

Chapter 2

The Six Cs of Effective Messages

Outline

Communication Perspectives

Section 1 Courtesy

Section 2 Clarity

Section 3 Conciseness

Section 4 Concreteness

Section 5 Correctness

Section 6 Completeness

Summary

Learning Objectives

- 1 Revise messages to reflect courtesy.
- 2 Revise messages to enhance clarity.
- 3 Apply techniques that ensure concise messages.
- 4 Make messages concrete by providing specific information.
- 5 Review messages for correct content, mechanics, and appearance.
- 6 Determine whether a message meets the completeness criteria of *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.

COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVES

Correct Word Choice

As the polling editor for USA TODAY for the past 15 years, my fundamental task has been to meld two professions—public opinion research and daily journalism—that exist to communicate.

For me, the communication process consists of two steps:

- First, I help create polls. Each poll is, in effect, listening to what Americans think about the issues of the day.
- Second, I help the newspaper publish articles about the poll results. The paper speaks to Americans about their attitudes on the issues of the day.

Anyone who works as a newspaper reporter for very long winds up in the embarrassing position of having to run a correction to a story. I have been involved in my share. Printing corrections certainly drives home the point of how difficult communicating clearly and correctly can be.

The most concrete lessons I've learned about how easily communication can "jump the tracks" have come from the polling side of my job. The lessons are concrete and measurable.

One example occurred in July 1999. The USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup polling team wanted to know how Americans thought the federal budget surplus should be used. We asked half the people in our poll, "Would you prefer to see the budget surplus used to increase spending on other government programs or to cut taxes?" We realized, however, that the phrase "spending on government programs" had powerful negative connotations for many respondents. For the other half of the people being polled, we spelled out some of the ways the money might be spent: "Would you prefer to see the budget surplus used to increase spending on education, defense, Medicare, and other programs or to cut taxes?" The addition of those few words caused support for spending to jump from 28 percent to 61 percent.

Time and time again I have seen such seemingly minor question tweaking lead to major shifts in responses. Each time it happens, I am reminded once again how powerful words are and how elusive the goal of effective communication can be.

Even though no one can ever achieve total mastery of the art of communication, lessons are to be learned that can improve one's efforts. The rewards for such improvements are well worth the effort.

James Norman, Polling Editor
USA TODAY

Section 1:

COURTESY

The Six Cs

Courtesy

Clarity
Conciseness
Concreteness
Correctness
Completeness

Courtesy helps you maintain goodwill by showing concern for the reader.

Goodwill is a feeling of confidence based on honesty and reliable service.

You can also describe courtesy as diplomacy. For example, when government officials from different countries meet, they employ some of the same strategies you use in showing concern for the reader of your messages. Both parties prepare by researching the other's culture and language (developing the *you* attitude). If a disagreement arises, the representatives try to be objective and polite (using positive words) rather than insulting. The officials use appropriate gender references during their dialogue (selecting gender-free terms). After the meeting, further negotiations and relations between the two countries are aided by meeting communication deadlines (responding to messages promptly).

All communicators should demonstrate courtesy by following these methods:

- Develop the *you* attitude.
- Use positive words.
- Select gender-free terms.
- Respond to messages promptly.

Develop the *You* Attitude

To develop the *you* attitude in communication, a writer or speaker must project empathy into business messages, replace *I* or *we* with *you* or *your*, and address the receiver by name.

Empathy means imagining yourself in the receiver's position. In written communication, apply the same tact that you would use if you were talking directly to the receiver. When you talk with a person, body language helps project your meaning. When you write, you have only words to convey the meaning. The reader must understand exactly what you intend because many business decisions depend entirely on the written word. A misused or misunderstood word can confuse the reader and cost a business money. Thus, when you write or speak, avoid colloquialisms, jargon, and any words or phrases that might be offensive.

Replace *I* or *we* with *you* or *your* to establish your friendly intent as a writer. In your message, emphasize the benefits to the reader. Consider the following examples:

Examples:

I/We Attitude

I will issue a \$25.82 credit to you on your December invoice.

We will provide free event shirts for volunteers to wear at the race.

You/Your Attitude

You will receive a \$25.82 credit on your December invoice.

All volunteers may wear free event shirts at the race.

Even requests for action and unfavorable responses may create goodwill when the emphasis is on the reader's benefits. The following examples illustrate how an unpleasant message can be courteous and incorporate the *you* attitude.

Examples:

I/We Attitude

After September 15, I will drop all students who have not signed and returned their Acceptable Use Form.

We require a \$300 minimum balance in order for customers to receive free checks.

You/Your Attitude

Please protect your enrollment. Sign and return your Acceptable Use Form by September 15.

When you maintain a \$300 minimum balance, you receive free checks.

Timely Tip



Jargon includes technical or specialized language used in a profession, trade, or group.

