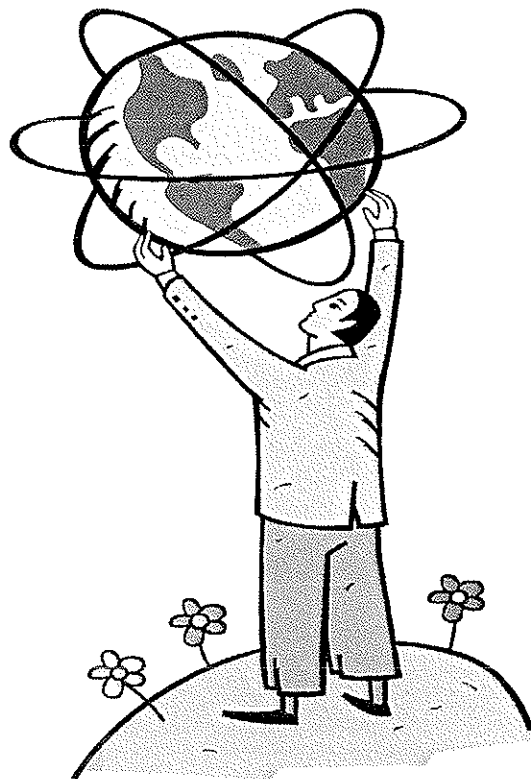


English for Business Administration: Business Writing



University of Cyprus

Language Centre

May 2012

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Business Writing in English

Day 1

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Philosophy of Workshop

- Instructional goals and objectives should be negotiated and not imposed;
- Create real-world environments that employ the context in which learning is relevant;
- Focus on knowledge construction, not reproduction;

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Philosophy of Workshop

- Present authentic tasks (contextualizing rather than abstracting instruction);
- Provide real-world, case-based learning environments, rather than pre-determined instructional sequences;
- Foster reflective practice;

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Philosophy of Workshop

- Support collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation.

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The Pre-test of English Language Use

- Have Fun!



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Electronic Email



- Know why you are writing and what you hope to achieve;
- Visualize the reader and the effect your message will have;
- Consider ways to shape the message to benefit the reader.

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■ *Content, Tone, and Correctness*

1. Be concise;
2. Don't send anything you wouldn't want published;
3. Don't use email to avoid contact;
4. Never respond when you are angry;
5. Care about correctness.

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■ Guide Words

■ Salutation

1. Because the content is like a letter include a salutation;
2. It makes the message friendlier;
3. It's a visual clue as to where the message begins.

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Writing Plan



- Opening: State your main idea
- Body: Provide background detail and explain the main idea
- Closing: Request action, summarize the message, or present a closing thought

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BODY: Graphic Highlighting

■ Use letters

Debenhams attracts customers by featuring quality fashions, personalized service, and a generous return policy.

Debenhams attracts customers by featuring (a) quality fashions, (b) personalized service, and (c) a generous return policy.

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Graphic Highlighting

■ Use Bullets

Debenhams attracts customers by featuring the following:

- Quality fashions
- Personalized service
- Generous return policy

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Graphic Highlighting

■ Use Numbers

Debenhams focuses on the following steps when hiring new personnel:

1. Examine the application
2. Interview the applicant
3. Check references

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Graphic Highlighting

■ Use Headings

Debenhams focuses on the following steps when hiring new personnel:

- **Attracting applicants.** We advertise for qualified applicants.
- **Interviewing applicants.** Our interviews include customer roleplays.
- **Checking references.** We investigate every applicant thoroughly.

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Parallelism

■ Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance.

• With the **-ing form (gerund)** of words:

Parallel: Mary likes hiking, swimming, and bicycling.

• With infinitive phrases:

Parallel: Mary likes to hike, to swim, and to ride a bicycle **OR** Mary likes to hike, swim, and ride a bicycle.

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■ **Incorrect:**

My degree, my work experience, and ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job.

■ **Correct:**

My degree, my work experience, and my ability to complete complicated projects qualify me for the job.

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■ **Incorrect:**

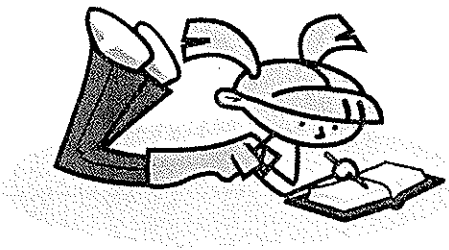
- Prepared weekly field payroll
- Material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- Recording OSHA regulated documentation
- Change orders
- Maintained hard copies of field documentation

■ **Correct:**

- Prepared weekly field payroll
- Handled material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- Recorded OSHA regulated documentation
- Processed change orders
- Maintained hard copies of field documentation

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EXERCISES



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Memorandum



■ Use a direct opening and be positive:

- This is to inform you that...
- ✓ Please review the following....

- As you may know, employees in Accounting have been complaining about...
- ✓ To improve...in Accounting, I recommend that...

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- Organize the message logically, keeping similar information grouped together.
- Graphic highlighting (bullets, numbered lists, headings) make information easier to read and review.
- The end of a memo should include action information (such as a deadline), a summarizing statement, or a closing thought.

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Memos that make a request

- The Introduction:
 - Ask the most important question first, followed by an explanation and then the other questions
 - Use a polite command, such as Please answer the following questions regarding...

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- The Body:
 - Explain and justify your request
 - When you must ask many questions, list them, being careful to phrase them similarly (parallelism)

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■ The Ending:

- Provide an end date. This helps the reader to plan the response so that the action is completed by the date given.

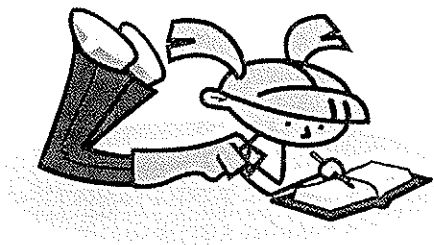
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Memos that respond

- Announce main idea in *Subject*;
- Summarize main idea and refer to previous message;
- Arrange information in order of original request and use graphic highlighting for emphasis and/or grouping of information;
- Close with reassuring remark and offer of further assistance.

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EXERCISES



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Sentence Types

- **Simple Sentence.** Every sentence must have a subject and a verb.
- **The final exam** took place in the auditorium.
- **The European Union** is investing a lot of money in research and development.

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- **Compound Sentences.** Two simple sentences are put together by using a FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or yet, so).
- **The final exam** took place in the auditorium, **but the students** were not informed.

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- **Complex Sentence.** This sentence type is a combination of one simple sentence and a clause.
- *If the students had been informed,* **they would** have shown up for the final exam.
- *Since the students did not arrive at the auditorium for their final exam,* **they may** retake it on June 30th.

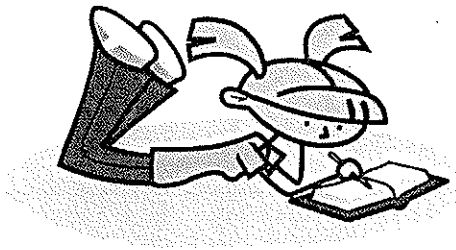
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■ **Compound-Complex.** This type of sentence construction must have two simple sentences and one clause.

■ *If you had handed in your tax declaration form on time, **you** wouldn't have these problems now, so **you** would be a lot happier.*

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EXERCISES



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References / Resources

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- <http://barker.orconhosting.net.nz/words.html>
- Guffey, M.E. *Essentials of Business Communication*. United States of America: Thomson South-Western, 2004
- Guffey, M.S. *Business English*. United States of America: Thomson South-Western, 2002

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GRAMMAR/MECHANICS DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Name _____

This diagnostic test is intended to reveal your strengths and weaknesses in using the following:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| plural nouns | adjectives | punctuation |
| possessive nouns | adverbs | capitalization style |
| pronouns | prepositions | number style |
| verbs | conjunctions | |

The test is organized into sections corresponding to these categories. In sections A-H, each sentence is either correct or has one error related to the category under which it is listed. If a sentence is correct, write C. If it has an error, underline the error and write the correct form in the space provided. Use ink to record your answers. When you finish, check your answers with your instructor and fill out the Grammar/Mechanics Profile at the end of the test.

