in which US culture—and thus also its language—has changed across the years. First, consider the Industrial Revolution. This is an interesting period through which to examine how culture is reflected in language use. This was a time, of course, of great advancements in science and technology. New words entered into the vernacular, including *camera*, *ambulance*, and *photograph*.

Later, the 1950s were a time of concern over political relations with other countries. People asked if the country was in danger of nuclear war and if there were spies and traitors about. This time saw many neologisms, including *space race* and *fallout*.

As a final example, the language of the 1980s was quite colorful. This time saw the word *like* emerge as verbal filler. Another example of language from the 1980s is the term *yuppie*, which today is understood to mean 'young urban professional.' When it was coined, though, it specifically referred to a 'young urban professional in a well-paying job.'

Language Today

Today, the interdependence between language and culture has led to fairly technology-heavy, short-attention-span culture. It is reflected in what people write and the way they write. Though there are exceptions, insights are shared and consumed in bits and bytes more so than letters and prose.

There is a delicate balance that writers have to walk—especially when writing for professional contexts—between using language that doesn't damage a professional relationship but also gets to the point a little more quickly than perhaps some writers are wont to do.

Activity: Changing Uses

To get a feel for the shifting use of language in culture, go to a library. Try to find two articles on a similar topic from different eras. For example, you could find reviews of presidential candidates, or pieces on the state of the economy. You might find one article from 2017 and one from 1985.

Once you find the new and old articles on the same topic, look to see what differences you can find between the two articles. Jot down whether there are words used in the older article that are less common in today's lexicon and, thus, not used in the newer article. Alternatively, see if there are words used in the newer one that hadn't

yet made emerged or were perhaps used differently in the older one. Compare the articles and note the differences.

Ask yourself: What changes in our culture between then and now can you note, and how do they play into the differences in language you found? For example, if you found an article on real estate, perhaps you noted differences in how housing and housing prices were referred to across different eras based on the culture in each.

Questions to Consider

1. Now that you've learned about prescriptivism and descriptivism, where do you fall on the spectrum? Does your answer surprise you?

2. What examples can you generate of subcultures with their own unique language? What connections can you draw between their language and their cultures?

3. Besides the ones covered in the lecture, what idioms or clichés can you think of that are uniquely American? What about those you've heard from other cultures? What do these idioms communicate about their respective cultures?

3

The Importance of Word Choice

People use words all the time, every day, mostly without giving them much thought at all. This lecture examines the specific skill of choosing the right words for the context. That skill is important because words are the most basic building blocks of communication. The lecture begins by making an important distinction between the connotative meaning of words and their denotative meaning. This comparison will engender understanding of where the meanings of words come from. Then, it looks at a framework called the four Cs, which will give you the tools you need to pick the right words every time.

Denotation and Connotation

Every word has two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation. Denotation is, simply put, the dictionary definition of a word. However, even the dictionary definition of a word isn't written in stone: Meaning is culturally constructed, and meanings of words can shift across times and cultures.

Connotation adds even more complexity. Connotation is both the implied and inferred definition of a word based on how a person is using it. This creates even more for the writer to consider: The connotation of a written word can be impacted by elements such as current context, social factors, demographics and/or personal experiences of the reader, and so on.

The connotative meaning is not inherent in a word. The very same word may have different connotations for different people at different times. Therefore, writers need to make conscious choices about their words.

The Four Cs

The four Cs framework suggests that the words you choose when you communicate should be:
- Correct.
- Concrete.
- Clear.
- Contextually appropriate.

The Four Cs: Correct

The first of the four Cs stands for correct—that is, it's important to use the correct word. People don't always do this. Malapropisms are an example. They occur when a person used a word that sounds like the word he or she means but isn't. Yogi Berra was famous

for this; for example, he once said, "Texas gets a lot of electrical votes." (He meant electoral votes).

Choosing the correct word also means thinking about where it must be placed to communicate the intended meaning. Even the correct word, incorrectly placed, can create a different meaning or miscommunication. For example, consider the difference between "I have to go meet a new employee" and "I have a new employee to go meet." The latter sounds much more positive.

The Four Cs: Concrete

The next of the four Cs is concrete. One of the best ways to choose the right word is to understand the difference between concrete and abstract word choices. Using abstract words can leave a reader unsure and frustrated.

Choosing a concrete word means picking one with less possible variance in the connotative meaning. For example, if a person says, "I just heard my dog bark," it's fairly obvious that he or she is referring to the sound a dog makes rather than the exterior of a tree.

However, sometimes words can be abstract even within the context of the sentence. For example, if two university colleagues agree to meet at the "new building," there may be confusion if there are multiple new buildings on campus. These examples illustrate that when you write, it's important to be specific with your word choice.

The Four Cs: Clear

The next C is clarity. There are three things to keep in mind to help you write clearly: writing concisely, avoiding redundancy, and avoiding jargon.

Writing Concisely

To write concisely, forget the flourish. Say exactly what you mean. Most people will not take the time to look up a word they're unfamiliar with or respond to ask for clarification. They will often simply move on, which means you risk your written document not accomplishing what you want it to. The best way to avoid that is to write as simply as possible. It's also important to get to the point. Readers have little patience for long, drawn-out written passages.

Generally speaking, economy of words is the name of the game. Take these examples from the context of a real estate company flipping houses:

> The planting of trees and flowers in the backyard will really be pretty expensive.

| Landscaping the backyard will be expensive.

Those two mean the same thing, but the second uses fewer words. Context is important here. If you're dealing with a difficult or sensitive subject—delivering bad news, for example—it may behoove you to temper your message with a little cushion.

As a quick visit to the opposite end of the spectrum, it's not uncommon for many people to respond to various requests and inquiries with the one-word response: "Sure." This often leaves the recipient with feelings of ambiguity. This course recommends choosing slightly less economy in this instance. You can avoid the need for relational repair by adding only two more words and replying, "It's my pleasure."

Avoiding Redundancy

The second way to ensure that you're clear is to avoid redundancy. The urge to repeat something for emphasis or to make a point is strong, but it is not necessary in written communication. It never has the same effect as it does in spoken word. In fact, it has exactly the opposite effect. From the writer's perspective, adding redundant words is often simply a sign—or a result—of a lack of confidence in one's writing.

When writing, pay attention to unnecessary repetition. Avoid using two or more similar words. An example of redundancy is this: "I will look over the contract in extremely fine detail." Additionally, if you find yourself using phrases like "said another way," then that is a sign you're being redundant.

Avoiding Jargon

The third and final tip for being clear is to avoid jargon. Sometimes, jargon can serve a purpose for specific groups. For example, medical professionals may use the term *onset* rather than *start* or *beginning*; this is intentional to illustrate a specific kind of start—that of a disease or medical issue. Other times, jargon can help create a sense of community.

However, jargon often has much less purpose and is rather empty. Some jargon carries little weight or concrete meaning. For example, saying, "Can you unpack that for me?" involves jargon that usually only academics use: the term *unpack*. It is a more complicated way to say, "Can you explain what you mean?"

The Four Cs: Contextually Appropriate

Jargon is not in and of itself problematic. You just have to consider how appropriate it is for the context, which leads the final of the four Cs: contextually appropriate. If you don't consider choosing the right word for the particular context, the risks can be much greater than misunderstanding. The wrong choice can have a profound impact on your professional relationships.

Each culture and subculture has its own language, and everyone participates in numerous subcultures within a given day. Thus, it's important for everyone to be selective about choosing contextually appropriate language numerous times every single day.

For example, if a subordinate employee says to his or her supervisor, "I wish you had run this by me first," the intention may have been to communicate that the subordinate employee could have helped. However, the inference made by the supervisor could be that the

tone was entitled and potentially insolent—not an appropriate way to communicate with one's supervisor.

Sometimes, failing to consider the context can lead to choosing a word that is correct in meaning but wrong for the context. An example is using the word *juvenile* when the writer really should use *young*. Although they're technically synonyms, *juvenile* has come to be seen as somewhat pejorative. If one is juvenile, one is immature.

Writing to be contextually appropriate means considering many things regarding your audience. When you write, you should place yourself in the context in which your message will be read—not the context in which it is written.

Questions to Consider

1. What examples can you think of from your own life of times when the right or wrong word choice had a noticeable impact?

2. What examples can you generate of a word that might be correct in one context but not another?

3. How would you gauge your ability to write concisely?

4

Mastering Punctuation

Punctuation is a challenging but important facet of writing. This lecture covers some of the most misunderstood rules of punctuation, including issues around commas, semicolons, quotation marks, and dashes, as applied to standard edited American English.

Comma Usage

One rule applies to the vast majority of comma usage. When thinking about whether to use a comma, you need to think about the essential elements of the sentence—that is, which words are essential for the meaning of that sentence and which words are nice to have but not essential.

If a word or phrase is essential to the sentence, do not use commas around the word or phrase. The absence of commas indicates that everything in that sentence is critical to its meaning. Thus, the opposite is also true: If a word or phrase is not essential and simply adds detail, set it off with commas.

For example, take this sentence:

> Judith's favorite movies, *Casablanca* and *The Maltese Falcon*, both star Humphrey Bogart.

This is correct as written. Removing the names of the movies from the sentence would not change its fundamental meaning. Contrast that with this example:

> Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, is his best one.

This is incorrect as written. In this case, the reader needs to know which play is his best one. Having commas there would indicate that you can remove "*Romeo and Juliet*" without changing the meaning of the sentence. However, it would make no sense to say, "Shakespeare's play is his best one." In this case, it is necessary to omit the commas:

> Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* is his best one.

That versus Which

A common incorrect belief is that the words *which* and *that* are interchangeable. If the phrase is integral to the sentence (so you are not setting it off with commas), use *that*. If the phrase is not integral to the sentence (so you are setting it off with commas), use *which*.

Additional Comma Usage Tips

There are a few additional comma practices to round out your comma-use knowledge. This first such rule is this: Use a comma between two independent clauses joined by coordinating or correlative conjunctions. An independent clause is a group of words that could stand on its own as a sentence. When two of them are joined by a conjunction such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *neither*, or *nor*, use a comma before the conjunction. Here is an example:

> I used to run alone, but now I have a training partner.

On the opposite side of that coin, do not use a comma with a compound predicate—that is, one subject with two verbs. For example:

> I will replace the lightbulb and go to Home Depot to buy some more.

Another rule is this: When an independent clause—that is, a complete sentence—is preceded by a fairly long dependent clause, separate those with a comma. Consider this example:

> Before we move all the boxes from the garage to the attic, we should check them for spiders.

It's easy to spot the part that could stand alone: "we should check them for spiders." If the dependent clause is at least as long as the independent clause, you're probably safe to choose the comma.

Here is a third rule: Separate two adjectives that modify the same noun if the word *and* can be used between them without altering the meaning. For example:

> I'm lucky to have a supportive, easygoing boss.