Use the reader's name in the message to emphasize the person's importance. When you respond to a written message, obtain the correct spelling of the name from the sender's message. If you originate the message and you are unsure of the correct spelling, call the business and ask for the correct spelling of the individual's name and title. Illustration 2-1 on page 33 shows how a person's name can be used effectively in a message.

Use Positive Words

Courteous messages use positive words. Positive words show respect for the reader and reflect the *you* attitude. People are more open to the content of positive messages than of negative ones. Refer to Table 2-1 for a list of negative words that undermine positive messages.

Table 2-1

Negative Words to Avoid			
blame	damaged	fear	no
complaint	doubt	lazy	not
criticize	failed	never	sorry

Both word choice and sentence structure can change a negative tone into a positive tone. Structure your sentences to state what can be done rather than what cannot be done. The next examples show how word choice can change a negative tone into a positive tone.

Examples:	Negative Tone	Positive Tone
	Never allow customers to shop without first greeting them.	Always greet customers as soon as they arrive.
	We do not make exchanges for purchases without receipts.	With your receipt, you may exchange any purchase.

Select Gender-Free Terms

Some nouns, especially job titles, refer to either men or women. **Gender-free** terms grant both sexes equal status and respect. Terminology that stereotypes or indicates bias against either men or women is called **sexist** language. Stereotypes may imply that racial and ethnic groups, women, men, or individuals with disabilities are superior or inferior to others. Thus, words that stereotype people may offend readers and lessen opportunities to create goodwill. Alternatives to sexist terms are listed in the following examples.

Examples:	Sexist	Gender-Free
	policeman	police officer
	bellman	customer service assistant
	craftsman	craft worker
	fireman	firefighter
	foreman	supervisor or manager
	mailman	mail carrier
	waitress	server



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March 10, 20—

Mr. Hayato Matsumi
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2338, Shiokawa
Maruko-machi
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NAGANO-KEN 386-04

Dear Mr. Matsumi:

Thank you for stopping at the Tourist Information Center during your recent visit to Branson, Missouri. While you were in the Center, you were kind enough to sign the Visitor Register.

Please complete and return the enclosed visitor profile survey. The information that you provide will allow us to better serve the needs of our future visitors. When your completed survey is received, a \$100 Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World Gift Certificate will be mailed to you. The certificate is redeemable in the online store at <http://www.basspro.com>.

Mr. Matsumi, please plan a return visit to Branson in the near future.

Sincerely,

Marsha Dickerson

Marsha Dickerson
Awards Manager

jb

Enclosure

Illustration 2-1 Personalized Message

When you refer to a category of people that may include both men and women, one option, shown in the next examples, is to make the noun plural and use a plural (gender-free) pronoun.

Examples:

Sexist

The doctor should listen to his patients.

Treat the customer courteously so she will continue to shop in our store.

Gender-Free

Doctors should listen to their patients.

Treat customers courteously so they will continue to shop in our store.

Respond to Messages Promptly

Timeliness is the watchword for diplomatic communication. Therefore, prompt responses enhance the effectiveness of written communication. A favorable business reputation is built on orders that are shipped early. In addition, a timely response may turn a complaint into a business opportunity.

Business etiquette dictates that you send congratulations within two days of an event and that you answer requests within five working days of receipt. Practice courteous communication.

Message clarity, a *C* quality that enhances courtesy, is discussed in Section 2.

Culture View



Japan

In Japan, courtesy requires indirect communication: yes may mean “no” or “maybe.” In contrast, business courtesy in the United States calls for direct communication: asking direct questions, requesting action plans, and stating specific concerns.

Since the Japanese value the outward appearance of harmony, they will never say “no” during a negotiation. Instead, the Japanese will listen respectfully—even to unacceptable ideas. Etiquette requires them to demonstrate attentiveness by nodding their heads or saying yes at short intervals. Understand that positive words and body language are the Japanese way of saying, “Yes, we hear you.”

In the Japanese view, you, the listener, have the responsibility to listen for the true meaning by understanding implied information. Therefore, listen carefully to the full replies of Japanese colleagues to determine what they mean.

Section 2: CLARITY

Clarity means writing easy-to-read and easy-to-understand messages. A clear message keeps the intended receiver in mind. The message should focus on expressing a thought, not on impressing the reader.

In the following, the unclear examples on the left are written to impress the reader; the clear examples on the right are written to express the thought.

Examples: *To Impress*

The English language device known as capitalization, using in printed matter designated letters of larger size, not only is a punctuation tool of considerable importance but also is a tool whose function varies in accordance with differing, prescriptive language rules.

The self-explanatory purpose of the letter address is both to designate the person to whom the mailed correspondence is to be received and to stipulate the location to which the said mailed article of correspondence is to be delivered.