A. PLURAL NOUNS

branches

Example The newspaper named editors in chief for both branchs.

- Three of the attornies representing the defendants were from cities in other states.
- Four freshmans discussed the pros and cons of attending colleges or universities.
- Since the 1990s, most companys have begun to send bills of lading with shipments.
- Neither the Johnsons nor the Morris's knew about the changes in beneficiaries.
- The manager asked all secretaries to work on the next four Saturday's.

B. POSSESSIVE NOUNS

- We sincerely hope that the jurys judgment reflects the stories of all the witnesses.
- In a little over two months' time, the secretaries had finished three reports for the president.
- Mr. Franklins staff is responsible for all accounts receivable contracted by customers purchasing electronics parts.
- At the next stockholders meeting, we will discuss benefits for employees and dividends for shareholders.
- Three months ago several employees in the sales department complained of Mrs. Smiths smoking.

C. PRONOUNS

Example Whom did you ask to replace Tom and I?

- My manager and myself were willing to send the copies to whoever needed them.
- Some of the work for Mr. Benson and I had to be reassigned to Mark and him.
- Although it's motor was damaged, the car started for the mechanic and me.
- Just between you and me, only you and I know that she will be transferred.
- My friend and I applied for employment at Reynolds, Inc., because of their excellent employee benefits.

me

D. VERB AGREEMENT

Example The list of arrangements have to be approved by Tim and her.

has _____

16. The keyboard, printer, and monitor costs less than I expected. _____
17. A description of the property, together with several other legal documents, were submitted by my attorney. _____
18. There was only two enclosures and the letter in the envelope. _____
19. Neither the manager nor the employees in the office think the solution is fair. _____
20. Because of the holiday, our committee prefer to delay its action. _____

E. VERB MOOD, VOICE, AND TENSE

21. If I was able to fill your order immediately, I certainly would. _____
22. To operate the machine, first open the disk drive door and then you insert the diskette. _____
23. If I could chose any city, I would select Honolulu. _____
24. Those papers have laid on his desk for more than two weeks. _____
25. The auditors have went over these accounts carefully, and they have found no discrepancies. _____

F. ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

26. Until we have a more clearer picture of the entire episode, we shall proceed cautiously. _____
27. For about a week their newly repaired copier worked just beautiful. _____
28. The recently elected official benefited from his coast to coast campaign. _____
29. Mr. Snyder only has two days before he must complete the end-of-the-year report. _____
30. The architects submitted there drawings in a last-minute attempt to beat the deadline. _____

G. PREPOSITIONS AND CONJUNCTIONS

31. Can you tell me where the meeting is scheduled at? _____
32. It seems like we have been taking this test forever. _____
33. Our investigation shows that the distribution department is more efficient than the sales department. _____
34. My courses this semester are totally different than last semester's. _____
35. Do you know where this shipment is going to? _____

H. COMMAS

For each of the following sentences, insert any necessary commas. Count the number of commas that you added. Write that number in the space provided. All punctuation must be correct to receive credit for the sentence. If a sentence requires no punctuation, write C.

Example However, because of developments in theory and computer applications, management is becoming more of a science. 2 _____

36. For example management determines how orders assignments and responsibilities are delegated to employees. _____
37. Your order Mrs. Swift will be sent from Memphis Tennessee on July 1. _____
38. When you need service on any of your pieces of equipment we will be happy to help you Mr. Lopez. _____
39. Kevin Long who is the project manager at Techdata suggested that I call you. _____
40. You have purchased from us often and your payments in the past have always been prompt. _____

I. COMMAS AND SEMICOLONS 1

Add commas and semicolons to the following sentences. In the space provided, write the number of punctuation marks that you added.

- _____ 41. The salesperson turned in his report however he did not indicate what time period it covered.
- _____ 42. Interest payments on bonds are tax deductible dividend payments are not.
- _____ 43. We are opening a branch office in Kettering and hope to be able to serve all your needs from that office by the middle of January.
- _____ 44. As suggested by the committee we must first secure adequate funding then we may consider expansion.
- _____ 45. When you begin to conduct research for a report consider the many library sources available namely books, periodicals, government publications, and databases.

J. COMMAS AND SEMICOLONS 2

- _____ 46. After our office manager had the printer repaired it jammed again within the first week although we treated it carefully.
- _____ 47. Our experienced courteous staff has been trained to anticipate your every need.
- _____ 48. In view of the new law that went into effect April 1 our current liability insurance must be increased however we cannot immediately afford it.
- _____ 49. As stipulated in our contract your agency will supervise our graphic arts and purchase our media time.
- _____ 50. As you know Mrs. Simpson we aim for long-term business relationships not quick profits.

K. OTHER PUNCTUATION

Each of the following sentences may require dashes, colons, question marks, quotation marks, periods, and underscores, as well as commas and semicolons. Add the appropriate punctuation to each sentence. Then, in the space provided, write the total number of marks that you added.

- 3 _____ Example Price, service, and reliability these are our prime considerations.
- _____ 51. The following members of the department volunteered to help on Saturday Kim Carlos Dan and Sylvia.
- _____ 52. Mr Danner, Miss Reed, and Mrs Garcia usually arrived at the office by 830 am.
- _____ 53. Three of our top managers Tim, Marcy, and Thomas received cash bonuses.
- _____ 54. Did the vice president really say "All employees may take Friday off"
- _____ 55. We are trying to locate an edition of Newsweek that carried an article entitled Who Is Reading Your E-Mail

L. CAPITALIZATION

For each of the following sentences, circle any letter that should be capitalized. In the space provided, write the number of circles that you marked.

Example · Vice president Daniels devised a procedure for expediting purchase orders from Area 4 warehouses.

4

56. although english was his native language, he also spoke spanish and could read french.
57. on a trip to the east coast, uncle henry visited the empire state building.
58. karen enrolled in classes in history, german, and sociology.
59. the business manager and the vice president each received a new compaq computer.
60. james lee, the president of kendrick, inc., will speak to our conference in the spring.

M. NUMBER STYLE

Decide whether the numbers in the following sentences should be written as words or as figures. Each sentence either is correct or has one error. If it is correct, write C. If it has an error, underline it and write the correct form in the space provided.

Example · The bank had 5 branches in three suburbs.

61. More than 2,000,000 people have visited the White House in the past five years.
62. Of the 35 letters sent out, only three were returned.
63. We set aside forty dollars for petty cash, but by December 1 our fund was depleted.
64. The meeting is scheduled for May 5th at 3 p.m.
65. In the past 20 years, nearly 15 percent of the population changed residences at least once.

five

Parallelism: Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance.

Poor: Miss Smith is energetic, resourceful and she can be relied on.

Improved: Miss Smith is energetic, resourceful, and reliable.

Poor: The new machine helped us save money, reduce pollution, and paper could be recycled.

Improved: The new machine helped us save money, reduce pollution, and recycle paper.

Improve the parallel construction.

A

1. Your job is to research, design, and the implementation of a diversity program.

2. Few managers are able to write letters accurately, concisely, and with efficiency.

3. The new software totals all balances, gives weekly reports, and statements are printed.

4. Our objectives are to make our stock profitable, to operate efficiently, and developing good employee relations.

B

Which direct opening statement is the best?

1. An e-mail message announcing an in-service program:
 - a. Employees interested in improving their writing and communication skills are invited to an in-service training program beginning October 4.
 - b. For the past year we have been investigating the possibility of developing an in-service training program for some of our employees.

2. A memo announcing a new procedure:
 - a. Some customer representatives in the field have suggested that they would like to key their reports from the field instead of coming back to the office to enter them in their computers. That's why we have made a number of changes. We would like you to use the following procedures.
 - b. Customer representatives may now key their field reports using the following procedures.

C

Use the following information to write a single sentence that includes an introductory statement and a list with letters (a,b,c). Do not list the items vertically.