It would make just as much sense for the person to say that his or her boss is "supportive and easygoing," so the comma is appropriate.

However, do not use a comma between cumulative adjectives—that is, a situation involving two adjectives in which the first adjective describes the following adjective (or the idea of it) and the noun that follows them. Here is an example:

> My dad still has his old leather glove from high school.

In this case, *old* clearly refers to both the glove and the leather. It would change the meaning write it this way: "old and leather glove." Therefore, do not use a comma.

Semicolons

Semicolons can be understood with two main rules. The first is to use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses not separated by a conjunction. For example, this sentence does have a conjunction in the form of *but*:

> Sheila and Davide used to own a sailboat, but now they are landlubbers.

However, one could also write the sentence as follows:

> Sheila and Davide used to own a sailboat; now they are landlubbers.

Neither option is more or less correct. It's a matter of choice. However, if you do not have two independent clauses, do not use a semicolon. This, for example, is incorrect:

> My cat, Petunia, is allergic to flowers; particularly roses.

"Particularly roses" is a dependent clause. This calls for a comma instead.

The other semicolon rule is that when you have items in a series, you must use a semicolon to separate the items in the series if one or more of those items contains a comma. Here is an example of the rule at work:

> This course will cover ethical paradigms, including utilitarianism and moral relativism; communication theories; and leadership approaches.

This punctuation tells the reader that the phrase "including utilitarianism and moral relativism" is not one of the major items in the series of what the course will cover. Rather, it relates directly to ethical paradigms.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are this lecture's next subject. Punctuation is one common sticking point here. Commas and periods go inside the closing quotation marks. Meanwhile, semicolons go outside. Here are some illustrations of those rules in action:

> Jackson has made the assertion that "all lead supervisors should receive a raise," but I don't agree with him.
>
> He said that "the weather was nice."
>
> Mark Twain said, "humor is mankind's greatest blessing"; I think it's cupcakes.

Exclamation points and question marks are tricky, but the consideration is logical. It simply depends on which part of the sentence is excited or interrogative: Is it the overall sentence, or is it the quoted material? Consider this sentence:

> Georgina asked, "could we invite Luke to the meeting?" once the meeting had already begun.

Here, the question mark goes before the closing quotation mark because Georgina's words are a question. However, what if you as the writer are asking the question? For example, look at the following sentence:

> Did Georgina actually say, "invite Luke to the meeting"?

In this case, you are asking the question, not Georgina; therefore, the question mark goes outside the closing quotation mark. Treat exclamation points the same way.

Dashes

Dashes are this lecture's final topic. It is helpful to know the distinction between hyphens, en dashes, and em dashes. The most obvious difference among these three dashes is their length. The hyphen is the shortest, followed by the en dash and then the em dash.

An em dash is used to indicate an interruption in thought or speech. Many people understand that one should use some kind of dash to interrupt a thought, but they mistakenly use a hyphen rather than an em dash. Here are em dashes at work:

> Because Lee has opened his third new business—his first two were massive successes—he has a stable financial future.

You may also use an em dash to set off or emphasize an insertion at the end of a sentence. But in that case, use only one:

> Lee has opened his third new business—his first two were massive successes.

There is often more than one correct way to write something. The preceding sample sentence illustrates that. Instead of an em dash, you could use a period or semicolon, or you could put that phrase in parentheses. The difference is emphasis: A dash indicates the most emphasis. A semicolon indicates middle-of-the-road emphasis. And parentheses indicate the least emphasis, treating the enclosed information almost like an afterthought. A period breaks the information into two separate thoughts.

Next up is the en dash, which is not used terribly often. It's used primarily to separate numbers in date ranges. For example, on your

resume, if you want to say you attended college from 1989 to 1993, you would show those dates with an en dash: 1989–1993.

However, do not use the en dash to replace the words *to* or *and* in a sentence. These are correct as is, for example:

> World War II took place from 1939 to 1945.

> The event had between 100 and 200 attendees.

The hyphen, meanwhile, has some uses that are commonly understood; for example, use a hyphen to divide a word with more than one syllable when it falls at the end of a typewritten line. People are also typically aware that the hyphen is used with words that have prefixes that are separate from their root words, such as *ex-husband*.

However, as language changes, many words that used to be hyphenated become accepted as one word. When in doubt, consult the dictionary.

A common misuse of the hyphen is its absence in compound modifiers, which are made when two adjectives work together to modify the noun that follows them. Here is an example:

> Ten-page report.

Only hyphenate terms like this when they serve as an adjective for a noun that follows. To conclude the lecture, here is a trickier example of hyphen usage:

> Geospatial planning is a time- and labor-intensive task.

Here, the term *geospatial planning* does not call for a hyphen. It is a noun phrase, not a modifier. *Labor-intensive* calls for a hyphen because *labor* and *intensive* work together to modify *task*.

The term *time* also needs a hyphen. This is sometimes called a split compound modifier. Without a hyphen, *time* would look like a standalone noun and cause confusion. Therefore, placing a hyphen after the first and second parts of the compound modifier correctly indicates that the task is intensive in terms of both time and labor.

Mastering Noun and Pronoun Grammar

This lecture focuses on the formal rules of grammar. In particular, it looks at capitalization issues with proper nouns. It also examines subject-verb agreement, pronouns, possessives, and dangling and misplaced modifiers.

Capitalization and Proper Nouns

The first topic for this lecture is capitalization. Among the most common capitalization mistakes are those related to family nouns and job titles. In both cases, only capitalize these words when you're using them as the name or part of the name. Here is an example:

> My father worked alongside the chief executive officer as well as President Rankin.

The only name or title here that calls for capitalization is President Rankin. You would not capitalize *father* in this case because the pronoun *my* indicates that you're simply using *father* as a noun, not as his name. By the same token, you would not capitalize *chief executive officer* because it's not being used as the name. However, with *President Rankin*, the title is being used as the name; therefore, you would capitalize.

Fields of study are another common sticking point. For example, consider this sentence:

> The first course I took for my archaeology degree, Archaeology 101, solidified my love for the field.

Always capitalize specific names of courses, such as *Archaeology 101* above. However, when referring to the general field of study—in this case, *archaeology*—do not capitalize that. The names of seasons are not proper nouns, either, and do not call for capitalization.

Subject-Verb Agreement

The next concept for this lecture is subject-verb agreement. The term *subject-verb agreement* means that if you have one subject, you must have a singular verb; if you have two or more subjects, you must have a plural verb. Here is an example of a subject-verb agreement error from a headline:

> Frequency of Cases Prompt KK Hospital to Launch Own Study.

Ask yourself: What is it that actually prompts the hospital to launch its own study? Is it the cases, or is it the frequency of cases? Here, *frequency* is the subject with which the verb needs to agree, and it doesn't make sense to say, "the frequency prompt." This headline should have read:

> Frequency of Cases Prompts KK Hospital to Launch Own Study

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

The nouns to which pronouns refer are called antecedents, and antecedents can either precede or follow the pronoun. There are essentially two common pronoun-antecedent issues. First, just like subjects and verbs, pronouns and their antecedents must agree in number. This is a case in point:

> If anyone wants to get ahead in business, they have to build strong networking skills.

In this sentence, the plural pronoun (*they*) does not agree with the antecedent (*anyone*), which is singular. It would be correct to write that sentence as either of these options:

> If anyone wants to get ahead in business, he or she has to build strong networking skills.

> If you want to get ahead in business, you have to build strong networking skills.

The second issue to pay attention to regarding pronoun-antecedent agreement is to be sure your antecedent reference is always clear. For example, take this sentence:

> Jim and Bill prepared the report together, but he wasn't happy with the final product.

It is not evident to whom *he* refers. It could be Jim, Bill, or a third party. In this case, you would want to replace the *he* with a specific name.

Pronoun Case

Pronoun case refers to the pronoun's function in the sentence. There are three types of case: possessive, subjective, and objective. The subjective case indicates that the pronoun is the subject of the sentence and is typically the person or thing doing the action. It comes before the verb (at least in statements, though not in questions). The subjective pronouns are *I*, *he*, *she*, *they*, *we*, *it*, *you*, and *who*.

The objective case indicates that the pronoun is being used as an object of either the verb or of a preposition. It's either the person or thing who is being acted on, or it's the person or thing to which the preposition refers. The objective pronouns are *me*, *him*, *her*, *them*, *us*, *it*, *you*, and *whom*.

Subjective pronouns cannot be used as objects, and objective pronouns cannot be used as subjects. Here are some examples of errors:

> Her and me both have a test tomorrow.

> Her and I both have a test tomorrow.

Her is an objective pronoun. It belongs only after the verb. This is the correct way to write the sentence:

> She and I both have a test tomorrow.

On the other side of this issue, sometimes people incorrectly put the subjective pronouns after the verb. For example, someone might write:

> Give the report to Scott and I.

In this case, *I* is a subjective pronoun. It cannot be used as the object of a verb or preposition.

Possessive pronouns indicate possession. Two possessive pronouns in particular cause confusion from time to time. The first one is *their*, which is sometimes confused with the homonyms *they're* and *there*. Mixing these up is really common, especially when people are writing quickly, so be on the lookout. Similarly, be aware of issues around the use of *it*, which has the same form as the pronouns *his*, *hers*, and *ours*: *its*.

Possessives

Apostrophes are used to make words possessive. To make a singular word possessive, you add an apostrophe and the letter *s*. This rule is true even when the singular word ends in *s*. For example, it is correct to write "James's guitar is out of tune."

One exception to this is corporate names that end in *s*. For example, one would write about "General Motors' factories" rather than "General Motors's factories."

People sometimes have trouble making plural words possessive. But the rule is simple: plural first, then possessive. You must first consider how you make a word plural. Then, the way you make it possessive depends on how it's made plural. Here is that idea at work:

> I will visit all my coworkers' offices.

The word *coworker* is made plural simply by adding *s*, so that happens first. Then, adding the apostrophe after the *s* creates *coworkers'*.

In the case of some words, the singular form ends in *s*. Usually in English, when a word ends in *s*, it is necessary to add *es* to make it plural. For instance, this course's instructor and her husband are the Friederichses. The possessive of that plural is Friederichses'.

Okay, so what about irregular nouns? You probably remember that term from Junior High, too. While most English words are made plural by adding "s," or "es," irregular nouns are made plural in unique ways. *Mouse* becomes *mice* and *fish* stays *fish*. The same rule applies here: plural first, then possessive. For example, take this sentence, which makes irregular plurals possessive:

> Mr. Ross left the children's lunchboxes in the men's room.

In some cases, you will come across two or more separate nouns. If two people own the same thing together, consider them one unit, and place an apostrophe and an *s* at the end of that unit: Bob and Sally own a business together, so it's "Bob and Sally's business."