To Express

Capitalization, a punctuation tool, varies based on different language rules.

The letter address names the message receiver and specifies the delivery location.

The Six Cs

Courtesy

Clarity

Conciseness

Concreteness

Correctness

Completeness

At first, you may hesitate to make changes in messages that you create. Strive, however, to form the habit of rewriting to improve clarity. Use these points to check messages for clarity:

- Select appropriate words.
- Place words in an orderly sequence.
- Limit use of *it* and *there*.
- Position phrases correctly.
- Position clauses correctly.
- Keep sentences short.

Select Appropriate Words

Appropriate word choice improves understanding between writer and reader. Words that look alike or sound alike frequently cause confusion. Verify word meanings in a dictionary to avoid offending or misleading a reader. When preparing spoken messages, use a dictionary to verify pronunciations. Study the examples of frequently confused words listed in Table 2-2, page 36, and in the Reference Guide.

Table 2-2 Frequently Confused Words

Word	Meaning	Example
a lot	many; much	Connie had a lot of anxiety.
alot	<i>not acceptable usage</i>	
accept	to take or receive	Midori agreed to accept the trophy.
except	to leave out; other than	Read all the notes except those on page 22.
affect	to influence or change	Changing chairs did affect his posture.
effect	a result	We cannot see any effect of Carolla's new diet.
all right	without error; correct	Zeke's answers were all right.
alright	<i>not acceptable usage</i>	
its	belonging to it	The dog had its nails clipped.
it's	contraction of <i>it is</i>	The driver said, "It's time to go."
lay	to put or place in position	You may lay the book on the desk.
lie	to recline; to be found in a particular place or position	Lie on the sofa and rest for a few minutes.
to	in the direction of; toward	Move your printer to the right.
too	besides; also; very	The holiday ended too quickly.
two	more than one	We do not have chairs for two desks.
your	belonging to you	Your keyboarding skill is excellent.
you're	contraction of <i>you are</i>	You're correct about the answer.

Place Words in an Orderly Sequence

Reading messages aloud helps reveal unclear word placement. If the word order makes you hesitate or reread the statement, try a different word arrangement. The pattern of subject before verb usually provides the clearest sequence.

The remarks "Baked is the bread" and "Scrambled are your eggs" sound awkward. Both statements place the verb before the subject, and the order appears illogical. In the next examples, notice how placing the subject before the verb makes the sentences easier to read and understand.

Examples:	Unclear Word Order	Clear Word Order
	Enclosed is your check.	Your check is enclosed.
	Burned was the toast.	The toast was burned.

When using a pronoun, be sure that the pronoun restates the intended reference, the **antecedent**. Change the word order or word choice when any confusion exists between a pronoun and an antecedent. Sentences containing expressions such as *his or hers*, *he and she*, or *him or her* are confusing to readers. Try rewriting the sentence with a plural antecedent and plural pronouns. The following examples illustrate how to correct unclear pronoun references:

Examples: **Unclear Antecedent**
Felix called his agent while he was reading the script.
(Does *he* refer to Felix or to Felix's agent?)

Pronouns should not be used in definitions because they have unclear meanings.
(*They* could refer to pronouns or to definitions.)

Clear Antecedent
While Felix was reading the script, he called his agent.

or
Felix called his agent, who was reading the script.

Definitions containing pronouns may have unclear meanings.

or
Pronouns used in definitions may have unclear meanings.

Limit Use of *It* and *There*

It, an indefinite reference, often causes the reader to search for a correct meaning or relationship. With a minimum of effort, you can state exactly what you mean and limit the use of *it*. By being specific, you may also shorten your message. Compare the following sentences:

Examples: **Indefinite It**
It is recommended that you label your clothes with a waterproof marker.

After the program ends, *it* is time for you to leave.

Improved Clarity
Please label your clothes with a waterproof marker.

After the program ends, you may leave.

Just as removing *it* from sentences often improves clarity, so does reducing the use of *there*. When used correctly, the word *there* refers to a specific place. Note how both clarity and brevity improve when *there* is eliminated in the following examples:

Examples: **Indefinite There**
There are six steps you can use to ensure message clarity.

There is no other membership requirement except age.

Improved Clarity
You can use six steps to ensure message clarity.

Age is the only membership requirement.

Position Phrases Correctly

Humor can be an asset in messages. However, you want the reader to laugh with you, not at you. Incorrectly placed phrases can create unintended humor, cause misunderstanding, and reduce your credibility. Correctly positioned phrases reduce the chance of unintended humor, as shown in these examples:

Examples: **Incorrect Positioning**
Victor ordered rugs for the new apartment of various colors.

Correct Positioning
Victor ordered rugs of various colors for the new apartment.

Incorrect Positioning

Dr. Zayas wrote the letter while flying from Washington to Los Angeles on the back of an envelope.