The front page of a Web site should teach or familiarize readers. This front Page should tell them what the site is about. It should also tell about the organization of the site. Finally, it should tell them how to navigate the site.

Use the following instructions to write a bulleted vertical list with an introductory statement.

To use the Rollerblade brake, you should do these things. First you should move one leg a little bit forward. Then the front part of your foot should be lifted. Finally, the back part of your foot should be dragged to complete the braking action.

D

Improve the following email text.

Barbara:

We had no idea last month when we implemented new hiring procedures that major problems would result. Due to the fact that every department is now placing newspaper advertisements for new-hires individually, the problems occurred. This cannot continue. Perhaps we did not make it clear at that time, but all newly hired employees who are hired for a position should be requested through this office.

Do not submit your advertisements for new employees directly to an Internet job bank or newspapers. After writing them, they should be brought to Human Resources, where they will be centralised. You should discuss each ad with one of our counsellors. Then we will place the ad in an appropriate newspaper or other publication. If you do not follow these guidelines, chaos will result. You may pick up applicant folders from us the day after the closing date in an ad.

Mike

Name three problems in this email: _____

Revised e-mail

<p><i>Summarizes main idea concisely.</i></p> <p><i>Explains why change in procedures is necessary</i></p> <p><i>Starts each listed item with a verb</i></p> <p><i>Closes by reinforcing benefits to reader</i></p>	<p>Barbara:</p> <p>Effective today, all advertisements for departmental job openings should be routed through the Human Resources Department.</p> <p>A major problem resulted from the change in hiring procedures implemented last month. Each department began placing advertisements for new-hires individually, when all such requests should be centralized in this office. To process applications more efficiently, please follow this procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Write an advertisement for a position in your department.2. Bring the ad to Human Resources and discuss it with one of our counsellors.3. Let Human Resources place the ad with an appropriate newspaper or Web agency.4. Pick up applicant folders from Human Resources the day following the closing date provided in the ad. <p>Following these guidelines will save you work and will also enable Human Resources to help you fill your openings more quickly. Call Ms. Smith at Ext. 2906 if you have questions about this procedure.</p> <p>Mike</p>
---	---

E

Write an Email or Memo: Staff members in your office were disappointed that no holiday party was given last year. They don't care what kind of party it is, but they do want some kind of celebration this year.

Your job. You have been asked to write a memo to the office staff about a December holiday party. Decide what kind of party you would like. Include information about where the party will be held, when it is, what the cost will be, a description of the food to be served, whether guests are allowed, and whom to make reservations with.

A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 30 evenly spaced lines across the page.

Sentence Types

1. **Simple Sentence.** Every sentence must have a subject and a verb.
2. **Compound Sentence.** Two simple sentences are put together by using a FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or yet, so).
3. **Complex Sentence.** This sentence type is a combination of one simple sentence and a clause.
4. **Compound-Complex Sentence.** This type of sentence construction must have two simple sentences and one clause.

Correct or Combine the following sentences:

1. The European Union offers many opportunities for young researchers. There is a problem with recruiting young female researchers.

2. The deadline for the project has passed. There is no need to continue the work on the proposal.

3. There is only one procedure for claiming a refund. It is when you get your money back. This procedure must be completed before the time period of 14 days has ended.

4. You may take the exam. You must pay the fee.

5. Bill Clinton was the President of the United States. He was the commander of the U.S. military during his term of office. He did not join the army and participate in the Vietnam War.

Vocabulary Development: Confusing Words

accede, exceed

Accede means to agree, to allow; **exceed** means to go beyond, to surpass, as in "Drivers who exceed the speed limit are asking for hefty fines."

accept, except

Not commonly seen even from unpublished writers, who are probably familiar with the difference because they're all waiting for an acceptance! "We accept your invitation to your party, except for Bill, who will be away on that day."

However, I recently saw (on a publisher's web site!) the statement, "We are excepting submissions ..." Can you believe it?

adapt, adept, adopt

Adapt means to adjust, **adept** means skilled and **adopt** means to take as your own: "Some people cannot adapt to new surroundings." "He is very adept at dodging awkward questions." "He tends to adopt the attitudes of those around him."

adverse, averse

Adverse means inauspicious, hostile; **averse** means disinclined, repelled. "I'm very much averse to making a long, arduous journey under such adverse weather conditions."

advice, advise

Advice is the noun and **advise** the verb. "His advice was that we should advise everybody to either stay away or be extremely careful."

affect, effect

Affect is a verb; **effect** is more usually a noun. When used as a verb it means to achieve, fulfil, realise. "Bad weather will affect the quality of the fruit." "The effect of bad weather is a reduction in fruit quality." I can't think of any sentence using effect as a verb where one of the other three mentioned above wouldn't be a much better choice, but perhaps a politician might say, "To effect our goal of saving 10%..."

aloud, allowed

Aloud means out loud, speaking so that someone else can hear you; **allowed** means permitted.

already, all ready

Already means by this time; **all ready** means prepared.
"Are you already packed?"
"Yes, I'm all ready to leave."

altogether, all together

Altogether means wholly; **all together** means everybody in a group:
"It's altogether too bad that you can't come."
"All together, now: 'Good morning, Sir!'"

all right, alright

All right is the correct form; **alright** is grammatically incorrect.

allude, elude

Allude means to refer to; **elude** means to dodge or escape.

allusion, illusion

Allusion is an indirect reference or hint; **illusion** means deception or mirage.

all ways, always

All ways means by every way or method; **always** means all the time, forever.

annual, annul

Annual means yearly; **annul** means to make void or invalid.

anyone, any one

This is quite tricky. **Anyone** means anybody, any person at all; **any one** means any one person and is followed by "of".
"Does anyone else want to come?"
"Any one of you is welcome to come along."

appraise, apprise

Appraise is to assess or estimate. **Apprise** is to inform or notify:
"I will appraise the situation and immediately apprise everybody of my conclusions."
Please don't make your character say or write anything like this, though—unless you want him to sound like a pompous twit!

ascent, assent

Ascent is an upward movement; **assent** means agreement.

assistance, assistants

Assistance means help or aid; **assistants** is the plural of assistant, one who gives help.

assure, ensure, insure

Assure means to guarantee; **ensure** means to make sure; **insure** means to protect against loss or damage:

"I assure you there's no call for alarm."
"To ensure your crockery doesn't get broken, wrap it all in bubble wrap."
"In case of breakage or loss, you should insure everything with a good insurance company."

auger, augur

Auger is a tool; **augur** means to predict.

baited, bated

Baited usually refers to traps or snares. When the reference is to someone who is hardly daring to breathe, the correct word is always **bated**:
"She watched with bated breath."
I've yet to read that someone "bated a trap" instead of baiting it, but there's always a first time.

bare, bear

Bare means naked; **bear** (apart from being a large animal) means to carry.

bazaar, bizarre

Bazaar is an exhibition or fair; **bizarre** means weird, grotesque, alien.

berth, birth

Berth is a place to sleep on a boat or ship; **birth** is the beginning (usually of life).

beside, besides

Beside means by the side of; **besides** means in addition to.

biannual, biennial

These two are really tricky! **Biannual** means happening twice a year; **biennial** means every two years.

blonde, blond

Because these are borrowed from French there is a feminine and masculine form. **Blonde** is feminine and **blond** is masculine.

bore, boar, boor

Bore as a noun is a boring or tiresome person, or something that you don't like doing; **boar** is a male pig; **boor** is a vulgar person.

board, bored

Board is a long sheet of wood, also a group of people as in "Board of Directors", and as a verb means to go onto a ship, plane or other form of public transport; **bored** means not interested.

born, borne

Born is always the beginning of life, **borne** means carried. "I was born in the middle of a particularly severe winter." "The logs were borne down the river to the mill."

bought, brought

Bought is the past tense of buy, **brought** is the past tense of bring. So, I bought (paid for) a load of topsoil, and a truck driver brought (delivered) it to my home.

braise, braze

Braise means to cook slowly in liquid (usually meat); **braze** most commonly means to solder with an alloy of copper and zinc.

brake, break

Brake means to stop; **break** means to smash.