For another example, take this sentence:

> Ophelia and Oscar's proposals were not well received.

That is written correctly if Ophelia and Oscar wrote the proposals together and owned them as a unit. However, if Ophelia and Oscar each wrote one proposal, this would be correct:

> Ophelia's and Oscar's proposals were not well received.

Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Next, this lecture turns to issues with modifiers. When a modifier is not directly next to the word or phrase it describes, it is called a misplaced modifier. Consider this sentence:

> Jamie found a discarded desk in the basement with a mouse in it.

Which has a mouse: the desk or the basement? It is likely the discarded desk that has a mouse. There could be multiple correct ways to rewrite it, but one option would be to write:

> While in the basement, Jamie found a discarded desk with a mouse in it.

That puts the noun *desk* and the phrase "with a mouse in it" next to each other and minimizes the confusion. This lecture leads to another type of modifier error: the dangling modifier. A dangling modifier occurs when a dependent clause does not have a clear referent. For example, take this sentence:

> Finishing his report at the last minute, the printer ran out of ink.

In this sentence, *his* in the phrase "finishing his report at the last minute" cannot possibly modify the word *printer*. That makes no sense. The actual referent is missing, and the modifier dangles there with nothing to refer to. To correct this, you can revise either the dependent clause or the independent clause that follows. Here is the independent-clause method at work:

> Finishing his report at the last minute, Barney was dismayed to discover the printer was out of ink.

Now it is clear who was finishing his report: Barney. Alternatively, one could adjust the dependent clause instead and say, "As Barney was finishing his report, the printer ran out of ink." That sentence has the antecedent, *Barney*, clearly setting up the pronoun *his*. To avoid these errors, just remember to ask yourself: Is the word or phrase being described placed directly next to the word or phrase doing the describing?

6

Mastering Verb and Adverb Grammar

This lecture covers verbs, including passive and active voice, each of which can drastically change the impact of a sentence. Then, the lecture turns to mood (which reflects how the writer feels toward a subject) and tense (which orients readers by providing a sense of time). It also looks at adverbs, which act as verb modifiers.

Passive versus Active Voice

Verbs carry the characteristic of voice, which indicates whether the subject of a sentence is doing the action or being acted on. Active voice indicates that the subject of the sentence is performing the action. Here is an example:

> Jill tore the skirt.

Passive voice indicates that the subject of the sentence is being acted on by the verb. Passive voice either places the person or thing performing the action in a subordinate position or eliminates it altogether:

> The skirt was torn by Jill.

Passive voice may create unnecessary confusion or a lack of clarity, and it tends to be awkward. For example, this omits the important information of who set up the regulations:

> A new suite of compliance regulations was set up.

However, there are times you might want to use passive voice. For example, perhaps you don't wish to identify the person or thing doing the action. You might also purposely choose passive voice when the person or thing doing the action is unimportant, unclear, or difficult to identify. For example, consider these sentences:

> Cancer is usually treated with chemotherapy.

> Our house was renovated in 2015.

In each of these sentences, the person or thing carrying out the action is unimportant. The point is what happened, not who did it. Similarly, you might also choose to use passive voice when you

prefer to emphasize the person or thing receiving the action rather than the person or thing doing it.

Verb Moods

Verb moods function similarly to human moods: They indicate the attitude of the speaker toward what is written. Like passive voice, it's important to be able to identify mood because the choice you make can impact the meaning of the sentence.

Indicative mood is the most common. It indicates a state of reality. Indicative mood can be in past, present, or future tense, and it can express an assertion or a denial. For example:

> I had pizza for dinner.
>
> I'm not buying a new car tomorrow.

Imperative mood expresses commands or instructions. This is used to indicate that whatever is happening has to occur. For example:

> Turn the oven to 350 degrees and place the pizza on the top rack.
>
> Give her the code to the front door.

Interrogative mood may be the easiest to spot because it expresses a question:

> Should I send the report now?

Subjunctive mood is used for conditions that do not actually exist. It expresses wishes, desires, suggestions, or hypotheticals. In the

subjunctive mood, the verb *be* is used to express present tense, and *were* is used to express past subjunctive or something that never was. Here are examples of the mood:

> If I were you, I'd put that back where I found it.

> He requested that we be given leniency.

Finally, there is the conditional mood. The Oxford University Press grammar guide *Lexico* defines conditional mood as "used to make requests and to refer to situations which are uncertain or which depend on something else happening or being the case." Conditional mood is formed with the auxiliary verbs *would, could, should,* and *might.* Take these examples:

> You would like that restaurant, I'm sure of it.

> I might have time to meet with Kaitlin tomorrow.

Mood does have an effect on how your messages come across. For example, when making requests, the imperative voice is often more direct than the interrogative voice, but it may also seem curt. There is never only one right choice. The best choice is the one that makes the right impact.

Tense

Tense is how people aptly communicate exactly when things happened and when they happened in relation to one another. For example, take this somewhat unclear sentence:

> I went to the store and I went to school.

Written this way, the sentence doesn't give the reader the whole picture. It just means that the writer did those things. However, this version has more information:

> Before I got to school, I had gone to the store.

Now the reader knows that the writer is indicating one past action—going to the store—preceded another past action—getting to school. This is called past perfect tense. Past perfect tense is used to describe a past action that preceded another past action. There are several different forms of each tense. Knowing a specific form in detail is less important than understanding the impact of that form on the meaning of the sentence.

Another type of tense is the future progressive tense, which indicates something that will be going on in the future. Here is it in action:

> Stan will be proposing to Patty next week.

But what if a writer wants to indicate that an action will have been completed in the future, with the implication that it will be completed before some specified time? In that case, the future perfect tense is the way to go:

> By the end of the week, Stan will have proposed to Patty.

Tense gives your reader a sense of time. It offers a fuller picture of how things happened in what order, or how and in what order they might happen. Without tense, the written word would be very bland.

Adverbs

This lecture concludes with a look at adverbs, which act as verb modifiers. Adverbs describe, qualify, or limit the action of verbs. They usually answer these questions: When? Where? How? How often? To what extent? Adverbs most frequently end in *-ly* (though not always). Some examples of adverbs include *slowly*, *quickly*, and *warily*. The words *soon*, *always*, *too*, and *never* are all adverbs, too.

Adverbs can also modify adjectives, other adverbs, or even an entire clause or sentence. Consider this example:

> He is very tall for a jockey.

In this case, the adverb *very* modifies the adjective *tall*. Adverbs can also modify an entire clause, as *hurriedly* does here:

> Hurriedly, I proceeded to my next meeting.

Sometimes the specific placement of an adverb doesn't make a huge impact, as in these two sentences:

> Quickly, Murphy considered his options and decided to take the offer.

> Murphy quickly considered his options and decided to take the offer.

However, sometimes adverb placement is quite important because it can create ambiguity or even confusion. Consider these two sentences:

> James only paid the plumber.

> James paid only the plumber.

The former sentence, as written, means that the only thing James did was pay the plumber. But the second sentence, as written, means that the only person James paid was the plumber, implying that perhaps other people needed to be paid, but James neglected them. Below is a slightly more complex pair of sentences that might occur in a professional context:

> Stephanie swiftly ascertained the problem with generating a solution.

> Stephanie ascertained the problem with generating a solution swiftly.

In the former example, Stephanie quickly ascertained the problem, but in the latter, she (apparently at normal speed) ascertained the problem with being able to quickly generate a solution. Those are two different meanings, so the placement matters.

In addition to considering the placement of adverbs, it's also important to consider whether you're overusing them. One danger is redundancy. For instance, "He frowned sullenly" is redundant because *sullenly* is implied by the verb *frowned*.

Another danger is wordiness. Author Stephen King notes that authors tend to use adverbs when they're afraid they aren't expressing themselves clearly. The problem is that this kind of adverb use doesn't actually strengthen your writing; instead, it communicates a lack of confidence in your word choice.

Most of the time, the answer lies not in choosing a different adverb, but in rewriting the sentence altogether. Consider this sentence:

> She conducted her analysis quickly.

It's not bad, but it doesn't communicate much. For instance, it's unclear whether the writer thinks the analysis was rushed and haphazard or if the writer is impressed at her speed. If the writer wants to say she rushed through it, implying a negative valance, this is an option:

> She scrambled to complete her analysis on time.

To give off a sense of being impressed with her speed, this is an option:

> She impressed me with her speedy analysis.

The takeaway point is that rewording a sentence can help convey more meaning than the use of an adverb. When using adverbs, take care to consider both placement and use to ensure that you're saying exactly what you mean to say.

Analyze: What Your Reader Needs to Know

This lecture begins discussing a business-writing process called ACE, which stands for analyze, craft, and edit. The first lecture of this course indicated that you would need to learn two new habits to cultivate more impactful writing. The first new habit was changing your lens—always remembering to write from a reader-centric lens. The second habit, which this lecture broaches, is that you must change your writing process: Before you ever set pen to paper—or fingers to keyboard—you must actually conduct analysis about your document.

This lecture first provides a checklist for analyzing a document, which you can also see in the reference materials of this guidebook (along with checklists for the crafting and editing phases). Then, it moves into a more detailed breakdown of the analysis phase.

Analyzing Checklist

A. What is the purpose of your document?

- ○ What do you want this document to accomplish? (Dig deep!)

B. Who is your audience?

1. What do they know?
2. And/or what do they need to know?

C. What are the right facts for the document?

D. If you have a VID (very important document), have you written your full-sentence outline?

Activity: Consider Your Documents

Try this activity: Consider any documents you write daily, weekly, monthly, and even yearly. Make a list of them. They can be personal or professional documents. You can be more specific with certain documents. For example, if you listed reports or proposals, what kinds of reports and/or proposals do you write?

Once you have your list fleshed out, identify one document type that you write often. This will be helpful as you progress through this analysis phase.

Identifying Your Purpose

Any time you sit down to write any of the documents you've just captured in your list, the first thing you need to do is analyze. This course recommends using paper and pen or pencil for analysis. Using your computer for analysis lures you into writing the draft, or even the final product, before you're ready.

The goal of the analysis phase is to craft a purpose statement. Your purpose statement is the foundation for your entire document and consists of one or two sentences. Your purpose statement will ultimately become the opening statement of the document, but for now it serves to drive your analysis.

To craft a purpose statement, you'll analyze two things—your purpose and your audience—and then you'll select the relevant facts for the document. To analyze your purpose, ask yourself: What is your desired outcome for this document? Do you want it to inform, describe, persuade, or something else? Then, go one step deeper to find a more specific purpose. For example, you might want a document to inform employees about a new policy so that they will follow the new policy.

Be sure you're focused on the result you want from the document rather than feelings about the topic. Whatever it is that you expect the audience to do with the information in this document should be included in the purpose statement.