Correct Positioning

While flying from Washington to Los Angeles, Dr. Zayas wrote the letter on the back of an envelope.

Position Clauses Correctly

The words *which* and *that* frequently introduce a clause. If the sentence is clear and correct without the clause, the clause is *nonrestrictive* and should be set off with commas. When the clause is needed for clarity or correctness, the clause is *restrictive* and commas should not be inserted. *Which* generally introduces a nonrestrictive clause, and *that* generally introduces a restrictive clause. Correctly placed clauses make the meaning clearer. Incorrectly placed clauses can create confusion, as shown in the following examples:

Examples:

Incorrect Positioning

Julia returned the support cast for her injured leg that she bought.

Please place your donation in the jar, which is appreciated.

Correct Positioning

Julia returned the support cast that she bought for her injured leg.

Please place your donation, which is appreciated, in the jar.

Keep Sentences Short

State your message in as few words as possible. Lengthy sentences often cause readers to lose the intended meaning. Most sentences range from 13 to 20 words; the average sentence contains 16 words. Short sentences are forceful and emphatic. However, short sentences can become choppy unless you write thoughtfully.

Combine words into sentences that show concern for the reader and that are easy to understand. Thus, you can maintain courtesy and clarity with brief sentences. Section 3 contains techniques for writing concise messages.

Timely Tip



Use transitional phrases or words such as *however*, *next*, and *therefore* to connect thoughts.

Section 3:

CONCISENESS

The Six Cs

Courtesy
Clarity

Conciseness

Concreteness
Correctness
Completeness

Keep in mind the exact message that you want to convey to the reader.

Conciseness means saying what needs to be said in as few words as possible.

When you write with brevity, not abruptness, your messages remain both concise and courteous. Remember that courtesy helps you build and maintain goodwill. Critique your writing, and make every word meaningful.

As you edit and revise your writing, use the following methods to develop concise messages that are courteous and clear:

- Eliminate unnecessary words.
- Select action verbs and efficient words.

- Use necessary modifiers.
- Write in the active voice.

Eliminate Unnecessary Words

Write naturally! Keep that two-word command in mind as you write messages. Use a conversational tone that is easy to read. Enhance clarity and conciseness by using only the necessary words. After you compose a draft, edit your message to eliminate unnecessary words.

Note the difference in this example:

Example:

Wordy

You will quickly come to the conclusion that unless you communicate in a consistent manner, you will jeopardize your relationships with your coworkers.

Concise

Communication consistency builds trust with coworkers.

The wordy version contains 23 words. The concise version eliminated unnecessary words and reduced the word count to six words.

Select Action Verbs and Efficient Words

Some writers use wordy phrases even though action verbs make clearer, shorter, more concise statements. Compare the wordy phrases with the action verb messages in the next examples.

Examples:

Wordy Phrases

Please make an agreement to purchase the Marco system.

Dr. Parker made a contribution of \$500 to St. Jude's Hospital for Children.

Action Verbs

Please agree to purchase the Marco system.

Dr. Parker contributed \$500 to St. Jude's Hospital for Children.

After you choose action verbs, check for efficient, concise words. In the following examples, note how concise expressions reduce the word count:

Examples:

Wordy Phrases

Every one of the students entered the contest.

Please move the box *off of* the desk.

Concise Words

Every student entered the contest.

Please move the box *off* the desk.

Review Table 2-3 for concise expressions that you can use to replace inefficient words and phrases. You may review additional examples of concise expressions in the Reference Guide.

Timely Tip



Write clear sentences that readers can read once and understand.

Table 2-3 Concise Expressions

Avoid Inefficient Words and Phrases	Use Efficient Words and Phrases
acknowledge receipt of	thank you for
as a matter of fact	in fact; indeed
at an early date	<i>Give a specific date.</i>
at that point in time	then
at this time; at this point in time	now
because of the fact that	because
during the month of May	during May
each and every	each
enclosed herewith	enclosed
for an extended period of time	<i>Give an exact time.</i>
for the amount of \$320	for \$320
I would appreciate it if	please
in accordance with your suggestion	as you suggested
in spite of the fact that	although
in the city of Cincinnati	in Cincinnati
in the last analysis	<i>Do not use this phrase.</i>
off of	off
please do not hesitate to contact us	please contact us
please find enclosed	<i>State what is enclosed.</i>
thank you in advance	<i>Do not use this phrase.</i>
until such time as	until

Use Necessary Modifiers

Select a word or phrase only when the word or phrase serves a purpose. Avoid unnecessary modifiers and **doublet phrases**—phrases that say the same thing twice, such as *the honest truth*. Compare the following sentences:

Examples:

Unnecessary Modifiers

Follow the *road west in direction* until you see our facility on the right.

The team leader suggested a very *unique* solution.