bridal, bridle

Bridal has to do with brides and weddings; **bridle** as a noun means a halter or restraint; as a verb it means to restrain or to draw oneself up in anger.

by, buy, bye

By is a preposition meaning next to; **buy** means purchase; **bye** means farewell or good-bye.

canvas, canvass

Canvas is cloth or fabric; **canvass** means to seek votes, to survey, to sell door-to-door.

capital, capitol

Capital means the seat of government; money invested; excellent, as in "What a capital idea!". **Capitol** is the building where government meets, although in New Zealand that's simply called The Beehive.

caught, court

Caught is the past tense of catch. **Court** is a place where criminals are tried; a place where ball games are played; a royal household or residence. As a verb it means to curry favour, to strive for or seek; or (in relationship terms) to date someone of the opposite gender.

cereal, serial

Cereal is something you might eat for breakfast, such as porridge. **Serial** is something in a series; something that continues one after another, as in a weekly instalment of chapters from a book.

censor, sensor

Censor as a verb means to officially inspect and make deletions or changes (in books, letters, movies, etc.) usually because the deleted or changed material is regarded as offensive or harmful in some way, though movies these days are more likely to be given

a rating instead; as a noun it refers to the official who does the censoring. **Sensor** is something that senses (for instance a burglar alarm has many sensors: for movement, body heat, etc.)

collaborate, corroborate

Collaborate means to work with someone; **corroborate** means to establish the truth of something.

compliment, complement

Compliment means praise or congratulate. You always pay someone a compliment, not a complement. **Complement** means to supplement, round out. Mustard complements ham, for instance, by "rounding out" the flavour.

continual, continuous

Continual means something that happens frequently, with breaks between the occurrences. **Continuous** means something that happens without stopping! "Continual interruptions distract me from writing."
"The continuous noise of the motor mower distracts me from writing."

co-operation, corporation

Co-operation (usually spelt without the hyphen in US English) means working together; **corporation** is a business organisation.

correspondence, correspondents

Correspondence is written communication; **correspondents** are those who write it.

creak, creek

Creak is both a noun and a verb and means squeak or groan (for instance, rusty hinges and loose floorboards creak); **creek** is a noun and means a waterway or stream.

credible, creditable

Credible means believable; **creditable** means praiseworthy or deserving credit.

criteria, criterion

Criterion is singular; **criteria** is plural.

curb, kerb

Curb means to control, as in "curb your temper", while **kerb** is the edge of a footpath or sidewalk.

currant, current

Currant is a fruit, usually dried. **Current** as an adjective means contemporary, fashionable; as a noun it means stream, flow.

desert, dessert

Desert means to abandon (and can also be a noun, meaning a wasteland); **dessert** is the sweet course of a meal.

device, devise

Device is a noun, meaning a gadget or (particularly in writing terms) an invention; **devise** is a verb, meaning to invent or plot.

discreet, discrete

Discreet means respectful, prudent; **discrete** means separate or detached from others.

draft, draught

Draft refers to the first writing of your novel or story (or any other document). You can also be drafted (enlisted or recruited) into the army, navy, etc. **Draught** is an air movement, a drink (as in "draught of ale") or refers to a horse (or other animal) used for pulling ploughs, etc (e.g., "draught horse").

elicit, illicit

Elicit means to extract or draw out; **illicit** means not legal.

eminent, imminent

Eminent means distinguished, famous; **imminent** means near, close at hand.

everyday, every day

Everyday means commonplace, ordinary; **every day** is used for something that happens daily.

everyone, every one

Everyone means every person in a group; **every one** means each person and is always followed by "of".
"Everyone needs to know how to swim."
"Every one of you should be able to swim."

fair, fare

Fair means average, good-looking, pale, unbiased (what a lot of meanings for one little word!); **fare** is the money you pay to go somewhere by bus, train, plane, taxi, etc. It can also refer to a passenger. As a verb it means do, as in: "I didn't fare as well in my exams this year as I'd hoped."

farther, further

Farther is used for physical distance; **further** for non-physical. For instance: The farther we walked the more hostile the terrain became. I promised to give the plan further thought.

faze, phase

The most common error is the use of **phase** when the writer means **faze**. To **faze** someone is to fluster or confuse them, whereas **phase** is mostly used in reference to a stage in someone's life—though it can be a stage in almost anything else: "Like most children, Danny's going through a phase of refusing to eat his vegetables." "Nothing fazes my mother, who can produce a meal for unexpected guests at a moment's notice."

flare, flair

Flare means to flash or blaze and (as a noun) is a pyrotechnic device; **flair** means ability or skill.

forbear, forebear

Forbear means to refrain from; **forebear** is an ancestor or forefather.

foreword, forward

Foreword is the preface in a book, usually written by someone who is not the author; **forward** means ahead, near the front.

forth, fourth

Forth means forward; **fourth** is after "third".

foul, fowl

Foul can mean dishonourable (by foul means), disgusting (a foul smell), entangle (rubbish dumped in the river can foul fishing lines); **fowl** is a bird.

found, founded

Found is the past tense of find; **founded** means started, as in "My great grandfather founded this company nearly a hundred years ago."

gibe, jibe

Gibe means to taunt; **jibe** means to agree, correspond or tally; in boating it means to shift the sails.

gorilla, guerrilla

Gorilla is a large ape; **guerrilla** is a particular kind of soldier.

hail, hale

Hail means to greet or to come from (as in "She hails from Texas") and as a noun it is frozen raindrops; **hale** means healthy or (as a verb) to haul.

hanged, hung

A criminal is always **hanged**; a picture is **hung**:
"We hung the portrait where everybody could see it."
"John Smith was hanged yesterday at dawn."
Just remember, "I'll be hanged if they're going to hang me," and you won't forget the difference again!

herd, heard

Herd is a group of animals; **heard** is the past tense of hear.

here, hear

Here refers to a location (as in "over here"). **Hear** is always what your ears do. I can't see why writers should get confused here, but they must do because I have seen this more

than once. (And, no, that's *not* a sample sentence!) I've even seen "Here! Here!" when the writer wasn't having a character call another character, but was expressing support for a real person!

hoard, horde

Hoard means to stockpile and as a noun it is a cache of stockpiled stuff; **horde** is a large group.

hole, whole

Hole is an opening; **whole** means complete.

home, hone

In this case the error is always using "hone in" instead of "home in". **Hone** means to sharpen.

immemorial, immortal

Immemorial means ancient beyond memory (as in the cliché "since time immemorial"); **immortal** means deathless, eternal.

intolerable, intolerant

Intolerable means tiring, onerous crushing; **intolerant** means biased, prejudiced. Someone cannot be intolerable of another's beliefs.

irregardless, regardless

There is no such word as **irregardless**; the correct word is **regardless**

its, it's

This is confusing because possessives normally have an apostrophe, but in this case **it's** is short for it is and **its** is possessive—*always*. "Its colour is green and it's quite beautiful." Other possessives that don't have an apostrophe are theirs, hers, yours and his—though I doubt anyone is likely to try putting one in his!

knew, new

knew is the past tense of know; **new** is the opposite of old.

later, latter

Later means afterwards; **latter** is the second of two things. "Later that day we went for a walk." "We have two choices. The latter is the more reliable, but the former would be cheaper."

lay, laid

This pair confuses writers almost more than any other. "He lay on his bed." Although this sentence is past tense, "laid" would be incorrect and suggests he was laying eggs. "She sighed as she laid the visitors' book beside the pen and lay back wondering if she would ever make an entry in it again." In present tense the sentence would read, "She sighs as she lays the visitors' book

beside the pen and lies back, wondering if she will ever make an entry in it again."
 BUT "I sigh as I lay the visitors' book beside the pen and lie back, wondering if I will ever
 make an entry in it again."
 (In practice, I would probably write I place/placed and she places/placed. It's so much
 less confusing, not to mention less repetitive!)"
 "It lay on the desk beside an open book." Present tense would read, "It lies on the desk
 beside an open book."
 "Our hens lay every day."
 "The hens laid ten eggs yesterday."

