Welcome to Fundamentals of Business English
ABC of Writing Skills

3rd Aug 2012
Objective:

- Understand the importance of effective business writing.
- Apply the ABC and KISS concept of business writing.
- Ensure the absence of deadwoods and verbosity in written messages.
- Use proper punctuation and apply positive mirroring in your written communications.
Effective writing skills

Effective business writing demands at least a little prior planning. Before you begin, you need to keep three basic principles in mind:

1. Understand your purpose
2. Know your audience
3. Decide the outcome and how to get there
Effective writing skills

ABC of Writing:

- Accuracy
- Brevity
- Conciseness and Clarity
Accuracy in writing

• Only 7% of our message is communicated through words.

• Accuracy of the message is integral to the effectiveness of the communication.

• Use of right words, avoidance of ambiguity, and correctness of the sentence constructed are of supreme importance.
a. Ambiguity

✓ Avoid ambiguous words and phrases.

- Rohit played Macbeth as well as Othello
  Meaning 1: He has acted in both the plays i.e. Macbeth and Othello.
  Meaning 2: He played the role of Macbeth as good as he played Othello.

- We dispense with accuracy.
  Meaning 1: We distribute /give out/allot (dispense) with a lot of accuracy.
  Meaning 2: We do away with/ leave out (dispense) accuracy.
b. Sentence construction

✓ Use grammatically correct sentences.

• Since I have to go to my village to sell my land along with my wife, please sanction me two day’s leave.
  • Wrong placing of the phrase **along with my wife** creates multiple meaning.

• “This is in reference to your ad post for a ‘writer and an proof reader’- Male or Female'. As I am both I am applying for the post.”
  • The incomplete phrase **as I am both-** creates confusion.
Your Answer

1. The police stopped drinking at midnight.

2. The country had no capital at the time.

3. “Please send a mail to the security department about her arrival to the campus on Monday morning.”

4. "Since I have to go for a cremation and I may not return, please grant me half day casual leave."
Brevity

- Another characteristic of effective writing is to be brief and simple.
- The point of brevity is not to say less, but to communicate a message more concisely.
- By deleting needless words or sentences and editing, this is possible.

Example: 'Management has become cognizant of the necessity for the elimination of undesirable vegetation surrounding the periphery of our facility.'

With brevity- 'Please remove the weeds around the building.' (Source: http://EzineArticles.com/3859050)

Example: ‘Pursuant to the rules reexamined as of this date by the administration in charge of Human Resources, endeavor to employ uncomplicated words in writing.’

With Brevity- ‘The HR wants us to write in simple language.’
The KISS concept

• Keep it **Simple**
  ✓ Short sentences, short paragraphs, simple subject line

• Keep it **Strong**
  ✓ Use concrete words and examples

• Keep it **Sincere**
  ✓ Reflect your sincerity and friendliness

• Keep it **Short**
  ✓ Cut needless words, redundant information & stale phrases
a. Deadwood/Tautology

1. Free gift
2. True facts
3. Sum total
4. Repeat again
5. Reply back
6. Component part
7. Hollow tube
8. Thought and consideration
Identify and remove the Deadwood word in the below sentences:

1. Renu went home at 12 midnight.
2. This is the most perfect sketch of the victim.
3. Circle around the correct alternatives.
4. We could not reach to a consensus of opinion in the meeting.
5. Infosys encourages new innovations.
6. If dissatisfied, you can return the product back in a days time.
7. People will remember this date in the future to come.
8. In my personal opinion the movie was bad.

1. 12
2. most
3. around
4. of opinion
5. new
6. back
7. to come
8. personal
### b. Many words to one word - Quick Quiz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A speech delivered without preparation</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Extempore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>One who cannot read and write</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>That which cannot be read</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Illegible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>One who sacrifices for his country</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>martyr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>One who always looks at the bright side of things</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Optimist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A place that provides refuge</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Asylum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>People in a stadium</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>spectators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>That which is likely to catch fire</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Inflammable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Who has a command over many languages</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Linguist/multi-linguist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A distant place</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Remote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A person with long experience</td>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Veteran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Article or poem of an unknown writer or author</td>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>To move out of one’s country to another</td>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Emigrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>To move from place to place</td>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Migrate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confusing words-Homonyms

- Homonyms are a group of words that share the same spelling and the same pronunciation but have different meanings.