Identifying Your Audience

The next step in the analysis phase is to identify the document's audience. That phase includes asking these questions:

- Who is your audience? (It's important to be specific and clear about who you're writing for, even when it may seem obvious.)

- What is the audience's existing knowledge of the topic?

- What do they need to know?

If the audience doesn't know much about the topic, avoid using very technical language or jargon. If you feel confident the audience already knows a great deal about this topic, you can usually safely use technical language and jargon, though do not assume your audience knows everything about the topic at hand.

Once you analyze what they already know, you must also analyze what they need to know. These two questions may, in some cases, be two sides of the same coin, but it will help you fine-tune your audience analysis to consider them both. For example, if the purpose of your document is to report on the results of a pay equity study, there's no need to tell the audience about the process you undertook to put the committee together. With that purpose—to report on the results of a study—it's unlikely that the audience needs to know about the committee creation.

Crafting the Statement

Once you have your purpose and audience, you can craft your actual purpose statement from the information in your analysis. Sticking to one sentence is simpler, but sometimes crafting one lengthy sentence is less clear than two shorter, simpler sentences. For now, this lecture will stick to a one-sentence purpose statement.

The purpose statement should be comprised of the answers to the questions you've asked thus far. Your answers should identify the purpose of the document, the audience, and what they know and/or need to know.

To practice, go back to the document from your list that you singled out. Based on the document you usually write, conduct the analysis and then craft a purpose statement. As an example, take this purpose statement:

- This document explains to faculty how to submit their grades electronically.

"This document explains" is the purpose. Next, "to faculty" identifies the audience, and "how to" describes what the audience needs to know. Finally, "submit their grades electronically" is what the audience should do with the information

This example demonstrates a wonderful thing about purpose statements: When you use one as the first sentence of your document, the audience will know what to expect when reading the document. It will also help them determine whether or not they need to take the time to read the whole document.

Selecting Relevant Facts

After you craft your purpose statement, there is one more step in the analysis phase before you can begin writing. You must select the relevant facts for your document. Relevant facts are directly related to your purpose statement. The facts you include should be no more and no less than the answer to this question: What does the reader absolutely need to know relative to my purpose statement?

To illustrate, here is a purpose statement:

> This proposal demonstrates why the County Exhibit Hall is the best choice to be the new permanent home for the county's annual lawn and garden trade show.

Next are the potential facts a hypothetical writer could consider including. The parenthetical information identifies whether or not that information is relevant.

- We have successfully hosted more than 20 other trade shows. (Relevant.)

- We offer two electrical outlets and indoor water hookups for every booth. (Relevant.)

- We are conveniently located just off Highway 1 and only three minutes from downtown. (Likely relevant, but keep in mind that the audience might already know this, making it irrelevant.)

- We have been in business since 1995. (Irrelevant unless there's something you know about your audience that leads you to believe this is a particular selling point.)

- We are owned by the defensive coordinator for the local pro football team. (Irrelevant.)

- We have a staff of 25. (This is on the right track to relevancy, but information about the staff's training and experience may be more helpful.)

- We have successfully hosted nearly 100 weddings and galas. (Somewhat irrelevant. Although these are events, it would be best to leave this information out. Keep the focus on the fact that the venue has hosted the exact same type of event.)

- Our space is compliant with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (If the audience is concerned about this, it is relevant. If the audience is not, it is OK to omit this information: The audience can follow up if they end up having a question about it.)

- We have a 4-out-of-5-star rating on Yelp. (This is a borderline case. This course would recommend only including a 5-star rating and/or information that is a more sophisticated measure of client satisfaction.)

The Outline

After you have analyzed your document for purpose and audience, written a purpose statement, and selected the relevant facts for the document, this course recommends one more step: Organize your points into a full-sentence, handwritten outline. This is especially good advice if the document is very important and you have enough time to create the outline.

Outlines are incredibly helpful tools for helping you craft a solid document. Once you have your purpose statement, your relevant facts, and your outline all set, you'll be ready to move to crafting the document.

Craft: Building the Bones of Your Document

This lecture discusses best practices for crafting a draft of a document. The lecture first provides a checklist for crafting a document, which you can also see in the reference materials of this guidebook (along with checklists for the analyzing and editing phases). Then, it moves into some general tips for crafting the document. It's important that you don't treat the crafting phase as writing the final document. Don't worry about making this version the final version, the best version, or even a particularly good version.

Crafting Checklist

A. Transcribe Your Purpose Statement

- This comes from your handwritten analysis phase notes onto your draft page.

B. Craft the Body

1. Transcribe the relevant facts for your document that you selected in the analysis phase.
2. Craft the body with the first words that come to mind; you'll edit later.
3. Hold off on detail work. However, do highlight or note incomplete or troublesome sections.

D. Craft the Conclusion

- The conclusion should be simple but specific:
  1. The conclusion should review the main points of the document.
  2. The conclusion should tell the reader "now what."

Before You Begin

Before you begin crafting, there are some things you should do to ensure a successful crafting process. Stephen King calls it "creating a good writing environment."

First, eliminate all distractions. This can be challenging in a work environment, but you can control a few of the most annoying distractions. Turn off your email so it doesn't ding when you get one. Turn off your phone so you don't receive text alerts. You also need to eliminate distractions that force you to focus on the perfect word or verbiage. Turn off spell check and grammar check tools, regardless of the program you're using.

The Body

The next step is to begin to craft the body of the document. This course recommends not writing the introduction until everything else is complete. While the introduction will contain your purpose statement, it will likely need a bit more by way of a preview of the entire document. Therefore, the introduction, counterintuitively, is the very last thing you'll write.

You'll begin crafting the body of the document by leveraging the second helpful part of the analysis phase—the facts you selected. Remember that in the analysis phase, you selected the relevant facts for the document. Simply transcribe them onto your draft.

After that, begin to flesh things out. During this stage, don't worry about the perfect words. You'll do all the cleaning up during the editing phase. However, it is helpful to develop a system for tagging those places that you know will need attention when you begin to edit. Some people use comments on the document, and other options include bolding and highlighting.

In case you do find yourself experiencing writer's block when crafting, then just type anything. Truly anything. It doesn't matter what you type because sometimes the simple act of getting your fingers moving often gets your wheels turning. You'll eventually begin to write about your intended topic.

Eight Best Practices

There are eight additional best practices that will help you craft a well-written draft. These are generalizations, so there may be exceptions, but they are useful rules to keep in mind.

1. Keep your sentences simple. Write with clarity and concision.

2. Paragraphs should typically be three to five sentences long.

3. Focus on a single point within each paragraph. If you're still on the same main point, don't begin a new paragraph. Additionally, don't bring up a new point within the same paragraph.

4. Be sure you're providing well-supported assertions and arguments. Making unsubstantiated claims can have a real impact on your credibility.

5. Jargon is an important consideration. To a large extent, your use of jargon should be driven by the audience analysis you conducted in the analysis phase. Use the language your audience knows and expects you to know.

6. Don't feel beholden to narrative form. Long, narrative paragraphs tend to be glossed over or ignored more readily. If

your information can easily be chunked into bullet points, tables, or headings and subheadings, try doing that.

7. Consider using additional modes of presenting information to supplement your words. If you can use elements like pictures, charts, and links to additional sources, that will increase the likelihood of connecting to your readers. Only do this if the supplemental modes add value in helping the reader understand the information. For example, don't give people links to follow if the information in that link simply repeats what you've already said.

8. Take breaks. As a general rule, even professional writers get mentally fatigued after about 45 minutes. Most experts suggest breaking as frequently as every 20 minutes. If you're feeling fatigued, walk away for a bit, and then come back with fresh eyes and a fresh mind.

The Conclusion

Once you feel you have your draft fairly well fleshed out, it's time to craft your conclusion. A conclusion should always have two parts and two parts only.

First, the conclusion should review the main points of the document. You can do this as a summary review:

> This report has outlined the current state of the industry.

Alternatively, you can offer a quick summary of the main points:

> This report has outlined the current state of the industry and suggested a two-pronged course of action: rebranding and moving our headquarters.

Once the conclusion has reviewed the main points of the document, it should wrap up. The wrap-up should entail one to two brief sentences that let the reader know definitively that the document has concluded. This may include giving the reader next steps, or it may simply just conclude. Either way, you should never bring up new information in a conclusion.

If you're concluding an email or memo, the conclusion may sound something like these examples:

> Please email me by Friday.
>
> You should begin logging your grades electronically at the beginning of this week.
>
> Please submit your proposals to Melvin by noon on Monday.

Reports and longer documents may need more of a summary, but again, keep the whole thing short and direct. For instance, take this sample conclusion:

> This report has outlined the current state of the industry and suggested a two-pronged course of action: rebranding and moving our headquarters. I will follow up with each of you on April 1 to ascertain whether you have any questions.

The Introduction

Once you've crafted the body and the conclusion, you're ready to craft the introduction to the document. The purpose statement should be the first sentence, with one exception. If you're giving bad

news, it may be too direct and come off as uncaring if you begin right away with the purpose statement, as in this example:

> This letter is to notify you that, as of July 1, your HOA dues will increase 5 percent.

In a case like this, you could begin with a short background statement like this one: "The energy usage among condo owners has increased 10 percent in the past year." Otherwise, you typically want to begin with your purpose statement.

The introduction should preview the body of the document. You can do so with an actual, point-by-point preview of the main points or a summary preview. Look back at the list you created of the relevant facts; that list may help you create your preview. Don't confuse the relevant facts contained in the document with the main points of the document—the latter are what you should preview. Consider this example:

> This letter alerts our employees of some important changes to the 2019 tax laws. You will learn about new requirements for expense claims and documentation.

In addition to the purpose statement and preview, you should consider whether any additional context may be valuable in your introduction. Keep this context relegated to things that are important to explain before the reader begins reading the rest of the document. Examples might include definitions of terms or intentional omissions to the document, like this one:

> Although we are referencing survey responses from 500 employees, we do not yet have the focus group results.

At this point, you will have your introduction, body, and conclusion crafted, and you'll be ready to move to the editing phase.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever heard of plotting and pantsing? Some people tend to be plotters, meaning they plan things out. If the suggestion in the lecture on the analysis phase to write an outline sounded magnificent to you, then you're a plotter. But some people are pantsers, meaning they like to fly by the seat of their pants and let things come to them as they write.

   This might be a good time to consider which approach you feel more closely aligned with. The ACE process is perfectly aligned with either approach. Either way, you should still follow the analyzing, crafting, and editing steps. The difference would come through most evidently during the crafting step.

   If you're a plotter, then you'll likely feel more comfortable transcribing your purpose statement and then the main points that will flow from it (or connect to it). If you're a pantser, you should still transcribe your purpose statement and then let your writing come to you more organically. The main difference in how plotters and pantsers will interact with the ACE process is that pantsers will have to rely even more on the editing process to look for coherence and organization. With that in mind, don't force yourself into plotting if it doesn't feel natural to you.