Revisions

Follow the road *west* until you see our facility on the right.

The team leader suggested a *unique* solution.

Review the unnecessary modifiers and doublets listed in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4 Necessary Modifiers

Avoid Doublets and Unnecessary Modifiers	Use Necessary Modifiers
actual truth	truth
basic fundamentals	fundamentals
consensus of opinion	consensus
each and every	each <i>or</i> every
entirely complete	complete
exactly identical	identical
first and foremost	first <i>or</i> foremost
honest truth	truth
important essentials	essentials
in the year of 2010	in 2010
long in length	long
maximum possible	maximum
merge together	merge
orange in color	orange
repeat again	repeat
return back to	return
round in shape	round
rules and regulations	rules <i>or</i> regulations
small in size	small
three in number	three
very unique	unique
west in direction	west

Write in the Active Voice

In the **active voice**, the subject of the sentence performs some action. The **passive voice** shows the subject receiving the action. Passive constructions add unnecessary words, usually in the form of prepositional phrases. Changing from the passive to the active voice makes the messages more succinct.

Examples:

Passive Voice

The old car *was painted by* the technicians.

The overgrown trees *were trimmed by* the power company.

Active Voice

The technicians *painted* the old car.

The power company *trimmed* the overgrown trees.

Select the passive voice when you want to avoid placing specific blame on someone. In a negative situation, the passive voice sounds more diplomatic and tactful than the active voice. Note how the active voice examples have accusatory tones:

Culture Frame



Phonetically pronounce many Japanese words, as shown in these key terms:

English	Japanese (Pronunciation)
Good day	ko-nee-chee-wa
Goodbye	sa-yo-na-ra
Yes	hai
No	ee-yeh
Excuse me	soo-mee-ma-sen
Please	doh-zo
Thank you	ah-ree-ga-toh

Examples:

Active Voice

Dora *placed* the books in the incorrect positions.

Alex *cut* the pattern too small.

Passive Voice

The books *were placed* in the incorrect positions by Dora.

The pattern *was cut* too small by Alex.

Unless you choose the passive voice to ensure diplomacy, use the active voice to achieve both conciseness and clarity. You can further refine conciseness and clarity by checking your messages for *concreteness*, as discussed in Section 4.

Section 4:

CONCREteness

The Six Cs

Courtesy

Clarity

Conciseness

Concreteness

Correctness

Completeness

Concreteness means conveying a message with precise terms. As a message sender, you build mental pictures for your readers through your use of words. The readers' backgrounds influence their perceptions of your words. Thus, words have different meanings for different people. If you said, "Charles has a hit," a baseball coach might think that Charles will help win the game. A music producer might think that Charles has composed a song that soon will be at the top of the sales charts. Use words or phrases that have definite meanings to convey a concrete message.

These steps will help you write concrete messages.

- Establish contact with the reader.
- Use precise modifiers.
- Avoid opinions or generalizations.
- Provide specific details.

Establish Contact with the Reader

Concreteness in written messages compares with exactness in spoken messages. When a young boy catches a fish and tells his friends about the event, he uses his hands, posture, and words to describe the size of the fish. Even more hand gestures illustrate the struggle he had in pulling the fish into the boat.

When the boy writes to a relative, he may include with the fishing story recollections of other family incidents. These recollections help the reader visualize the fishing adventure. You can use the same approach to establish contact with readers. When you write a message, build on shared personal or business backgrounds.

Timely Tip



Reader and receiver are used interchangeably.

Business communication often involves mutual experiences, such as the following:

- Sending and receiving documents
- Shipping and possibly returning orders
- Applying for credit and being either accepted or rejected
- Asking for or writing recommendations

If you do not have an experience in common with the receiver, establish contact and build a concrete message through these techniques:

- Mentally picture the person.
- Collect as much background information as possible.
- Consider the person's culture and occupation.
- Use concrete words that have well-understood meanings.

Use Precise Modifiers

Dynamic verbs show action and motion, whereas static nouns name objects and ideas. Modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) add meaning and intensity to other words. When you use adjectives and adverbs, you add strength and color to nouns and verbs.

Select precise modifiers because research reveals the following facts:

- Readers remember precise (concrete) words longer than general words.
- Specific terms translate more easily than do broad, general words.

You probably would receive three different answers if you asked three people the question, "What is a good price for a printer?" Each person would have a different interpretation for *good*, and you did not give adequate information about the type or speed of the printer or about how much you were willing to pay. The next examples illustrate how precise modifiers or details provide more concreteness than vague modifiers.

Examples:

Vague Modifiers

Our storage facility offers *large* climate-controlled units.

(Will readers agree on what *large* means?)

Our new product will arrive *soon*.

(Will all customers have the same concept of *soon*? Indicate an exact date.)