lay, lie

When these two are confused it's usually because the writer is in the wrong tense for a word that means recline. "I am going to lay down because I don't feel well" or "I am going to lay on my bed and read" are both incorrect; the word should be lie. In the second sentence it sounds as though the writer is going to lay an egg as well as read! In past tense, however, the correct usage is "I lay down because I didn't feel well" and "I lay on my bed and read".

lead, led

Lead (pronounced led) is a heavy metal or (pronounced leed) the present tense of **led**.
 So:
 "He opens the door for me and I lead the guests upstairs to their rooms."
 "He opened the door for me and I led the guests upstairs to their rooms."

lend, loan

Lend is a verb meaning to give something temporarily to someone; **loan** is a noun, meaning the temporary transfer of something to someone else. So, "Dad, can you loan me a few dollars until pay day?" is incorrect.

lessen, lesson

Lessen means to make less; **lesson** is something you learn.

liable, libel

Liable means subject to, answerable for or likely; **libel** is written (as opposed to spoken) untruths about someone, for which you may be taken to court.
 "He is liable to sudden attacks of ill temper for no apparent reason."
 "Politicians should be made liable for their bad decisions."
 "Pollen is liable to cause hay fever or even asthma attacks in certain individuals."

licence, license

In British usage, **licence** is always the noun and **license** the verb.

lightening, lightning

Lightening means making lighter or brighter; **lightning** (which is always a noun) is what comes out of the sky, usually followed by a crack of thunder.

lose, loose

Lose always means mislaying or dropping something and not being able to find it, while
loose means slack or free:
 "If the fastening on your wrist-watch is loose (slack) you may lose your watch."

manner, manor

I saw this pair confused in an email ("all manor of complaints") and figured if one person could get them confused others could too. **Manner** means method, appearance, class, character; **manor** is strictly a large, stately house.

mantel, mantle

Mantel is the shelf above a fireplace, or the fireplace surrounding; **mantle** is a cloak or blanket.

marshal, marshall

Marshal is a military officer or a sheriff; **marshall** is a verb

maybe, may be

Another tricky one, best explained by demonstration:
"Maybe you could explain this to us a little clearer."
"It may be a good idea to give us a clearer explanation of this."

meet, mete, meat

The two more often confused are meet and mete. **Meet** means to encounter (and can also mean fit or suitable); **mete** means to allot, apportion or distribute; **meat** refers to flesh as food.

mute, moot

Mute as a verb means to silence or quieten down, as a noun it's a little gadget used by string players (particularly violinists) to soften the sound from their instruments. As an adjective it means dumb or making no sound, as in "He looked at me in mute appeal."
Moot means debatable. So, it's a "moot point" not a "mute point".

no, know

Strange that these two should get confused, but they do. **No** is always the opposite of yes; **know** is to be certain (that you know the difference!)

overdo, overdue

It baffles me that people get these mixed up, but they do. **Overdo** means to exaggerate or carry something too far; **overdue** is what your bills are when you forget to pay them!

passed, past

Passed is the past tense of pass. **Past** means a time that has gone.
"Time passed and we all forgot the incident."
"In times past it was the custom for women to wear hats in church."

peace, piece

Peace means the absence of war (or even noise); **piece** is a portion of something.

peer, pier

Peer as a noun means a person who is your equal and as a verb it means to squint or look obliquely at something; **pier** is a type of wharf or dock. Two other words that sound

similar are pear (a fruit) and pare (to peel) but I haven't seen any instances where these have been confused.

plain, plane

Plain means obvious, also unadorned or lacking in good looks; **plane** is a carpenter's tool or an abbreviation of aeroplane.

patience, patients

Patience means forbearance; **patients** are people under medical care.

peek, pique, peak

Pique means to excite or irritate; **peek** means to peep or snoop; **peak** as a noun means the summit or tip, and as a verb means to climax. So, you pique someone's curiosity; you don't peek or peak it. If someone annoys you, you become piqued rather than peeked or peaked.

perspective, prospective

These two sound only vaguely alike yet seem to get confused. **Perspective** means point of view; also panorama; **prospective** means future, inevitable, destined.

pour, pore

You **pour** sauces, gravies, etc, over your dinner, while **pore** means to study something—so, "**pore** over the book", not "**pour** over the book", which reads as though you might be damaging the book with an unnamed liquid substance!

practice, practise

In British usage, **practice** is always the noun and **practise** the verb.

pray, prey

Pray is usually what you do when you talk to God. **Pray** as a verb means to hunt, to stalk,; as a noun it means the subject of the hunt,

premise, premises

Premise usually means assumption, supposition, while **premises** means an apartment, house or building and its grounds.

presence, presents

Presence means being near at hand; **presents** are gifts.

principal, principle

Principal means chief or main, also the amount borrowed in a loan; **principle** means regulations or ideals.
"The principal reason for the company's failure was lack of money." (or)
"The new principal is making a real difference to our school."
"We are paying both principal and interest each month on our mortgage."
"She is completely without principles and would steal from her own mother."
"The principle of a clause like this in your employment contract is to protect you against unfair dismissal."

profit, prophet

Profit means gain, earnings, advantage, and is usually associated with business. A **prophet** is a seer, a diviner. I saw this mix-up in a writer's group, of all places! "What doth it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loseth his soul?" "A prophet is without honour in his own country."

quiet, quite

Quiet means without noise; **quite** when used in fiction usually means moderately, but can also mean totally or entirely. Use of the wrong word here could, of course, simply be a typing error that went unnoticed in the proof-reading stages!

rain, reign, rein

Rain is the water that comes down from clouds; **reign** means to rule; **rein** is a strap, usually leather, for controlling an animal, especially a horse.

raise, raze

These two are exact opposites. **Raise** means to lift or build up and **raze** means to pull down:

"We will raise the reputation of our village to new heights."
"He instructed his army to raze the village to the ground."

rapt, rapped, wrapped

Rapt means enchanted, engrossed; **rapped** is the past tense of rap, to hit or criticise; **wrapped** is the past tense of wrap, to coat or enfold.

reality, realty

Reality is real life; **realty** is real estate.

reference, reverence

I don't know if this confusion is common. I didn't even realise the words *could* be confused until I saw one wrongly used in something written by ... a writer! Maybe it was just a typing error. **Reference** is something referred to, **reverence** means respect.

regimen, regiment

Regimen is a noun and is mostly used to refer to a prescribed way of life, or diet or exercise. It is also the action of governing. **Regiment** as a verb means to direct, command; as a noun it refers to a military unit.

residence, residents

Residence is a house; **residents** are the people who live there.

respectfully, respectively

Respectfully means politely; **respectively** means in the order stated. "The containers stood in a row and were numbered 1, 3, 2, 5 and 4 respectively" means they were standing in this order rather than numerical order.

retch, wretch

Retch means to gag or try to vomit; **wretch** is a grovelling person, a creep.

rifle, riffle

Rifle (apart from being a firearm) means to steal; **riffle** means to leaf through or browse. So your character doesn't rifle *through* someone's belongings and only rifles them if stealing them.

right, rite, write

Right means correct; **rite** is a ceremony, usually religious; **write** means to make words.

road, rode

Road is a long surface for cars and other vehicles; **rode** is the past tense of ride.

role, roll

Role is a part in a play or film; **roll** as a noun is a document or something that is cylindrical in shape and as a verb it means to make something into a cylindrical shape, to turn or spin:

sale, sail

Sale is either offering something for purchase ("for sale") or offering it at a special price ("on sale"); **sail** is part of a ship or boat.

scene, seen

Scene is the place where something happens; **seen** is the past participle of see. "Yet he had seen nothing suspicious at the scene of the accident." (Of course you wouldn't write a sentence like that; the two words make for a clumsy combination. I would probably replace "scene" with "site".)

seam, seem

Seam is most often used to refer to the joining of two pieces of fabric with thread, but it can refer to other types of joins; **seem** means appear: "He makes it seem so easy to do."

sell, cell

Sell is to exchange for money; **cell** is a small room (invariably lacking in comfort); also an organism (as in "stem cells"); the small divisions in something large such as a container or a table in a web page or word-processed document.

sever, severe

Sever means to separate, detach; **severe** means grim, stern.

serf, surf

Serf means slave or servant; **surf** is a wave and as a verb is also the action of riding the waves on a board or using a computer to find something on the Internet.

shear, sheer

Shear means to cut or clip; **sheer** means transparent (as in "sheer nylon hosiery"); steep (as in "a sheer drop"); total or absolute (as in "sheer stupidity").

shore, sure

Shore as verb means to brace or support; as a noun it is usually a beach but can also be a support or a brace; **sure** means certain, confident. So you do not sure up a company by borrowing more capital; you shore it up.

singly, singularly

Singly means individually, one-by-one; **singularly** means strangely, uniquely. I found the wrong use of this pair on a writer's site, where singularly was used instead of singly, and figured if one person could get it wrong so could others.

site, sight, cite

Site always refers to location or place: building site; archaeology site. "We will site the house to take advantage of the panoramic views."