9

Edit: Perfecting Your Prose

This lecture covers the third step of the ACE process: the editing phase. A common assumption is that editing and proofreading are the same thing, but this is mistaken. Proofreading is simply the act of looking for errors. Editing is much more; it's analyzing your document to ensure it says what you want it to say in an organized, clear, and concise manner. Therefore, you edit for many more things than typos.

With your reader-centric lenses on, you'll edit your document to ensure it's understandable to your reader. You do that by following the editing steps in the ACE checklist, available below and in the reference materials of this guidebook. The remainder of the lecture provides supplementary information to that checklist.

The Editing Checklist

A. Edit for Organization

    1. Each paragraph should relate clearly and directly to the purpose statement.

    2. Each paragraph should follow logically from the one before it.

    3. Each paragraph should include evidence that directly supports the point you're making in that paragraph.

    4. Ensure that you aren't missing any important points.

B. Edit for Clarity and Conciseness

    1. Use short, simple sentences.

    2. Use economical word choice.

    3. Avoid redundancy.

    4. Use active voice (unless passive voice is more appropriate).

    5. Avoid being overly wordy or too succinct.

    6. Avoid overuse of pronouns.

C. Edit for Proper Word Choice

    1. Use the four Cs framework to ensure the words you've chosen are correct, concrete, clear, and contextually appropriate.

    2. Engage in consistent use of vernacular.

    3. Consider whether you should repeat key words and phrases specific to your industry or argument.

D. Edit for Punctuation and Grammar

    1. Check for capitalization of proper nouns.

    2. Check for subject-verb agreement.

    3. Check for pronoun-antecedent agreement.

    4. Check for pronoun case.

    5. Check for consistent verb tense.

    6. Check your adverbs.

7. Check for mood.
8. Check for voice.
9. Check for typos.

Editing for Organization

The first item to edit for is organization. When you edit your document for organization, you work to ensure that your thoughts flow logically from one to the next and that each point you make relates directly to the purpose statement.

Every single paragraph in your document should have an obvious relationship to your purpose statement. A good test is to create a new document and put your purpose statement at the top. Then, copy each paragraph, one at a time, from your main document and paste it directly after the purpose statement. Would the document make sense if that were the whole document? If so, then that paragraph relates directly to the purpose statement and can be left in. If not, ask yourself if that paragraph belongs as a sub-point to another paragraph or if it should be omitted altogether.

You'll also want to make sure that your paragraphs flow in logical order from one to the next and that you transition smoothly between paragraphs. Remember that although the link between two thoughts or two paragraphs may be obvious to you, it may not be clear to the reader. Transitional phrases can be helpful here.

The next step is to assess whether you've provided evidence or supporting material to support your points. If you have not done so, add that evidence now. If you can't come up with anything to support your point, then ask yourself whether this should be a sub-point in another paragraph or whether it can be omitted.

Finally, consider whether you're missing any important points. Go back to your purpose statement. Are there any other points you have not included that would strongly support it? If so, add them now. Take care to include a new point in the right place: Is it strong enough to warrant its own paragraph, or does it need to be included as a sub-point to an existing paragraph?

Editing for Clarity and Conciseness

Once you're finished editing for organization, you'll edit for clarity and conciseness. To edit for clarity and conciseness, examine your document to see if it uses short, simple sentences. Try reading the document aloud. You're much more likely to notice wordiness when you speak your words rather than reading them to yourself.

Next, ask yourself if your document displays economical word choice. Keep an eye out for words like *very* and *really*. It is likely that you don't need them. After that, see if your document avoids redundancy. Watch out for redundant phrases like "still remains" and "again and again." Sometimes phrases like these are used for emphasis, but they're often unnecessary.

Also pay attention to voice. In instances of the passive voice, pay attention to whether it's appropriate to make that choice. If not, you'll want to ensure you're using active voice to be concise.

Avoid being overly wordy. For instance, if you notice phrases like "said another way," you may be making a point twice. You only need to make it once. On the flipside of being overly wordy, you should also pay attention to whether you're actually too succinct. It is possible to be succinct to the point of coming across as curt. Take care that your tone strikes a delicate balance.

Finally, make sure you've avoided the overuse of pronouns. This sentence, for instance, has too many pronouns:

> He told him to go to his office where his files were kept.

The presence of too many pronouns creates a lack of clarity. In that sample sentence, it is unclear to whom *his* is referring each time.

Editing for Proper Word Choice

Proper word choice is the third thing you need to edit for, and there are three questions you should ask yourself:

1. Are you using the four Cs framework from Lecture 3, which covers word choice? You'll use that framework to ensure that the

words you've chosen are correct, concrete, clear, and contextually appropriate. For another resource, take a look at the list of commonly misused words and phrases in the reference materials of this guidebook.

2. Ask yourself if you are engaging in consistent use of vernacular—that is, key words or phrases in your document. For example, if you open the document by discussing "rewards and costs" of an issue, don't switch to discussing "pros and cons." This will confuse the reader.

3. The third question is this: Should you repeat key words and phrases that are specific to your industry or argument? For example, consider this excerpt:

> Otosclerosis is a progressive disease. It begins as a spongy growth near the base of the stirrup, or stapes—the third of the chain of bones in the middle ear. In time, the growth turns to bone, freezing the stapes into immobility.

In this excerpt, the author hasn't searched for a synonym to replace the word stapes. That word is so specific to the context that it is better to repeat it to help aid the reader in understanding the definition.

Editing for Punctuation and Grammar

The final step is to edit your document for the elements of proper grammar and proper punctuation covered in this course's earlier grammar lectures. For a list of errors to scan for, refer back to the checklist.

This lecture now turns to some examples of errors that may pop up, beginning with this one:

> The problems with the new approach is that it will take too long.

This sentence flouts the grammar rule of subject-verb agreement. Edit to be sure that where you have one singular subject, you have a singular verb, and where you have two or more subjects or one plural subject, you have a plural verb. Next up is this sample sentence:

> Him and her served on the task force together.

This one breaks the grammar rule of pronoun case. Remember that subjective pronouns—*I*, *he*, *she*, *they*, *we*, *it*, *you*, and *who*—cannot be used as objects, and objective pronouns—*me*, *him*, *her*, *them*, *us*, *it*, *you*, and *whom*—cannot be used as subjects.

Here are the lecture's next two examples:

> My neighbor saw a dog hiding behind the table with a missing leg.

> Walking into the building, the air conditioner hummed loudly.

The first sentence has a misplaced modifier: It's unclear whether the dog or table is missing a leg. The second one has a dangling modifier because there is no clear referent to the introductory phrase. Air conditioners cannot walk into buildings.

Three more items to look out for are punctuation and mechanics. When you're working on punctuation and mechanics, specifically edit with an eye toward the following issues:

- Commas.

- Semicolons.

- Colons.

- Dashes.

- Quotation marks.

- Capitalization.

- Italicization.

It is also necessary to pay very close attention to whether there are any typos. These aren't necessarily a matter of grammar or punctuation; instead, they are just plain wrong.

Concluding Tips

- This lecture concludes with some general tips. First, during the editing phase, be sure to remove any bolding, highlights, or comments that you inserted for your own reference.

- Second, don't make the mistake of assuming that because you've found one error in a sentence, you've found them all. There could be several errors or needs for revision in any given sentence.

- Third, if the document is a very important document and/or involves high levels of emotion for you, step away for at least 24 hours. This will help you identify issues of tone and diplomacy that will impact the final document.

- Finally, don't be afraid to use tools to help you. Examples include the Purdue OWL and Grammarly.

10

Applying the Analyze-Craft-Edit Process

This course's previous three lectures covered the steps of the ACE business-writing process. In this lecture, you will see ways to practice applying the ACE process to two types of documents commonly written in almost any organization: business memos and newsletter articles.

Business Memo: Overview

To begin practicing applying the ACE process to a business memo, first select the organization you'll use as your subject for this activity. It's ideal if you can choose an organization in which you're working or have worked so you know enough about it to craft a memo. But it would also work to choose an organization with which you've had significant interaction.

After that, you'll need to choose a topic about which to write your memo. To do that, think about the organization you've chosen. Can you think of an issue this organization has dealt with or is dealing with? Has it had any challenges about which a memo might be written? Has it gone through any turning points?

This lecture will present a hypothetical example for you to follow along. The example will use a university, known as Learning University, as its organization, with the writer being an employee in human resources. The university is going through the change of switching to a new performance-management system. The writer's goal is to notify individuals who supervise other members of the university's staff of the change.

Business Memo: Analysis

The first task is to analyze the document's purpose. (Remember that this phase occurs with a pen and paper, not on a computer.) In this lecture's hypothetical case, the true purpose is to ensure that supervisors take required action steps. The next step is to consider who the audience is. For example, this document is only for staff members who supervise other staff members. It would be different if it were going out to all staff members.

The next questions are: What do they already know about the topic, and what do they need to know?

A large amount of background information on the switch isn't necessary, but the audience does need to know that the university is switching to a new system. They will also need information such as how to use the login system, the required action steps (which are a training and entering information into the new system's online portal), and a deadline.

That analysis leads to this purpose statement:

> This document notifies Learning University supervisors of two required action items, to be completed by December 31, 2020, for the transition to the new university-wide performance-management system.

Business Memo: Crafting

After the analysis phase is complete, the next step is crafting the document. At this stage, you can begin using your computer. Remember that the ACE overview in the reference materials of this guidebook provides a checklist for this phase (as well as the other two). The crafting checklist can help you compile the information you need to include in your document.

Below is a review of the necessary information as it pertains to this lecture's hypothetical memo. These points will become the main points of the memo:

- The writer knows the audience, and therefore who to address the memo to.

- The audience needs to know that the university is switching to a new performance-management system, but they do not need to know how the sausage was made, so to speak. The writer can offer them a link to previous information that was sent out in case they're interested.

- The writer needs to be careful about any jargon or terminology because this is a new system to the audience.

- The writer will need to transcribe the purpose statement into the memo. The purpose statement should always be one of the first few statements in the memo, but it doesn't necessarily have to be the very first.

- The readers need to know how to access the new performance-management system.

- The readers also need to know they are required to complete a training that will familiarize them with the new system. The writer needs to provide links but does not need to mention any additional technology requirements.

- The readers need to know to use the supervisor portal within the new system to enter their supervisees' information. They also need a direct link to the supervisor portal as well as a link to the page with instructions for entering their supervisees' information.

- The writer should approximate the amount of time readers should expect to spend on each task so they can schedule their time accordingly. The readers also need to know the deadline for completing both action items.

