

Business Writing: Write Right for Results



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Loan Program

C.A.R.E. to get results

- **C** = *Connect, to communicate*
- **A** = *Adjust to audience*
- **R** = *Reinforce reasons to act*
- **E** = *Expect the best*

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Connect, to communicate

- Find and point out *commonalities*
- Be *calmly conversational*
- *Compliment* the reader(s) if possible

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Connect with commonalities

- Who you are
- What you do
- What interests you
- Use “us” and “we” as you write

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Connect with a calm, conversational tone

- Connect as a friend or equal partner
- Keep your attitude to yourself
- Don't destroy or prevent a connection via:
 - hostility, sarcasm, or arrogance
 - fear or fawning flattery
 - apathy
- Have a friend read it before you send it

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Connect with a compliment

- Well deserved, not idle flattery
- Builds relationship and makes reader more receptive to message
- Refer to something they are or have done
- Be as specific as possible

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Adjust to your audience

- Is reader hostile or friendly?
- Is this good or bad news?
- What is reader's level of knowledge?
- What is reader's personality style?
- Are there other potential readers?

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Adjust to your audience: hostile or friendly?

- If hostile to recommendation, do not flatter or try to ingratiate:
 - use calm, cordial, professional tone
 - take time to explain benefits carefully
- If friendly, may be able to be more casual, depending on reader's "rank"

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Adjust to your audience: good or bad news?

- If good news, enjoy sharing it
- If bad news
 - make more palatable in three steps:
 - positive statement (if possible)
 - negative news
 - positive statement (if possible)
 - preserve relationship with diplomacy:
 - focus on the process used
 - avoid saying anything personal

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Adjust to your audience: level of knowledge

- Will reader understand issues, or do you need to explain in detail?
- Will reader understand jargon or should you avoid it?

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Adjust to your audience: rating readability

- To ensure comprehension, learn the “readability score” on your writing
- Flesch-Kincaid test checks length of words, sentences, and paragraphs
- Rates text on grade school level
 - score of 8.0 means an eighth grader can understand the document well

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Adjust to your audience: rating readability

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**, and then click the **Spelling & Grammar** tab
2. Select the **Check grammar with spelling** check box
3. Select the **Show readability statistics** check box, and then click **OK**
4. Click **Spelling and Grammar** on the **Standard** toolbar

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Adjust to your audience: rating readability

- Only when Word finishes checking and correcting spelling and grammar will it display information about the reading level of the document
- To skip the correction process, press the "Ignore All" button located in the upper right part of the suggestion box. Then the "Readability Statistics" box will appear. The Flesch-Kincaid readability score appears in 10th position.

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Adjust to your audience: level of knowledge

- If readability score is too high, don't "dumb down" your writing
- Substitute shorter but clear words
- Break up sentences and paragraphs to shorter ones
- Break text into easy to digest bullet points

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Adjust to your audience: a readability example

- I would appreciate it very much if each of you remember that if there are any future occasions when it is necessary to bring matters of this nature regarding refunds to my attention to send your message to the Customer Service department with a copy to me rather than sending the message directly to my attention.

Grade level 12

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Adjust to your audience: a readability example

- Please send all future messages regarding refunds directly to Customer Service. Then forward a copy to me, please.

Grade level 8.2

Financing Your Education: Loans, Grants, Scholarships, and Jobs (An NSLP online course)

Determining the best way to fund your education is challenging. Many questions must be asked and answered as you learn about all the options.

The major questions include:

- How much will my college education cost?
- How will I pay for books, supplies, room and board, transportation, and an occasional pizza?
- What's the payoff for my time and expense?
- How much financial aid is available?
- How will I pay off any loans? How long will it take? What's the total cost?

Financing Your Education: Loans, Grants, Scholarships, and Jobs (An NSLP online course)

Learn more about financing your education by enrolling now. This course will help you:

- Determine your eligibility for financial aid
- Learn how to apply for financial aid
- Research other college funding options

**Learn about financing education and
five other money management topics!**

[**Register Now**](#)

Adjust to your audience: level of knowledge

- Always choose clear, concise, easily understood words over longer obscure, **obfuscating** words
- Your goal is to communicate, not impress

Adjust to your audience: choose concise, clear words

Wordy or obscure:

- Accomplish the project
- Afford an opportunity
- Attached/enclosed herewith attached/enclosed is/are
- Based on the fact that
- Deem
- Effect modifications
- Endeavor, attempt
- Finalize

Concise, clear:

- Complete, finish
- Allow, permit, enable
- Please find

- Because
- Believe, think
- Modify, change
- Try
- Conclude, finish, end

Adjust to your audience: choose concise, clear words

Wordy or obscure:

- For the purpose of
- In addition to the above
- In the amount of
- In close proximity to
- In the event that
- In a position to
- Interpose no objections
- Involve the necessity of
- Is found to be

Concise, clear:

- For, to
- Also
- For
- Near
- If, in case
- Can, able
- Agree with
- Involve
- Is

Adjust to your audience: choose concise, clear words

Wordy or obscure:

- *Make* an adjustment to
- *Make* mention of
- *Make* reference to
- Perform an analysis of
- Predicated upon
- Present a conclusion

Concise, clear:

- Adjust
- Mention
- Refer
- Analyze
- Based upon
- Conclude

Adjust to your audience: choose concise, clear words

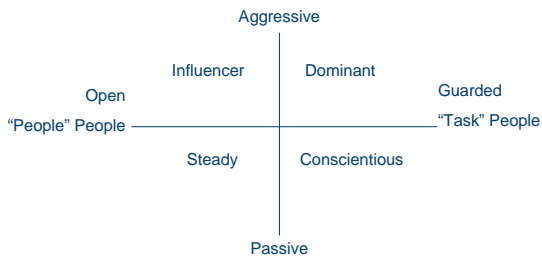
Wordy or obscure:

- Pursuant to
- Pursuant to your request
- Raise the question
- Through the use of
- We are in receipt of
- With the exception of

Concise, clear:

- According to, by
- As you requested
- Ask
- By, with
- We received
- Except for

Adjust to your audience: personality style



Adjust to your audience: terms that appeal to influencers

- Compelling, appealing, unique, new
- Inspiring, motivating, insights, influential
- Innovative, creative, let's brainstorm, big picture, vision, mission
- Quick, painless, easy, fun
- Be the first, be recognized, appreciated
- Passion, dedication, contribution

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Adjust to your audience: to compliment influencers

- Recognize their:
 - innovative approach, creativity, vision
 - passion, dedication, hard work
 - sparkle, charisma, people skills, connections
 - optimism, resilience, influence
 - ability to lead and bring out the best in people

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Adjust to your audience: terms that appeal to dominants

- Reach the goal, achieve, accomplish, get results, work hard, get more done
- Do it now, immediate, quickly, urgent
- Critical, important, imperative, essential
- Solve the problem
- Bottom line, profit, deliverables

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Adjust to your audience: to compliment dominants

- Recognize their:
 - clear, focused thinking
 - decisiveness
 - efficiency
 - drive
 - ability to solve problems quickly
 - ability to organize, stay on task, and get things done (and push when necessary)

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Adjust to your audience: terms for the conscientious

- Data, facts, details, research, studies, documentation, proof, prove
- Analyze, examine, test, review, consider, evaluate, outline, detail
- Careful, thorough, logical, objective
- Correct, right, accurate, dependable, high quality

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Adjust to your audience: to compliment the conscientious

- Recognize their:
 - thoroughness, attention to detail, accuracy
 - logic, analytical nature, intelligence
 - dedication to quality and accuracy
 - ability to ask “devil’s advocate” questions and work out contingency plans

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Adjust to your audience: terms that appeal to steadies

- Accommodate, help, support, share, care
- Collaborate, build consensus, resolve, keep the peace, get closure, maintain stability
- Compassionate, thoughtful, considerate
- Team, family, us, we, inclusive, be faithful to, loyal, spend time together
- Improve morale, contribute, recognize others

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Adjust to your audience: to compliment steadies

- Recognize their:
 - insights, understanding of people, sensitivity to feelings
 - ability to recognize and bring out the best in people, draw out their ideas, collaborate, gain consensus
 - dedication to fairness and everyone being heard
 - loyalty, dedication to “the team”

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Adjust to your audience: complimenting all styles

- Recognize their:
 - hard work
 - dedication, caring
 - to results and/or to people

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Adjust to your audience: other readers?

- Always organize thoughts well and express them clearly
- Adjust to the biases, knowledge, and styles others might have

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Questions?



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Reinforce reasons to act

- Make message powerful and concrete by addressing “What’s in it for me?”
 - convert features to benefits
 - warn of negative effects of not acting
 - express message with personal pronouns
- Make message personal by adapting to reader’s personality style

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NSLP's Financial Literacy Online Learning Center Description

Wish you could teach your students personal money management but don't have the time and resources to do so? National Student Loan Program is here to help. (you) Your school has a unique opportunity to experience NSLP's Financial Literacy Online courses for absolutely NO COST and for very little time commitment.

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Reinforce reasons to influencing readers

- Tell how your recommendation:
 - will make them look good
 - will save time or effort
 - is new/cutting edge and exciting
- Use personal stories
- Present testimonials
- Build the relationship

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Reinforce reasons to dominant readers

- Tell how your recommendation:
 - will help them achieve goals
 - will save time or accomplish results quickly
 - will increase efficiency
- Be organized, concise, and to the point (but include supporting data at end)
- Use bullet points vs. dense paragraphs
- Give them clear-cut alternatives, or urge specific course of action

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Reinforce reasons to conscientious readers

- Tell how your recommendation:
 - ensures or increases efficiency, quality or accuracy
 - decreases, avoids, or eliminates risk
- Use a pleasant but not personal or chatty tone
- Be clear, logical, dispassionate, thorough
- Use detailed data and quote reliable sources
- Don't exaggerate your idea's positives; admit the negatives

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Reinforce reasons to steady readers

- Tell how your recommendation:
 - will help individuals or the team, or use their strengths
 - will help them organize and get things done
 - will raise morale or *esprit de corps*
 - will decrease risk, stress, or conflict
- Use non-threatening, relationship-building "team talk" and warm, informal tone
- Provide assurances, guarantees, offers of coaching/training
- Sincerely encourage questions

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Reinforce reasons to all styles

- Begin by addressing dominants
- Then briefly speak to the interests/priorities of others

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Reinforce reasons to all styles

Your office has invested in some PDAs for people. You need to convince them it's worth making the effort to learn to use them. You might write:

"Your PDA will help you get more done in less time! It also helps you get organized, which gives you more free time. All while keeping track of key details."

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Expect the best

- Trust in reader's intentions and capabilities
- Appeal to people's best selves, and you'll get *more* of their best selves
- Build a culture of positive expectation

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Questions?



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Recommended books

- **Business Writing for Results:** *How to create a sense of urgency and increase response to all of your business communications*, by Jane K. Cleland
- **Persuasive Business Writing:** *Achieve your objectives and raise your profile with better business communication*, by Patrick Forsyth
- **Write to the Point:** *How to communicate in business with style and purpose*, by Salvatore J. Lacone

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