Precise Expressions

Our storage facility offers *15-by 20-foot* climate-controlled units.

Our new product arrives *October 1*.

Business writing uses Standard English rather than formal English.

Formal prose is usually reserved for academic and literary writing. Overuse of formal vocabulary makes a business writer sound pretentious.

Also, overusing modifiers may make messages sound insincere and may create a sense of distrust. Replace vague terms with precise modifiers. Develop and maintain credibility by writing clearly and precisely.

Overused Modifiers

Take advantage of the very *lowest* prices you'll ever find *anywhere!*

(The typical customer does not believe superlatives.)

Customers who use Expo Marketing products build a *more positive* image.

(Will everyone agree on how to measure a positive image?)

Precise Expressions

Take advantage of the 50 percent discount off our regular prices.

Customers who have used Expo Marketing products have shown a *10 percent gain*

on the Baker Image Scale

Review Table 2-5 for suggestions on how to change vague modifiers to precise modifiers.

Table 2-5 Precise Expressions

Vague Modifiers	How to Avoid Vague Modifiers	Use Precise Expressions
as soon as possible	State an exact date or time.	Please return the form by Monday, June 12.
better	Provide specific information.	The 250-LK scans six pages per minute, which is two pages faster than the 150-LK model.
big	State the size or measurement.	You will need 8 ¹ / ₂ -inch by 14-inch paper for the form.
fast	State the exact rate of speed.	Rafael inputs text at the rate of 65 words per minute.
few	State a number.	Carmen bought three reams of paper.
good	Describe fully.	Yoriko used 20-pound bond paper with 25 percent rag content.
high	State the exact height.	The windows begin 10 inches above the floor and measure 4 ¹ / ₂ feet wide by 9 feet high.
little	Describe the size.	Aluminum foil measures 660 microns thick, but plastic wrap measures only 25 microns thick.
long	State the distance or measurement.	Bonito commutes 42 miles to work each morning.
many	State a number.	Alex requested 30 new printers.
more	State the difference in numbers.	Jennifer completed five mailable letters; Melissa produced three draft copies.
most	Quote an exact number or percentage.	Sang completed 97 percent of the problems within the time limit.
several	State a number.	Savita purchased seven printer cartridges.
slow	State the exact rate of speed.	The 125-IT printer produces 15 pages per minute.

Table 2-5 Precise Expressions (continued)

Vague Modifiers	How to Avoid Vague Modifiers	Use Precise Expressions
some	Quote an exact number or percentage.	Manuel sold six ads for the newspaper.
soon	State an exact date or time.	Wendy, please fax the message by 2 p.m. today.
too much	State exactly how much variance occurred.	Curt's score on the math test was three points below the acceptable limit.
worthwhile	Explain the benefit.	Donors receive a ticket to the awards banquet and a tax deduction.

Avoid Opinions and Generalizations

When people ask for your opinion, think about what information they need before you respond. If you have a negative opinion or if you do not agree with their position, exercise caution. When you are not sure what information they really want, ask for clarification. The following examples demonstrate the differences between opinions and requests.

Examples:

Opinions

You should join our focus group.

I think the data would look better in table format.

Courteous Requests

Please join our focus group.

Please consider displaying the data in table format.

Generalizations, vague or sweeping statements, often appear in written messages when the writer is attempting to persuade readers. Advertisers sometimes make broad, inclusive claims. Experienced advertisers exercise caution with generalizations because many consumers do comparison shopping. Note how these examples change generalizations into specific descriptions:

Examples:

Generalization

Our kit offers the *ideal* solution for accessing the Internet.
(Will everyone have the same concept of *ideal*?)

Our holiday jewelry sale offers *extraordinary* values on gold pendants.
(Will all customers define *extraordinary* in the same way?)

Specific Information

Our ZoomPorte, a complete Internet kit, includes the V.34 external data fax modem and \$400 worth of software on one CD.

Our 14kt gold pendants are \$70.50, a savings of 30 percent during the holiday sale.

Timely Tip



Effective communication serves as a bridge between cultures, allowing people to interact and enrich their understanding of how other people live.

Provide Specific Details

Effective messages contain specific details that are clear to both the sender and the receiver. Show concern for the receivers by providing specific details, such as sources of information your readers may need or want.

Suppose prospective clients called a vendor and asked that someone meet them at the airport. The vendor, eager to make a sale, agreed to meet the clients at the baggage claim area at 7:30. Unfortunately, the agreement lacked specific details, such as the name of the airline carrier and whether the arrival time was a.m. or p.m.

Imagine the vendor's concern when the clients could not be located at the luggage carousel for any 7:30 a.m. incoming flight. In a large airport, checking all carriers and incoming flights could take hours. The clients had not indicated the name of the carrier and the 7:30 p.m. arrival time. Also, the vendor should have asked for vital information. Complete details would have saved time and concern for all parties.