- Once the readers have completed the two tasks, the system will notify them and the HR employee that they are approved to begin using the new system. Finally, the memo should let them know who to contact with any questions.

Remember that in this stage, the writer just wants to craft. That means simply writing instead of getting hung up on perfection. The completed memo draft might come out something like this:

> Dear Learning University supervisors,
>
> The university-wide transition to a new performance-management system, including the process for choosing the system, was announced in the February, May, and August editions of the *Learning U. Gazette*. This memo notifies Learning University supervisors of two required action items, to be completed by December 31, 2020,

for the transition to the new performance-management system.

First, all Learning University staff who supervise one or more other staff members are required to complete a training to learn to use the new system. Follow this link to log on to the new performance-management system. Your login ID and password will be the exact same as you currently use to access your Learning University email account. You will not need to create an account; you are already in the system. Once logged in, you may click on "New Supervisor Training," or you may follow this link directly to access the training. The training will take approximately one hour.

The second action item for all Learning University staff who supervise one or more staff members is to go to the Supervisor Portal within the performance-management system and enter the names and Learning University ID numbers for each staff member you supervise.

You may follow this link to go directly to the Supervisor Portal, in which you'll enter your supervisees' information. Or you may follow this link to find instructions for how to enter your supervisees' information in the Supervisor Portal. The process is very simple and should only take a few minutes.

This memo has outlined two action items for Learning University supervisors, both of which must be completed by December 31, 2020. Once you complete both items, the system will jointly notify both me and you that you are approved to begin using the new

> Learning University performance-management system to complete your performance reviews, which will be due April 1, 2021. In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact me directly with any questions.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Allison

Note that in addition to the due date for the action items, the writer included a second upcoming due date because, when crafting the memo, the writer decided that enough people would want to know the due date for performance reviews that it felt important to include.

Business Memo: Editing

In the editing phase, it is necessary to edit for the following characteristics of the document:

- Organization: Is the document organized well? In the case of the example memo, the writer is paying special attention to whether the order of information presented makes sense to the reader.

- Clarity and conciseness: Does the document use simple, concise sentences?

- Word choice: Are the words chosen correct, concrete, clear, and contextually appropriate? In the case of the memo, is there any jargon that readers might be unfamiliar with?

- Then, edit for correct grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

- Finally, check for typos. The memo writer should pay special attention to whether the dates used are correct.

If you need a refresher as to the complete details for any of the items you should edit for, return to the lecture on editing or use the checklist of the ACE process.

Newsletter Article: Analysis

This lecture concludes with a look at the analysis phase of a hypothetical newsletter article. Imagine that you work for a nonprofit organization, called Parent Partners, which offers parenting workshops and support to families of lower socioeconomic status. You are tasked with writing a newsletter article that will announce a new program called Parent Connect, which will offer parenting help via virtual meetings and phone calls. You're writing this article in the hopes that your organization's constituent families will utilize these new options because, in theory, making it easier for them to connect with the organization will make them more likely to use its services.

You should begin with analysis using paper and pen or pencil. Start by asking yourself: Is the purpose here to inform families about this service? It is not. Instead, your purpose is to have families utilize the service.

The next question is: Who is the audience? In this case, it's all of the constituent families of the organization. Presumably, you know a good bit about the demographics of this group, so you would let that inform your crafting. For example, you already know the socioeconomic status of this audience, so you would highlight the economic value of this service. You might also know the average

number of children the constituent families have, meaning you might consider including some data to support that what you're offering is important for families with more than two children.

The question of what the audience knows is next. This is the very first announcement going out to families about this program, so you can assume they know nothing about it. But you should also ask yourself what they know about the actual organization and decide how much to share in the newsletter article. Remember to err on the side of less information and to link to—as opposed to writing out—supplemental information whenever possible.

Next, you want to ask what the audience needs to know. In this case, they'd need to know everything possible about the program: Who's eligible to participate? When and how can they connect virtually and by phone? With whom would they be speaking? What can they expect? An important question for this audience would likely be whether there's a fee for this service. What else might this audience want or need to know?

They'll also need to know how to use the service. Thus, you'll need to include clear and concise instructions for doing so. With any new program, there are bound to be lots of questions and unknowns, so you might be tempted during the analysis phase to include a lot of information, FAQs, and so on. However, long newsletters tend to be ignored. In a case like this, it may make sense to host most of the information on the Parent Partners website and make it clear that they should go to the website or call Parent Partners for more information.

Based on this analysis, here is an example purpose statement:

> The purpose of this article is to motivate parents to use the new service offered by Parent Partners called Parent Connect, through which they can receive free parenting help virtually or by phone.

In this case, providing information about going to the website would end up in the conclusion, not the purpose statement. From here, you'd craft a list of main points, then craft the document and edit it. Following this process will lead to a concise newsletter article that entices Parent Partners constituents to use the new service, or at least to navigate to the website to learn more about it.

Questions to Consider

1. This lecture covered applying the ACE process to writing memos and newsletters. What other types of documents will you apply ACE to? Have you taken the time to apply it in practice yet? If not, why not start now?

Developing Your Professional Voice

The skills covered in this and the next lecture are geared toward inching you closer to mastery of writing. This lecture covers how to develop your professional writing voice, both when writing individually and when sharing authorship. The term *voice* in this context refers to the consistency of your voice across the myriad written mediums you are called on to write documents in and for today's professional world. The use of a consistent voice makes you seem more trustworthy, and it enhances your credibility.

Achieving Consistency

To achieve this crucial consistency in your professional written voice, follow the ACE business-writing process. Being consistent in your analysis of your writing goals and the audience for whom you're writing will help you ensure high standards across all your written communications. The same goes for careful editing.

Another practice for ensuring consistency is to know the difference between your voice and your tone. Chelsea Alves of Classy Marketing notes that, contrary to voice, tone can change. Your tone might change depending on who you're speaking to or the message you're trying to convey. For example, you may use a humorous tone when writing an email to a coworker, but you would use a professional tone when writing an email to request a donation to a group of high-level supporters.

The Consistency List

This lecture now turns to a list of ideas that can help you achieve consistency. Any one of these ideas may seem a little strange on its own, but it is employing them as a whole that creates consistency in your written voice:

- Strive for consistent word choice in terms of both complexity and verbiage.

- Strive for generally consistent sentence length, which can create a consistent tempo.

- Engage in consistent use of pronouns.

- Be consistent with your use of jargon. Make sure you are completely confident your readers will comprehend each word.

- Consider any clichés and colloquialisms you use. Ensure that you're being thoughtful about their use as well as consistent regarding which ones you do and don't use.

- In the case of contractions, consider your audience, context, and goals. If your context and audience call for more formal writing, you probably shouldn't use contractions. However, if you're writing for social media, that will be less formal, and contractions may be OK.

- Keep clarity in mind. Channel your audience analysis and take it a step further. Be mindful of the reader's experience with your document every time you write.

- Always remain professional. Regardless of context, audience, goals, and so on, never write things that are inappropriate, offensive, critical of others, judgmental, or otherwise problematic.

- Adhering to your organization's in-house style guide or manual is another important route you should take to ensure consistent voice in your writing. If your organization does not have one, consider an industry-specific style guide or a general style guide.

  ○ An example of an industry-specific guide is the legal style manual titled *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, which covers many rules specific to the legal field.

  ○ Examples of general style and usage guides include *The Chicago Manual of Style*, the American Psychological Association (or APA) style guide, *The Elements of Style*, and the Associated Press style guide.

  ○ These style guides offer information on tasks such as labeling visuals, citing evidence, and organizing sections of a work. They also provide advice on how to handle numerals and many other elements of written work. Most style manuals are also excellent resources for grammar and punctuation rules.

Activity: Style Guide Uses

The following is a helpful activity that will help you get the most out of each style guide you decide to use. Once you've identified which style guide you should utilize, write a list of the most common uses you'll need the style guide for. Ask yourself: What are the top 10 or 20 questions you'll have about style and writing?

There are a few things that might help you craft this list. Consider the types of documents you'll be called on to write most frequently. What are the common questions or potential roadblocks you encounter when writing those? You could also look back at the notes you've

captured as you've gone through this course. What are the new items you've learned that you might need to look up consistently?

Once you've written your list, create tabs in your style guide for quick, easy access to those items. This will save hours of labor and headache down the road.

Multiple Authors

Style guides are also important for ensuring consistency in documents that have multiple authors. For example, organizations may ask multiple authors to collaborate on the writing of one particular document.

Brand management experts note that consistent voice when employing multiple authors creates a stronger relationship between an organization's brand and its audience. And these experts agree that having each author strictly follow the agreed-on style guide is one of the most effective ways to ensure the all-important consistency.

There are other best practices, though, when you have multiple authors collaborating on documents to ensure consistency in voice.

• First, make sure all authors are aware of and agree on the tone of the document. If the document is for an organization's marketing efforts, the tone may be fairly known and consistent. However, in the case of an internal document, the tone may be less evident and require more explanation.

• In the ACE business-writing process, audience analysis is just as important when you have multiple authors. It's important that all of the authors have a clear understanding of the audience,

including the big three factors: who the audience is, what they know, and what they need to know.

- One way to ensure consistent voice is to avoid writing the way you speak. That is especially important when you have multiple authors. Each author will need to work hard to write as plainly and objectively as possible.

- Editing is critical when crafting documents with multiple authors. This course recommends that the authors collaborate on the editing process at first, getting the document to a final draft stage. Then, if time and resources allow, allow a final editor—who is potentially not one of the authors—to go over the document.

- If you collaborate on the editing phase, you may wish to assign roles. For example, one person might edit for accuracy of content, another might edit for consistency of voice, and a third might look at grammar, punctuation, and typos.

Activity: Group Writing

If you have a group of authors for a document in mind, the following is a group activity that will prepare you to write well as a group: Find a document that you can edit as a group before you begin to write as a group. You could have some fun with this and convert a passage from a children's book or even a Shakespeare scene to corporate speak. Then, have the group edit it to ensure it meets the parameters for your organization. An activity like this will help the group of writers practice creating a unified and consistent voice.

Questions to Consider

1. Can you locate examples of writers you've noticed who haven't used consistent voice in their writing? What impact did this have on you as a reader?

2. Are there other ways you might ensure consistent voice that the lecture didn't capture?

3. If you've never used a style manual, consider taking the time now to decide which one you'll make your new guide.

4. Have you ever had to craft a document with other authors? How was that process different from the way it would happen with the best practices outlined in this lecture?

Building Relationships through Writing

Impactful writing involves having your document accomplish what you want it to. This lecture builds on that idea to discuss how you can also build strong relationships through your writing. Specifically, it focuses on how to build strong professional relationships through email through to main routes: being a good listener and utilizing a collaborative approach.