Sight always refers to vision, as in the cliché "a sight for sore eyes".

"We sighted two horsemen coming over the hill."

"It was a sight I would never forget."

"She feared she might lose her sight."

Cite means to summon, or to refer to a source, as in the following sentences:

"I was cited as a witness to the accident."

"He cited in his defence an incident in which these same people were involved."

sleight-of-hand, slight-of-hand

It occurred to me that these could be confused only when an editor changed my "sleight-of-hand" to "slight-of-hand", making me wonder how come I had made such a mistake. The latter is definitely incorrect; it suggests hands that are slender rather than deft or skilful, which is what the word sleight means.

slither, sliver

A colleague found these words constantly confused in a book published by a big-name publisher. **Slither** means to slip, slide; **sliver** is a noun, meaning a thin piece, such as a flake, paring or chip.

some time, sometime

This is a common confusion. **Some time** is a period of time and **sometime** means at some time not specified.

"Some time ago you promised to introduce me to your brother."

"Sometime when you're not busy we must do this again."

sole, soul

Sole as an adjective means single, as in "the sole cause of the problem"; as a noun it is a type of fish and the under part of a foot or a shoe. **Soul** generally refers to the invisible part of you that lives on after you die; also heart or mind; a human being (as in "no living soul").

stationary, stationery

Stationary means standing still. **Stationery** refers to writing paper.

statue, statute, stature

Statue is a carved or moulded likeness; **statute** is law; **stature** means height or status.

straight, strait

Straight means without bends; **strait** is a passage of water.

taut, taught, taunt

Taut means tight, firm; **taught** is the past tense of teach; **taunt** equals jeer, insult.

tenant, tenet

Tenant is one who rents a property; **tenet** is a principle or belief.

there, their, they're

There is a location: "Put it over there."
Their is the possessive of they: "their coats"
They're is short for they are: "They're unlikely to miss seeing them."
So: "They hung their coats over there by the door where they're unlikely to miss seeing them on their way out." Dreadful sentence I know, but at least it demonstrates the correct usage for all three words.

to, too, two

To is a preposition meaning towards; **too** means also or extremely (as in "You are walking too fast for me"); **two** is the number after one.

throes, throws

Throes are violent spasms or painful struggles, though not always physical. For example, "She is in the throes of a nasty divorce case." **Throws** means hurls or tosses. As a noun it means blankets or other types of covering.

vane, vain, vein

Vane is something that shows from which direction the wind is blowing; also (among other things) the sail of a windmill, the flat part on either side of the shaft of a feather, a revolving fan or flywheel; **vain** means too concerned about how one looks (though one can be vain about other things, of course!) and also means useless, as in "a vain attempt"; **vein** is a blood vessel, a channel. When you blaspheme you are "taking the Lord's name in vain".

venal, venial

Venal means dishonest, dishonourable; **venial** means forgivable, unimportant (as in "venial sins").

verses, versus

I saw this mix-up—the use of verses instead of versus—in a small newspaper. **Verses** is the plural of verse, something a poet writes; **versus** means against, in comparison with.

vicious, viscous

Vicious means savage, cruel; **viscous** means thick, gummy.

waist, waste

Waist is the part of your body around which you fasten your belt; **waste** as a noun mostly refers to stuff that's thrown away. As a verb it usually means to squander.

wary, weary

Wary means careful; **weary** means tired.

wave, waive

Wave means to flap your hand in farewell and as a noun is also a breaker on the beach; **waive** means to give up one's rights or claim.

waver, waiver

Waver means to be undecided; **waiver** means the giving up of rights or claims.

weak, week

Weak is the opposite of strong; **week** is seven days, Sunday to Saturday.

wet, whet

Wet as a verb means strictly to pour liquid on something. You do *not* "wet" somebody's appetite for anything; you'll only land up doing the opposite of what you want! Instead, you **whet** it, which means to sharpen or stimulate.

which, witch

As a fantasy writer, I have trouble believing people get these two confused! **Which** is one of a group; **witch** is a sorcerer.

whose, who's

This confusion is similar to its and it's. **Whose** is possessive, and **who's** is short for "who is".

wont, won't

Wont means accustomed; **won't** is short for "will not". The usual confusion here is to use won't instead of wont.

yoke, yolk

Yoke as a verb means to bind or confine. In olden days, for instance, oxen were yoked together for ploughing. As a noun it is more usually the means by which something is bound or confined, though I remember the upper part of a two-piece bodice on a dress or blouse being referred to as a yoke. **Yolk** is the yellow part of an egg.

your, you're

As in the entry for whose and who's, this confusion is similar to its and it's. **Your** is possessive and **you're** is short for "you are".

Business Writing in English

Day 2

CAUTION

Letters written on stationery are considered to be a legally binding contract.

Writing Letters

- Openings and closings of letters are the most interesting and important.
- Openings should be direct and concise.
- Closings should tell the reader what you want done and when.

Letter of Request

- The first sentence is usually a question or a polite command (disguised as a question):

Will you please answer the following questions about providing meeting rooms and accommodations for 250 people from May 25 through May 29.

Letter of Request

- The last sentence should tell the reader what you want with a deadline:

Answers to these questions and any other information you can provide will help us decide which conference facility to choose. Your response before November 15 would be most appreciated since our planning committee meets November 19.

EXAMPLE



Information Response Letter

- Respond favourably to requests for information or action;
- Respond to request for information about a product;
- Respond to inquiries about procedures.

The Subject Line

- Refer to earlier correspondence;
- Summarize the main idea;
- Be concise.

- May use all capital letters;
- May use a combination of upper-and lower case letters.

Openings – Avoid Wordiness

- I have before me your letter of February 6, in which you request information about...

- ✓ Here is the information you wanted/requested about...
- ✓ Yes, I will be happy to speak to your local rotary club on the topic of...

Closing of Response Letter

- Be pleasant;
- Be helpful;
- Provide extra information.

✓ You'll find additional information ... If you would like to discuss my responses or ask additional questions, please/just call....
We look forward to...

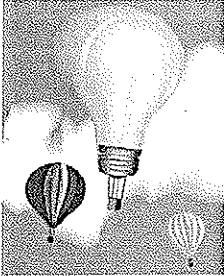
EXAMPLE



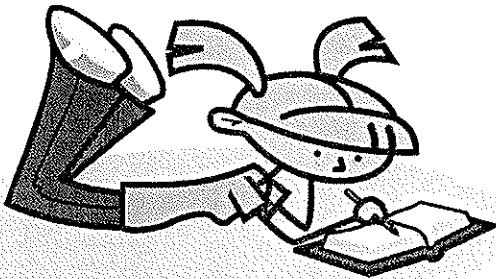
Request for Merchandise

- **Opening:** Authorize purchase and suggest method of shipping.
- **Body:** List items vertically; provide quantity, order number, description, and unit price; and show total price of order.
- **Closing:** Request shipment by a specific date, tell method of payment, and express appreciation.