A concrete message is exact. As you develop concrete messages, you also verify correctness. *Correctness*, the next quality of effective messages, is discussed in Section 5.

Section 5:

CORRECTNESS

The Six Cs

Courtesy

Clarity

Conciseness

Concreteness

Correctness

Completeness

Correctness means that the details of a message are accurate. Details involve not only the message content but also the message appearance. The correctness of your messages depends on your proofreading skills. Good proofreaders use reference tools to check message content and evaluate message appearance. The following four reference tools will help you produce correct messages:

1. A dictionary
2. A thesaurus (either printed or electronic version)
3. A word division manual
4. A format guide

Use a dictionary as a general reference to check spelling and word meaning. Consult a thesaurus for acceptable word choices. Verify preferable word division points in a word division manual. Refer to the Format Guide for acceptable message layouts.

Sending correct messages builds your credibility. In the workplace, a reputation for accuracy enhances your competence and helps you build a successful career. After you have written a draft of your message, complete the following tasks to ensure message correctness:

- Verify spelling.
- Select correct words or phrases.
- Insert appropriate punctuation.

- Check names, places, dates, times, and amounts.
- Evaluate message appearance.

Verify Spelling

Misspellings of frequently used words may be difficult to locate if you just give your message a quick once-over. However, a misspelled word may change the meaning of a sentence or may create a negative impression about you and your organization. Be absolutely sure every word is correct before you transmit your message.

In addition to a standard dictionary, you may need a trade or professional dictionary to check the spelling of technical or specialized terms. When you key a document in a word processing program, use the spell checker. However, do not rely on an electronic spell checker to detect errors in word usage. Spell checkers cannot determine whether you have used a word properly in the context of your message. Recheck spelling when you add new text or change word endings during the writing process.

Select Correct Words and Phrases

Selecting the word or phrase that correctly communicates your meaning can be challenging. The English language has borrowed words and expressions from many languages. As a result, English contains many **homonyms** (words that are spelled and pronounced alike but have different meanings) and **homophones** (words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings). Select correct words and phrases for accurate messages. Be especially alert for words and phrases that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings. These examples illustrate how word choice affects meaning:

Examples:

Word Choice

Answering e-mail messages is an *everyday* activity for me.

Every day provides you with opportunities to develop new skills.

Nobody answered the phone.

No body of county officials has permission to appoint a city mayor.

Discussion

Everyday as one word means "usual" or "routine."

Every day indicates each new day.

Nobody as one word indicates a person.

No body represents a group composed of people.

Table 2-6, on page 48, lists selected words and phrases with proper meanings and examples.

Selecting correct words and phrases also involves checking your messages for subject and verb agreement and for parallel structure. **Parallel structure** means using the same grammatical form throughout a list or

within a sentence. These examples illustrate nonparallel structures and show how to make the statements parallel:

Examples:	Nonparallel Structure	Parallel Structure
	Minimum maintenance should include the following: 1. Check oil and water levels 2. Balancing tires 3. Check air pressure	Minimum maintenance should include the following: 1. Checking oil and water levels 2. Balancing tires 3. Checking air pressure
	The computer operator's duties are completing the log, starting and stopping all runs, and to make minor repairs.	The computer operator's duties are to complete the log, start and stop all runs, and make minor repairs.

Table 2-6 Correct Word Choice

Word or Phrase	Proper Meaning	Example
altogether	completely; wholly	Your suggestions are altogether correct.
all together	in one group	The business teachers were all together at the conference.
always	forever; consistently	Always proofread your messages.
all ways	every possible choice	Please consider all ways of transmitting your messages.
among	implies division with three or more elements	The manager divided the tasks among four employees.
between	implies division with two elements	Timothy divided the cake between Elizabeth and me.
can	shows ability	She can play a violin.
may	implies permission; indicates possibility	You may go to Europe. We may complete the project by Monday.
different from	unlike	How is their accounting method different from ours?
different than	<i>not acceptable usage</i>	
few	amounting to a small number (countable)	Galen sold a few oranges.
less	not so much; not so well; (uncountable)	The architect allocated less space for attic storage.
good	pleasant; attractive; appealing (adjective)	They toured a good museum in Ohio.
well	in a satisfactory manner (adverb), fortunate; healthy (adjective)	Sergio works well in the computer lab. I feel well today.
regardless	having or taking no concern	Regardless of the time, she works until she completes the task.
irregardless	<i>not acceptable usage</i>	
who	takes the place of a person as the subject of a verb	Who answered the question?
whom	takes the place of a person as the object of a verb, a preposition, or an infinitive	You will go to the meeting with whom?