Being a Good Listener

Being a good listener has to do with how you respond to written messages you receive. You can most certainly communicate an active-listening attitude in your responses to emails from others. One way to do this is to keep in mind that if a message lands badly with you, it's totally possible that the author's motives were benign at worst, positive at best. Taking that perspective is one way to be an active listener in writing.

Another way is to try to read between the lines. If a colleague emails you something that sounds curt, rude, or even offensive, work hard to do three things:

1. Consider your relationship with this person. Is it likely they meant to write something curt or offensive? The answer is probably no, so give him or her the benefit of the doubt.

2. Consider possible reasons for the tone or verbiage you infer as problematic. Might they have been in a hurry? Might they assume you know them well enough to know they mean well? There are countless possibilities, and the truth is that their intention to come across negatively is probably the least likely one.

3. Consider the potential outcomes of your response. Ask yourself: Even if they did mean to be curt, what's to be gained by responding the same way? Consider the potential outcomes of doing so:

   - If you misread the situation and the person meant no offense, you risk damaging your relationship if you respond with reciprocity (or what you think is reciprocity).

- Even if you didn't misread the situation, responding in kind makes it much less likely you can repair anything moving forward.

- Even if you already had a challenged relationship with this person, responding in kind serves no purpose. Let your writing demonstrate who you are despite who they choose to be.

The next suggestion for being a good listener via email is to read the sender's entire email before making a judgement. Additionally, don't feel like you have to respond right away. There are two major reasons for this.

1. You may need clarification. It's much better to ask for clarification than to risk an ill-informed response. Just be sure to do so diplomatically and to take responsibility for the lack of understanding rather than blaming the sender for any writing issues.

2. If you need time to think about a response, take it. Remember that the ACE process should be followed even for emails, which means that you should always step away from an email for at least 5 or 10 minutes before editing it. However, you may feel you need even more time to consider your response. If so, you might want to respond to let the person know that. More importantly, if you do have a negative reaction to their email, you should definitely avoid responding right away. In fact, step away from the keyboard. If you're working on any document that is emotional for you, it's best to step away from it for no fewer than 24 hours.

This lecture's final piece of advice for being a good listener via email is that when you do respond, be sure to show respect for your sender

and her or his point of view. In communication, behaviors fall into one of three categories: confirming, rejecting, or disconfirming.

Confirming behaviors are behaviors that make the other person feel respected and valued—or at least heard. Rejecting behaviors are behaviors like arguing, contradicting, and complaining. Disconfirming behaviors are the most damaging kinds of behaviors. They are behaviors that say to the other person, "You don't exist."

When you get an email from someone and respond by offering your opinion without first acknowledging theirs, that is disconfirming behavior. To build a strong relationship through writing, you have to use confirming behaviors by showing respect for the fact that the sender has a point of view and took the time to share it. You can do this by offering the same types of active-listening phrases that work in person, such as these:

> I hear you.
>
> That's a great suggestion.
>
> That is an interesting observation.

Those phrases are simple yet effective ways to offer confirmation that you value and respect your colleague's opinion. It's certainly acceptable to offer your point of view in response to a colleague's email, but don't offer an immediate counter to theirs without this important step of acknowledging their point of view first.

Missing Information and Attachments

Have you ever sent an email to a professional contact and forgotten to include the attachment? Have you ever begun writing an email to someone, become distracted, and sent the email only to realize you hadn't completed the message?

Most people bring up a new email, enter the recipient's email address, write the email, and then attach the attachment. It can be helpful to reverse that process: From now on, pull up a new email, attach the attachment first, write the email, employ the ACE process to edit it, and then enter the recipient's email address. This new habit will help you avoid having to send those embarrassing follow-up emails to provide missing information or attachments.

Utilizing a Collaborative Approach: Greetings and Statements

You can also build stronger relationships through writing by utilizing a collaborative approach in your emails. There are myriad ways to do this, and this lecture now turns to several of them.

One way to engender collaboration is to warm up before jumping right into the body of an email. For example, take this simple opener:

Greetings, Todd, happy Monday!

Warmth like that can go a long way toward making you seem more human. Another practice for being more collaborative is to never begin a statement in this manner:

> This is great, but …

This communicates that the thing the author just called great is not great because it's not the alternative the author is suggesting. That may not be what the author intends, but that's what it typically communicates.

Single-Subject Emails

For the sake of organization, try to stick to one topic per email. Make sure the subject line reflects that topic and that topic only. If you absolutely have to send a single email regarding two topics, put both of the subjects in the subject line. But if you plan to cover three or more topics, put each of them in separate emails. You and your colleagues will ultimately appreciate the sense of organization this new habit offers.

Utilizing a Collaborative Approach: Provisionalism

Another recommendation for being more collaborative via email is to use an approach called provisionalism rather than certainty. Certainty and provisionalism are interpersonal communication concepts that exist on opposite ends of a spectrum. When a person exhibits certainty, that individual is convinced that he or she is right. No amount of additional information will change that fact.

Provisionalism, on the other hand, is a lens characterized by listening with an open mind and being open to others' opinions. Being provisional doesn't mean a person might not have strong opinions; it just means that the person acknowledges the possibility he or she might not be right, and that others' opinions have merit.

In email writing, certainty often manifests in language that's more concrete or absolute. Words like *can't*, *won't*, *never*, *always*, or *must* demonstrate certainty. Words like *perhaps*, *might*, or *possibly* communicate provisionalism.

Ours versus Yours and Mine

Yet another method to engender a sense of collaboration in your emails is to emphasize that issues, approaches, problems, and so on are ours rather than yours or mine. Remember that using a reader-centric lens means taking care to word your emails in a way that deemphasizes individual fault or error and emphasizes mutual success. Compare these two messages:

> Why did she do that?
>
> I want to be sure I understand the complete picture.

The first can come across to others as blaming, while the second is a good alternative. On the flipside, be careful of emphasizing yourself in positive situations. For instance, statements like this can come across as very self-congratulatory:

> My idea to merge the two sales departments was received well.

Avoid Conflict Management over Email

This lecture's final piece of advice for emphasizing collaboration in email is to never engage in conflict management over email. It may be tempting to fire off an email to let someone know when you feel wronged or even just misunderstood, but no good can come of it. Pick up the phone and call them. Alternatively, you can email them, but only if you do so to request a meeting to discuss the situation.

Remember that emails are discoverable. Don't risk getting yourself into hot water or losing credibility because an email in which you engaged in conflict becomes public. It's important in life to be flexible in many contexts, but this is not one of them. Adopt a no-exceptions policy that you never use email for conflict management.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you ever been on the receiving end of rejecting or disconfirming behavior? Have you ever (even accidentally) been rejecting or disconfirming with someone else? If you've answered yes to either of these, does that put a finer point on the possibility of using the techniques outlined in this lecture to be more confirming?

2. If you're feeling especially brave, consider going back through your old sent emails and/or asking people with whom you interact how frequently they've heard or seen you use certain rather than provisional language.

ACE Checklist

Use this sheet as a quick-reference guide when you create your business documents.

I. Analyzing Checklist

A. What is the purpose of your document?
  - What do you want this document to accomplish? (Dig deep!)

B. Who is your audience?
  1. What do they know?
  2. And/or what do they need to know?

C. What are the right facts for the document?

D. If you have a VID (very important document), have you written your full-sentence outline?

II. Crafting Checklist

A. Transcribe Your Purpose Statement
  - This comes from your handwritten analysis phase notes onto your draft page.

B. Craft the Body
  1. Transcribe the relevant facts for your document that you selected in the analysis phase.
  2. Craft the body with the first words that come to mind; you'll edit later.

    3. Hold off on detail work. However, do highlight or note incomplete or troublesome sections.

C. Craft the Conclusion
- The conclusion should be simple but specific:
  1. The conclusion should review the main points of the document.
  2. The conclusion should tell the reader "now what."

D. Craft the Introduction
1. The introduction should contain the purpose statement.
2. The introduction should also provide a preview of what the document will do/contain.

III. Editing Checklist

A. Edit for Organization
1. Each paragraph should relate clearly and directly to the purpose statement.

2. Each paragraph should follow logically from the one before it.

3. Each paragraph should include evidence that directly supports the point you're making in that paragraph.

4. Ensure that you aren't missing any important points.

B. Edit for Clarity and Conciseness
1. Use short, simple sentences.

2. Use economical word choice.

3. Avoid redundancy.

4. Use active voice (unless passive voice is more appropriate).

5. Avoid being overly wordy or too succinct.

6. Avoid overuse of pronouns.

C. Edit for Proper Word Choice

1. Use the four Cs framework to ensure the words you've chosen are correct, concrete, clear, and contextually appropriate.

2. Engage in consistent use of vernacular.

3. Consider whether you should repeat key words and phrases specific to your industry or argument.

D. Edit for Punctuation and Grammar

1. Check for capitalization of proper nouns.

2. Check for subject-verb agreement.

3. Check for pronoun-antecedent agreement.

4. Check for pronoun case.

5. Check for consistent verb tense.

6. Check your adverbs.

7. Check for mood.

8. Check for voice.

9. Check for typos.

Commonly Misused Words and Phrases

Ambivalent: The word *ambivalent* is commonly used to suggest that one feels neutral about something or does not care about it. However, the word actually means to have both positive and negative feelings about something.

Data: Most people understand that the word *data* refers to factual information such as statistics. The misuse of this word typically happens because people use it as a singular word, but *data* is a plural word because it refers to the body of information compiled together to demonstrate something. *Datum* refers to only one item used as a basis for larger calculations or measurements.

Dilemma: The word *dilemma* is often used incorrectly to refer to a problem someone has; however, using it that way is too broad and general. *Di* is derived from the Greek word meaning "twice," which indicates that a dilemma is actually a situation that involves at least two choices—all of them undesirable.

Eclectic: This word is often mistakenly used to suggest someone or something is sophisticated or discriminating in taste. However, the term *eclectic* actually means that something is "selected from various sources."

Enervating: The term *enervating* refers to draining one of energy. However, the term is often confused with the word *energizing*.

Literally: Many people mistakenly use the word *literally* for emphasis. The term should be reserved for use when you mean "in a literal or strict sense."

Noisome: The term *noisome* means "smelly," not "loud" as one might suspect.

Nonplussed: The *non* in *nonplussed* seems to trick people into thinking this word means something good, usually something like "calm" or "not upset." In reality, the word means "baffled or perplexed."

Commonly Confused Words

Accept/except: To *accept* something is to receive it. The word *except* is a preposition meaning "excluding."

Adverse/averse: If something is *adverse*, it is unfavorable or even antagonistic. If you are *averse* to something, you wish to avoid it.

Affect/effect: These sound and look similar, but the term *affect* is the verb, and *effect* is the noun. Example sentence: "I won't let Helen's adverse criticism affect me, but it does have an effect on Christopher."