EXAMPLE



EXERCISES



Bad News or Negative Messages

- Use the indirect pattern
- Buffer
- Reasons
- Bad news
- Closing

Buffer

- Begin with positive news first.
- ✓ To ensure that your incoming e-mail does not contain spam or viruses, we are installing a new filtering program that you may begin using immediately at no extra charge. (Increase in Internet Connection Fees)

Buffer

- Compliment the receiver's accomplishments, organization, or efforts.
- ✓ The Rotary Club has my sincere admiration for their fund-raising projects on behalf of refugee children. I am honored that you asked me to speak on (date)... (Refusing Request)

Buffer

- Express appreciation for doing business, for sending something, for showing confidence in your organization.
- ✓ Thanks for telling us about your experience at our hotel and for giving us a chance to look into the situation. (Refuse Claim)

Buffer

- Make a relevant statement with which both reader and receiver can agree.
- ✓ We both realize how much the export business has been affected by the relative strength of the euro in the past year. (Refuse Financing)

Buffer

- Provide objective information/facts that introduces bad news.
- ✓ During the past five years the number of employees eating breakfast in our cafeteria has dropped from 32 percent to 12 percent. (Cutting Back Hours of Service)

Buffer

- Show that you understand/care about the reader.
- ✓ We know that you expect superior performance from all the products you purchase from Telecom. That's why we're writing personally about the Tutti-frutti printer cartridges you recently ordered. (Announcing Product Defect)

Buffer

- Apologize to letter of complaints but be early, brief, and sincere.
- ✓ We're genuinely sorry that you were disappointed in... Your opinion is important to us, and we appreciate your giving us the opportunity to look into the problem you describe.

Presenting the reasons

- **Being cautious in explaining.** Tell why something is impossible.
- **Citing reader benefits.** Readers are more open to bad news if in some way, even indirectly, it may help them.
- **Explaining company policy.** Don't hide behind the policy, state why the policy makes sense.

Presenting the reasons

- **Choosing positive words.** Avoid negative words that may cause the reader to tune out: *claim, error, failure, fault, impossible, mistaken, misunderstand, never, regret, unwilling, unfortunately, and violate.*
- **Expressing sincerity.** In explaining reasons, demonstrate to the reader that you take the matter seriously, have investigated carefully, and are making an unbiased decision.

Provide a Pillow for Bad News

- **Positioning the bad news.** Do not let the refusal begin or end the paragraph. Begin a painful idea in a subordinate clause:
 - ✓ Although another candidate was hired, we appreciate your interest in our organization ... (although, as, because, if, and since)

Provide a Pillow for Bad News

- **Using the passive voice:** Passive-voice constructions put the focus on the action not on a person.
 - We don't give cash refunds.
 - ✓ Cash refunds are not given because...
- **Adding the passive voice** in a subordinate clause.
 - ✓ Although franchise owners cannot be required to lower their prices, we are happy to pass on your comments for their consideration.

Provide a Pillow for Bad News

- **Accentuating the positive.** Messages are far more effective when you describe what you can do instead of what you can't do.
 - We will no longer allow credit card purchases.
 - ✓ We are now selling gasoline at discount cash prices.

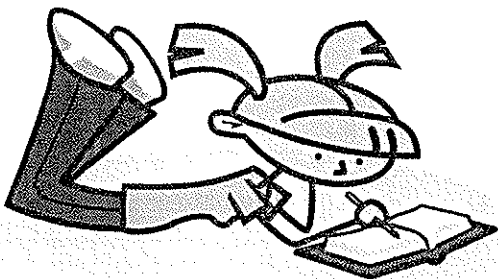
Closing Pleasantly

- **Forward look.** Anticipate future relations or business. *Thanks for your bid. We look forward to working with your talented staff when future projects demand your special expertise.*
(Rejecting Bid)
- **Good Wishes.** *We appreciate your interest in our company, and we extend to you our best wishes in your search to find the perfect match between your skills and job requirements.*
(Reject Employment)

Review of Outline

- **Bad News Messages**
 1. Buffer
 2. Reasons
 3. Bad news
 4. Closing

EXERCISES



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Letterhead	<p>DCC 958 Alum Creek Drive Columbus, OH 43208 PHONE: (614) 455-3201 Digital Communication Corporation FAX: (614) 455-6621 WEB: www.dcs.com</p>
Dateline	<p>October 14, 200x</p>
Inside address	<p>Mr. Dennis Purdy, Manager MGM Grand Hotel and Casino 3799 Las Vegas Boulevard South Las Vegas, NV 89109</p>
Salutation	<p>Dear Mr. Purdy:</p>
Body	<p>Can the MGM Grand Hotel provide meeting rooms and accommodations for about 250 DCC sales representatives from May 25 through May 29?</p> <p>Your hotel received strong recommendations because of its excellent resort and conference facilities. Our spring sales conference is scheduled for next May, and I am collecting information for our planning committee. Will you please answer these additional questions regarding the MGM Grand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the hotel have a banquet room that can seat 250? • Do you have at least four smaller meeting rooms, each to accommodate a maximum of 75? • What kind of computer facilities are available for electronic presentations? • What is the nearest airport, and do you provide transportation to and from it? <p>Answers to these questions and any other information you can provide will help us decide which conference facility to choose. Your response before November 15 would be most appreciated since our planning committee meets November 19.</p>
Complimentary close	<p>Sincerely yours,</p>
Author's name and identification	<p><i>Carol A. Allen</i> Carol A. Allen Corporate Travel Department</p>
Reference initials	<p>CAA:gdr</p>

TIPS FOR FORMATTING LETTERS

- Start the date on line 13 or 1 blank line below the letterhead.
- For block style, begin all lines at the left margin.
- Leave side margins of 1 to 1½ inches depending on the length of the letter.
- Single-space the body and double-space between paragraphs.

Analyze the following ineffective request for merchandise, and list its weaknesses. Outline a writing plan for an order request. Then revise using block style. Add any necessary information.

Dear Sir:

I saw a number of items in your summer/fall catalogue that would fit my Lentax ME camera. I am particularly interested in your Super Zoom 55-200mm lens. Its number is SF39971, and it costs € 230.49. To go with this lens I will need a polarizing filter. Its number is SF29032 and costs €32.95 and should fit a 52mm lens. Also include a 05CC magenta filter for a 52mm lens. That number is SF29036 and it costs €12.47. Please send also a Hikemaster camera case for €27.49. Its number is SF28355.

I am interested in having these items charged to my credit card. I'd sure like to get them quickly because my vacation starts soon.

Sincerely,

Bob



A. List at least five weaknesses in this letter.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

B. Outline a writing plan for an order request.

Opening:

Body:

Closing:

The following letter from the human resources department of a business illustrates the pattern of an order letter.

Greetings:				Opens directly with authorization for purchase, method of delivery, and catalog source.
Please send by express mail the following items from your summer catalog.				
Quantity	Catalog Number	Description	Price	Uses columns to make quantity, catalog number, description, and price stand out.
250	OG44-18	Payroll greeting cards	\$102.50	
250	OG31-22	Payroll card envelopes	21.95	
100	OM22-01	Performance greeting cards	80.00	
	Subtotal		\$204.45	
	Tax at 7%		14.31	
	Shipping		24.00	Calculates totals to prevent possible mistakes.
	Total		\$242.76	
My company would appreciate receiving these cards immediately since we are starting an employee recognition program February 12. Enclosed is our check for \$242.76. If additional charges are necessary, please bill my company.				Expresses appreciation and tells when items are expected; identifies method of payment.
Sincerely,				

Identifies previous correspondence; may use all caps or upper- and lowercase

Answers each inquiry fully and logically in list form

Builds goodwill by providing extra information and ends cordially without clichés

EXCALIBUR CREDIT SERVICE

301 N. International Parkway
Richardson, TX 75081

Voice: (800) 432-9587
Web: www.excalibur.com
Fax: (817) 683-2285

February 6, 200x

Ms. Hillary A. Roper
The Houston Post
4980 Washington Avenue
Houston, TX 77048

Dear Ms. Roper:

SUBJECT: YOUR FEBRUARY 1 LETTER REQUESTING INFORMATION FOR AN ARTICLE TO APPEAR IN THE HOUSTON POST

Thanks for providing this excellent opportunity to answer frequently asked questions about the credit-reporting industry in general and about our company in particular. Below are my responses to the questions in your recent letter.