- Homonyms include two categories of words-
  a. Homophones
  b. Homographs
Homophones

• Group of words that share the same pronunciation, irrespective of their spelling –
  • Same/different spelling(s)
  • Different meanings
  • But same pronunciation

E.g. Rose – a flower
  Rose – past tense of rise
  Chord – musical tone
  Cord - rope

Homographs

• Group of words that share the same spelling, irrespective of their pronunciation.
  • Different pronunciation
  • Different meanings
  • But same spelling

E.g. Advocate - ‘ædvəkeɪt’- to speak or write in support of
  Advocate - ‘ædvəkət’- a person who pleads for the cause of other
  Lead – ‘liːd’ - to guide or direct
  Lead – ‘led’- the metal
Identify the correct and the confusing word in the sentences:

1. I have to pay the **principal** amount first.
2. The bride looked radiant as she walked down the **aisle**.
3. A **horde** of curious bystanders were watching the movie shoot.
4. No heavenly body is **stationery**.
5. Rahul **complemented** Rita on her new attire.
6. It is better to be **discreet** than make a blunder.
7. The ‘**Diary** of Anna Hazare’ gives us a glimpse of the Indian freedom movement.
8. After much thought, he gave **assent** to my idea.

1. principal
2. aisle
3. horde
4. stationery
5. complemented
6. discreet
7. dairy
8. assent
Clarity and Correctness

• Written language is very different from face to face communication. The words used must be correct, professional, and the tone positive.

• Clarity is the gateway standard. If a statement is unclear, we cannot determine whether it is accurate or relevant. Avoid jargon, complex words, technical terms and abbreviations if the reader is not familiar to their usage.

• Your writing should be clear and to the point. The reader will respond quickly only if the meaning is crystal clear. Use short sentences and simple words.
# Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The period (.)</td>
<td>as a sentence ender. after an abbreviation</td>
<td>I live in Mysore. The term ends in Sep. for this batch..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question mark (?)</td>
<td>to indicate a direct question</td>
<td>Where did you go for the holidays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclamation (!)</td>
<td>to express a sudden outcry to add emphasis to a point</td>
<td>Wow! I don’t believe this! Thanks for not writing back!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma (,)</td>
<td>to indicate a separation of ideas or elements within the structure of a sentence after salutation or closing a mail</td>
<td>I like pink, blue, red and yellow flowers. We went shopping, they went home. Dear Raj, .............. Thanks &amp; Regards,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi colon (;)</td>
<td>to connect independent clauses ,To indicate a closer relationship between the clauses than a period does</td>
<td>Black is beautiful; white is peaceful. Call me later; I’ll give you the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon (:)</td>
<td>after a word introducing a quotation, an explanation, an e.g., or a series and after the salutation (email). Used within time</td>
<td>Summary: E.g.: Dear Ram: 8:15 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation marks (&quot;&quot; ')</td>
<td>Double quotes to mark the beginning and end of a passage attributed to another and repeated word for word and single quotes are used for quotes within quotes</td>
<td>He said “I don’t care!” The “sunshine” series was interesting. “John hates ‘the blues’ kind of music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyphen, (-)</td>
<td>Between the parts of a compound word or name or the syllable of a word, especially when divided at the end of a line.</td>
<td>Six-Pack Daughter-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostrophe ('')</td>
<td>To indicate the omission of a letter or letters from a word, the possessive case or the plural of numbers, letters and abbreviations</td>
<td>You’re Tara’s cat The 7c’s of writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correct the punctuation mistakes in this e-mail.

• you can reach me by phone any time today or tomorrow morning and my working hours are 10 to 5 so you can leave a message with my secretary to call back if necessary

• You can reach me by phone any time today or tomorrow morning. My working hours’ are 9 to 6. You can leave a message with my secretary to call back if necessary.
Add correct Punctuations

1. In three weeks time well have to begin school again
   Ans: In three week’s time we’ll have to begin school again.

2. Didnt you hear that theyre leaving tomorrow
   Ans: Did’nt you hear that they’re leaving tomorrow?

3. Elephants please sit in the car
   Ans: Elephants, please sit in the car.
       Elephants! Please sit in the car.
Positive mirroring

- Almost every day we are caught in situations where we should logically say ‘No” but don’t. Often our difficulty is caused by a desire to be a good person.

- Instead of telling someone what we cannot do, we can tell them what we can do. Avoid negative words such as cannot, mistake, failure, inconvenience etc.

THIS PATTERN IS CALLED POSITIVE MIRRORING

- Remember: Positive tones generally generate positive responses. Faith and goodwill generate confident co-operation.
Positive mirroring

1. We are not due for delivery for another two weeks.
   We are due for delivery in two weeks.

2. Rahul will be dealing with this but he is not in office till Monday
   Rahul is dealing with this and he will be in office on Monday.

3. We are unable to reply to your enquiry because you have not given the project code.
   We need the project code to respond to your enquiry.
Try positive mirroring

1. We never take telephone orders on weekends.

2. No one will pay more than $150 for this product.

3. We cannot exchange the bag without the bill.
Poll - Please provide your response

1. Question
2. Question
3. ...

Infosys