Allude/refer: To *refer* to something is to mention it directly. To *allude* to something is to hint at it or mention it indirectly.

Allusion/illusion: An *allusion* is an indirect mention of something. An *illusion* is something that deceives or provides a false impression of reality.

Among/between: The word *among* is used to refer to an association shared by more than two people or things. Its counterpart word

between is reserved for a reference to an association shared by only two people or things.

Amount/number: If you are referring to things that can be quantified, i.e., things that can be counted, use the word *number*. The word *amount* is only used to refer to things that cannot be measured in number, e.g., intangible things like respect, trouble, or concern, but also to tangible things that can occur in smaller or greater quantities but not individually counted, such as waste, shade, or weight.

Any one/anyone, any time/anytime, and the like: There are many pairs that are confused in much the same way as these. The key is in knowing when *any* is acting as a modifier of the noun that follows (*one* or *time*) and when the two words join together to become their own stand-alone noun. For example, *any one* means "any particular thing," while *anyone* is a pronoun meaning "any person at all." Example sentence: "After taking my speech class, any one of my students could give a successful presentation in front of anyone."

Appraise/apprise: *Apprising* is the act of giving notice or telling. To *appraise* means "to estimate the value or worth of."

Assume/presume: To *assume* is to suppose. To *presume* can be thought of as to take too much for granted.

Bad/badly: *Bad* is an adjective and is used when referring to a condition or state of being: "I feel bad that she thought I was angry." *Badly* is an adverb and should be used to describe a verb: "I performed badly on the exam."

Compliment/complement: To *compliment* is to give praise. To *complement* is to complete or go well with. Example sentence:

"The patron complimented the chef on how well the dishes complemented each other."

Continually/continuously: If something happens *continually*, it happens repeatedly but with stops or breaks in between. If something happens *continuously*, it is ongoing, or uninterrupted. Example sentences: "The bird in the cuckoo clock continually chirps to let us know the time. The gears in the clock continuously turn so that the clock stays running."

E.g./i.e.: *E.g.* is a stand-in for the phrase "for example." *I.e.* means "in other words."

Every day/everyday: The key here is in knowing when *every* is acting as a modifier of *day* and when the two words join together to become their own stand-alone adjective. *Every* modifies *day* when you are explaining how often you do something. *Everyday* is a stand-alone modifier. Example sentences: "I don't eat chocolate every day, but almost. Luckily, going to the gym in the morning is part of my everyday routine."

Farther/further: *Farther* refers to distance. Example sentence: "He can throw the ball farther than I can." *Further* can function as a verb or a modifier and is used to refer to things being at a more advanced point or a greater extent. Example sentence: "I was hoping this project would further my career, but I don't want to discuss it any further right now."

Fewer/less: *Fewer* is used to refer to things that can be quantified, i.e., things that can be counted, such as houses. *Less* refers to things that cannot be measured in number, e.g., intangible things like love and importance and tangible things that cannot be individually counted, such as money, garbage, overflow, or traffic. Example

sentence: "Harry pays less attention to Sally now that she has less money and fewer houses."

Flout/flaunt: To *flout* is to defy, ignore, or even mock. To *flaunt* is to show off. Example sentence: "Flouting social convention, Hortense decided to flaunt her million-dollar jewelry at the company picnic."

Good/well: *Good* is an adjective; therefore, it describes a condition or state of being. *Well* is an adverb; therefore, it describes a verb. Example sentence: "I feel good about myself when I do well on an exam."

Hone/home: *Hone* means "to polish." It does not refer to moving or directing attention toward an object or landmark. Example sentence: "A person hones a skill but homes in on something."

Infer/imply: To *infer* is to derive by reasoning or conclude, i.e., to make an inference. Inferring is quite different from implying, which is to suggest something. Example sentences: "James implied that I stole his idea. Then again, I could be inferring incorrectly."

Lay/lie: It's easy to remember how to tell these two apart because each word rhymes with its meaning. When you *lay* something, you place it: Lay → place. To *lie* is to recline: Lie → recline. Example sentence: "Lay down the blanket so we can lie on the beach together."

Lose/loose: If Sam *loses* something, he finds himself no longer in possession of that thing, Meanwhile, *loose* means "not tight."

Oriented/orientated: Simply put, *orientated* is not a word. The word is *oriented*, which refers to being pointed in a direction like north or toward something like family or career. Example sentence: "Brady is truly a goal-oriented young man."

Pore over/pour over: If you *pore over* something, you give it a great deal of attention. *Pouring over* would be something you do with syrup to pancakes. Example sentence: "Michael pored over the new employee's work as he poured oil into the fryer."

Principle/principal: A *principle* is a stated guideline of action or conduct. *Principal* always refers to something that is the highest in status or rank such as an investment or head of a school. Example sentence: "I make it a principle never to talk back to the principal."

Regardless/irregardless: *Irregardless* is not a word. *Regardless* means "without concern to or for."

Set/sit: *Set* means "to place something." *Sit* means "to be seated." Example sentence: "I need to sit down. Can you set my purse on the counter for me?"

Than/then: *Then* is an adverb that refers to a time other than now. To compare things, use the preposition *than*. Example sentence: "Hank told Anne he is nicer than people think, and then he yelled at her."

Their/there/they're: *Their* is a possessive pronoun. *There* is used to refer to a place that is not here. *They're* is a contraction for *they are*. Example sentence: "They're placing their new couch over there."

To/too/two: *To* is a preposition used for referring to direction or motion toward. *Too* means "also." *Two* is the number that comes after one. Example sentences: "Take one of the cupcakes to Lorna. I like cupcakes, too, so bring me two."

Commonly Misused Phrases

Correct	Incorrect
for all intents and purposes.	for all intensive purposes.
taken for granted.	taken for granite.
should've.	should of.
chest of drawers.	chester drawers.
couldn't care less.	could care less
scapegoat.	escape goat
the point is moot.	the point is mute.
with regard to.	in regards to.

Recommended Works

Works about Language

Aitchison, J. *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Forsyth, M. *Horologicon: A Day's Jaunt Through the Lost Words of the English Language.* New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2012.

> Comments: This is a thoroughly fun read for anyone interested in discovering more about the English language—current and past.

Laskow, Sarah. "Found: 30 Lost English Words That May Deserve a Combeback." Atlas Obscura. September 15, 2017. https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/found-30-lost-english-words.

Leith, D. *A Social History of English*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2003.

Murtiana, R. "The Dynamics of English Language Change from the Old Era to the Digital Age." *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 2, no. 1 (2012): 104–115.

O'Conner, Patricia. *Origins of the Specious: Myths and Misconceptions of the English Language*. New York: Random House, 2010.

> Comments: This is a fascinating book that explores the true origins of words for which we think we know the

> history and correct usage. Have fun testing whether you're what O'Conner terms *myth-informed*.

Oxford Royal Academy. "10 Words English Has Lost, and 10 Words It's Gained." May 12, 2106. https://www.oxford-royale.com/articles/words-lost-and-gained.html#aId=c46c2371-4e24-4605-aeb3-cb9a0d00dadc.

Sagar-Fenton, B., and L. McNeill. "How Many Words Do You Need to Speak a Language?" BBC News, June 24, 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44569277.

Salzmann, Z. *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2007.

Works About Grammar, Usage, and Writing

Dreyer, Benjamin. *Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style*. New York: Random House, 2019.

> Comments: Dreyer is known for his witty approach to teaching grammar and style, and he weaves humor into his examples.

Duistermaat, Henneke. "The Easy-Peasy Method for Finding Your Voice: 4 Examples of Writing Voice." Enchanting Marketing. https://www.enchantingmarketing.com/how-to-find-your-writing-voice/.

Garner, Bryan. *Garner's Modern English Usage*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

The Great Courses

> Comments: Many staunch grammarians consider this the authority on grammar, usage, and style.

———. *HBR Guide to Better Business Writing*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2012.

King, Stephen. *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. New York: Pocket Books, 2000.

Merriam-Webster, Inc. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. 2019.

> Comments: Everyone should own a hard-copy dictionary, and this one is a staple.

O'Conner, Patricia. *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. New York: Riverhead, 2009.

> Comments: This is the most approachable grammar-usage book out there. O'Conner uses humorous examples to explain nearly every grammatical rule.

Oxford English Dictionary. https://www.oed.com/.

> Comments: The *Oxford English Dictionary* is considered by some to be the preeminent source of information about usage in the English language. Its website does require a subscription, but it is recommended for any current or budding grammarians.

Strunk, William, & E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

Truss, Lynn. *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves: The Zero-Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. New York: Penguin, 2003.

> Comments: No list of grammar-related books would be complete without this truly hilarious staple.

Websites for Writing Help

Grammarly. www.grammarly.com.

> Comments: This is a free online tool that will check your work and let you know what mistakes it finds. It is useful because it identifies the grammatical issue rather than fixing it for you.

Purdue OWL. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html.

> Comments: The Purdue Online Writing Lab contains information about every grammar rule one could possibly need to know. It offers examples and cross-references, and it even illustrates templates for different style manuals.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center. https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/. Comments: Most universities' writing centers have their own resource pages, but this is a particularly useful one. Its "Tips & Tools" page, accessible through the above link, is full of valuable resources.

Works about Editing

Bell, Susan. *The Artful Edit: On the Practice of Editing Yourself*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.

Dunham, Steve. *The Editor's Companion: An Indispensable Guide to Editing Books, Magazines, Online, Publications, and More.* Blue Ash: Writer's Digest Books, 2014.

> Comments: Although the audience for this book is those who will be editing other works, its lessons are relevant for editing your own writing as well.

Works about Creating Stronger Relationships through Communication

Adler, Mortimer J. *How to Speak, How to Listen.* New York: Touchstone, 1983.

> Comments: Many of us overlook the importance of listening in communication. This classic book lays out a foundation upon which many other listening works are built.

Carnegie, Dale. *How to Win Friends and Influence People.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

> Comments: Originally released in 1936, this is a classic for a reason.

Fleming, Carol. *It's the Way You Say It: Becoming Articulate, Well-Spoken, and Clear.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2013.

Maxwell, John C. *How Successful People Think.* New York: Hachette Book Group, 2009.

Works on Conducting Research and Fact-Checking

Booth, Wayne. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Borel, Brooke. *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Style Manuals

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 7th ed. Washington DC, 2020.

> Comments: This is perhaps the most user-friendly style manual.

The Associated Press Stylebook. New York: Hachette Book Group, 2019.

> Comments: The AP style manual is written for professionals in fields like journalism and marketing; however, many organizations defer to its simple and comprehensive approach.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 17th ed. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2017.

Turabian, Kate. 2018. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

> Comments: Kate Turabian's book is adapted from the larger, more comprehensive *Chicago Manual of Style*

for use by students. Therefore, its rules are the same, but this book is a bit more focused on the writing of research papers.

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