1. Excalibur is a credit-reporting agency that stores information about the credit history of consumers. Such agencies are necessary to help credit grantors evaluate the credit history of consumers in a timely manner so that creditworthy people can have ready access to credit.
2. We do not collect or maintain information about race, religion, gender, salary, personal assets, checking or savings accounts, medical history, personal background, lifestyle, or criminal record.
3. The Fair Credit Reporting Act allows employers to access an applicant's credit report for employment purposes. We do not, however, make decisions about hiring applicants or denying employment. Individuals must check with employers to determine why they were denied employment.
4. A "risk score" is a numerical summary of the information in a consumer's file. It provides a credit grantor a nonjudgmental, empirically derived, and statistically correct tool to be used as part of the credit-evaluation process.

You'll find additional information in the enclosed booklet, "Understanding Excalibur's Credit-Reporting Service." If you would like to discuss my responses or ask additional questions, just call (414) 698-2302. We look forward to seeing your article in print.

Sincerely,

Debbie Wills-Garcia

Debbie Wills-Garcia
Consumer Services Division

DWG:rla
Enclosure

A student/engineer has requested more information about education and training/work possibility in your field. This individual wants to know about your program of study/your program of services. Write a letter describing the program/service in your field. What courses must be taken? Toward what degree, certificate, or employment position does this program lead? Why did you choose it? Would you recommend this program/position? Add any information you feel would be helpful.

Outline a writing plan for an order request.

Opening:

Body:

Closing:

A

Which of the following represents an effective direct opening

1. ___ Thank you for your e-mail of June 13 in which you inquired about the availability of sprinkler part H640B.
___ We have on hand an ample supply of H640B sprinkler parts.

2. ___ We sincerely appreciate your recent order for plywood wallboard panels.
___ The plywood wallboard panels that you requested were shipped today by Coastal Express and should reach you by August 12.

3. ___ My name is Susan Smith, and I am assistant to the director of Human Resources at the University of Cyprus. Our institution has an intranet, which we would like to use more efficiently to get feedback on employee issues and concerns. I understand that you have a software product called "Opinion-ware," which we are considering for our Intranet.
___ Please answer the following questions about your software product "Opinion-ware," which we are considering for our intranet.

B

Revise the following openings so that they are more direct. Add information if necessary.

1. Hello! My name is Susan Smith, and I am the assistant manager of Body Workout, a fitness equipment centre in Nicosia. My manager has asked me to inquire about the cycling machines that we saw advertised in the June issue of Your Health magazine. I have a number of questions.

2. Because I've lost your order blank, I have to write this letter. I hope that it's all right to place an order this way. I am interested in ordering a number of things from you summer catalogue, which I still have although the order blank is missing.

C.

Revise the following sentences so that the bad news appears in a subordinate clause.

1. Unfortunately, our PrimeTel FastAccess Internet service is unavailable in your area. However, we suggest that you use our dial-up modem for internet access and Web services.

2. We no longer print a complete catalogue. However, we now offer all of our catalogue choices at our Web site, which is always current.

3. Flying Airways cannot accept responsibility for expenses incurred indirectly from flight delays. However, we do recognize that this delay inconvenienced you.

D

Revise the following refusals so that they use passive-voice instead of active-voice.

1. Company policy forbids us to give performance reviews until an employee has been on the job for 12 months.

2. We cannot refund cash for the items you purchased on credit.

3. I have already filled my schedule on the date you wish me to speak.

E.

Writing Task: Write an e-mail or hard-copy memo to the staff denying the request of several employees to include nonemployees on the UCY intramural sports teams.

Recently several of your employees requested that their spouses or friends be allowed to participate in UCY intramural sports teams. Although the teams play only once a week during the season, these employees claim that they can't afford more time away from friends and family. More than 100 employees currently participate in the eight coed volleyball, softball, and tennis teams, which are open to company employees only. The teams were designed to improve employee friendships and to give employees a regular occasion to have fun together.

If nonemployees were to participate, you're afraid that employee interaction would be limited. And while some team members might have fun if spouses or friends were included you're not sure all employees would enjoy it. You're not interested in turning the sport event into "date night". Adding more teams would cause scheduling problems.

WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

Useful phrases

Salutation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dear Mr Brown • Dear Ms White • Dear Sir • Dear Sirs • Dear Madam • Dear Sir or Madam • Gentlemen
Starting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are writing to inform you that ... to confirm ... to request ... to enquire about ... • I am contacting you for the following reason. • I recently read/heard about ... and would like to know ... • Having seen your advertisement in ... , I would like to ... • I would be interested in (obtaining/receiving) ... • I received your address from ... and would like to ... • I am writing to tell you about ...
Referring to previous contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for your letter of March 15 ... • Thank you for contacting us. • In reply to your request ... • Thank you for your letter regarding ... • With reference to our telephone conversation yesterday ... • Further to our meeting last week ... • It was a pleasure meeting you in London last month. • I enjoyed having lunch with you last week in Tokyo. • I would just like to confirm the main points we discussed on Tuesday ...
Making a request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would appreciate it if you would ... • I would be grateful if you could... • Could you please send me ... • Could you possibly tell us/let us have... • In addition, I would like to receive ... • It would be helpful if you could send us ... • I am interested in (obtaining/receiving...) • I would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter. • Please let me know what action you propose to take.
Offering help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would be happy to ... • Would you like us to ... • We are quite willing to ... • Our company would be pleased to ...
Giving good news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are pleased to announce that ... • I am delighted to inform you that ... • You will be pleased to learn that ...

<p>Giving bad news</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regret to inform you that ... • I'm afraid it would not be possible to ... • Unfortunately we cannot/we are unable to ... • After careful consideration we have decided (not) to ...
<p>Complaining</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with ... • I am writing to complain about ... • Please note that the goods we ordered on (date) have not yet arrived. • We regret to inform you that our order n°--- is now considerably overdue. • I would like to query the transport charges which seem unusually high.
<p>Apologizing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are sorry for the delay in replying ... • I regret any inconvenience caused • I would like to apologize for (the delay/the inconvenience) ... • Once again, I apologise for any inconvenience.
<p>Orders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for your quotation of ... • We are pleased to place an order with your company for ... • We would like to cancel our order n°... • Please confirm receipt of our order. • I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of your order n°... • Your order will be processed as quickly as possible. • It will take about (three) weeks to process your order. • We can guarantee delivery before ... • Unfortunately these articles are no longer available/are out of stock.
<p>Prices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please send us your price list. • You will find enclosed our most recent catalogue and price list. • Please note that our prices are subject to change without notice. • We have pleasure in enclosing a detailed quotation. • We can make you a firm offer of ... • Our terms of payment are as follows :
<p>Referring to payment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our records show that we have not yet received payment of ... • According to our records ... • Please send payment as soon as possible. • You will receive a credit note for the sum of ...
<p>Enclosing documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am enclosing ... • Please find enclosed ... • You will find enclosed ...
<p>Closing remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know • If I can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me • If you require more information ... • For further details ...

<p>Referring to future business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for taking this into consideration • Thank you for your help. • We hope you are happy with this arrangement. • We hope you can settle this matter to our satisfaction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future • We would be (very) pleased to do business with your company. • I would be happy to have an opportunity to work with your firm.
<p>Referring to future contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look forward to seeing you next week • Looking forward to hearing from you • " " to receiving your comments • I look forward to meeting you on the 15th • I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience.
<p>Ending</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerely, } • Yours sincerely, } (for all customers/clients) • Sincerely yours, } <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regards, (for those you already know and have a working relationship with)

www.learn-english-today.com/business-english/business-letters.html



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ - UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS - KIBRIS ÜNİVERSİTESİ

ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΓΛΩΣΣΩΝ - LANGUAGE CENTRE - DİL MERKEZİ

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ ΕΝΗΛΙΚΩΝ / ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Lined writing area consisting of multiple horizontal lines for text entry.

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