



Succinct Plain Language Writing

Overview

Organizations greatly benefit from having a professional cadre who can produce clear, well-organized, grammatically correct documents of the work they perform. Today's professionals are expected to communicate technically, and technical writing plays a vital role in how one's work is presented to key customers, and the research community as a whole. Skills obtained from this technical writing course will help participants to communicate with others inside and outside of the organization through reports, instructions, procedures, e-mails, letters, abstracts, case studies, etc.

Learning Objectives

- Define succinct writing, including types of document and key purposes
- Establish a system of steps for planning and executing a well-written document, including methods for organizing and critical components
- Identify and implement tools for writing to complement the reader's level of understanding
- Write examples of technical instructions and conduct tests to determine areas that need improvement
- Gain a better grasp understanding of the grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure required for writing correctly.
- Practice the ability to write concisely and clearly, so that the reader will grasp quickly the message of the written material.
- Learn the process of gathering material, putting it in a format that addresses the points under discussion, and bringing closure to the situation, through recommendations or next steps.
- Revisit the rules of good grammar and clear communication
- Improve sentence construction and paragraph development
- To apply these skills in real work applications.
- To learn how to proofread your work so you can feel confident it is clear, concise, complete, and correct
- Revise given examples using editing tools
- Assess means of translating tech-talk into reader-friendly language
- Define and create abstracts and recommendations to summarize technical documents
- Identify elements of formatting to enhance the readability of documents

Course Agenda

Day One: Review

Module 1: Applying Plain Language Concepts to Your Writing

- Plain Language Act of 2010
- The 12 Principles for Plain Language
- Addressing one person and not a group
- Writing short sections
- Indicating requirements
- Omitting unnecessary words
- Using terms consistently
- Addressing legal, foreign, and technical jargon
- Focusing on one topic per paragraph

Module 2: Writing Overview, Basics, and Preparation

- The Purpose of Writing
 - Why is Writing So Difficult?
 - Why it Matters?
 - Write Better

Module 3: Assessing the Audience

- Who is your Audience?
- Create a Reader Profile
- Get a Better Understanding of Your Audience
 - Learning Styles
 - Audience Analysis Exercise

Module 4: Document Types and Purpose

- Business Reports
- Feasibility Studies
- Incident Reports
- Proposals
- Instruction Manuals
- Abstracts
- Executive Summaries
 - Skills Practice

- Recommendations
 - Skills Practice

Module 5: Crafting Sentences that Communicate

- Parts of a Sentence
 - Skills Practice
- Types of Sentences
- The Paragraph
 - Personal Pronouns

Module 6: Common Grammar Problems and How to Correct Them

- Grammar
 - Personal Pronouns
 - Noun / Verb Agreement
 - Avoid Offensive Language
 - Pronoun Form: Who/Whom and Whoever/Whomever
 - Me, Myself, and I: Pronoun Problems
 - Subject-Verb Agreement
 - 14 Words That are Always Singular
 - Verb Tenses
 - Passive Voice vs. Active Voice
- Punctuation
 - Commas
 - Transitions Between Clauses
 - The Semicolon
 - The Colon
 - The Apostrophe
 - The Hyphen
 - Quotation Marks
 - Adverbs & Adjectives
- Spelling
- Commonly Misused Words
- Capitalization
- Using Numbers
- Abbreviations and Acronyms
- Skills Practice
- Creating a Cheat Sheet

Day Two

Module 7: The Mechanics of Writing

- The MASTER Writing System
 - Technique 1: Mapping
 - Skills Practice
 - Technique 2: Arranging
 - Skills Practice
 - Technique 3: Scripting
 - Your Readers and Their Needs
 - Tips to Beat “Writers Block”
 - Skills Practice
 - Linking Thought to Thought, Paragraph to Paragraph
 - Skills Practice
 - Technique 4: Testing
 - Two Types of Testing
 - The Top 10 Test Questions
 - Skills Practice
 - Technique 5: Editing
 - Issues to Check for While Editing
 - Readability
 - Skills Practice
 - Technique 6: Reviewing/Revising
 - Four Steps to Ensure You’ve Nailed It!
 - Professional Tone
 - Writing Constructively
 - Writing the First Draft
 - Using the Inverted Pyramid to Structure Ideas
 - Write Your First Draft Fast
 - 11 Tips for Writing Your First Draft

Module 8: The Principles of Good Writing

- The Four C’s of Communication
 - Clarity
 - Conciseness
 - Completeness
 - Correctness
- Word Usage
- Redundancies

- Wordiness
- Poor Word Choice

Module 9: Proofreading Essentials

- Proofreading for Perfection
 - 15 Proofreading Strategies
 - Skills Practice