Insert Appropriate Punctuation

Punctuation marks serve as traffic signs for readers. Commas indicate caution—slow down or pause to comprehend the meaning. Semicolons tell readers to yield for the next thought. Periods and question marks mean readers should come to a complete stop before they proceed to the next sentence. Punctuate messages according to punctuation rules. When you insert appropriate punctuation in the correct locations, you maintain clarity for readers.

Punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence. Compare the following two examples:

Examples:

Punctuation Effect

“Sprouted grain bread,” said the nutritionist, “can be traced to ancient times.”

Sprouted grain bread said the nutritionist can be traced to ancient times.

For her research, Celia consulted with the architect, Corrine, Mr. Jeffries, the builder, and Stacy, the interior designer.

For her research, Celia consulted with the architect; Corrine; Mr. Jeffries, the builder; and Stacy, the interior designer.

For her research, Celia consulted with the architect, Corrine; Mr. Jeffries, the builder; and Stacy, the interior designer.

Discussion

The first example indicates that a certain type of bread can be traced to ancient times.

The second example implies not only that bread is speaking but also that a certain nutritionist can be traced to ancient times.

The third example lists five people.

The fourth example lists four people.

The fifth example lists three people.

Proofread aloud to be sure you insert the correct punctuation. If the message sounds awkward or causes you to hesitate, check the punctuation.

Check Names, Places, Dates, Times, and Amounts

Effective messages contain complete and correct names, places, dates, times, and amounts. Avoid confusion, lost time, effort, and money for your receivers. Check names, places, dates, times, and amounts twice for accuracy.

Timely Tip



To form the plurals of numbers and letters, simply add s (2001s, ABCs). If adding s forms a word or causes confusion, use the apostrophe (Dot your i's and cross your t's).

Culture Frame



The Japanese believe people in positions of responsibility should be shown respect at all times. Japanese workers may refer to managers by their titles instead of by their names. Some Japanese titles and their English translations are listed here.

- Chairman: *Kaicho*
- President: *Shacho*
- Vice President: *Fuku Shacho*
- Director: *Torishimariyaku*
- General manager: *Bucho*
- Section chief: *Kacho*

Evaluate Message Appearance

After verifying content correctness, evaluate the message for correct appearance. Correct appearance includes the style and placement of the message.

Most business messages follow standard company guidelines and practices. The Format Guide illustrates business and personal message formats. The message placement on a page, form, screen, or letterhead produces an image in the reader's mind. To make a good impression, the message should be formatted correctly and attractively, as well as be free of keying errors.

Section 6:

COMPLETENESS

The Six Cs

Courtesy
Clarity
Conciseness
Concreteness
Correctness

Completeness

Individual words express parts of a whole thought. Several words work together to express an entire thought in a sentence. Sentences become building blocks for messages. A **complete message** uses sentences to answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. A complete message also promotes goodwill.

Answer Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How

When you are developing a message, you do not need to answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* in a prescribed order. You must include all the appropriate answers, however, to have a complete message. After writing a draft of your message, use the criteria in Table 2-7 to evaluate your message for completeness.

Table 2-7 Completeness Criteria

Who?	Who is the intended receiver? Is the content appropriate for the intended receiver?
What?	What is your objective? Will the reader know what to do?
When?	When should the reader respond? Have you included complete, accurate details?
Where?	Where should the reader respond? Have you identified names, postal and electronic addresses, telephone and fax numbers?
Why?	Why should the reader respond? Have you stated a benefit for the reader?
How?	Have you encouraged a positive response? Does your message promote goodwill?

Illustration 2-2 shows a complete, clear message.

THOMPSON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Suite 1-B • 3110 West Palafox Street • Orlando, FL 32968-0110
<http://www.thompsonchamber.org>
Telephone: 619.555.1890 • Fax: 619.555.1820

April 16, 20—

Mrs. Betty Williams
The Williams Agency
4211 Palm Way
Tampa, FL 33946-4211

Who

Dear Mrs. Williams

When

Thank you for agreeing to speak at the Third Annual Thompson County Business Development Conference from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. on Thursday, June 12. The conference committee appreciates your willingness to focus your presentation on the tools needed for successful grant writing.

What

Where

Twelve chamber members, as well as 24 local business leaders, will join you in the Great Oaks Convention Center, 1190 West Cervantes Street, for your two-hour presentation. Since the committee must submit grant proposals by July 1, please specifically address the following issues:

Why

How

- Grant-writing principles
- Potential state and federal funding sources
- Pitfalls to avoid when writing and submitting grant proposals

Closing builds goodwill.

A copy of the conference brochure is attached. Please be our guest at any session convenient for you.

Sincerely

Alice Butler

Alice Butler
Executive Director

kw

Attachment

Illustration 2-2 Complete Message

Notice how the following example does not satisfactorily answer the questions *who, what, when, where, why, and how*:

Example: Please attend our in-service meeting on Thursday at 5 p.m. The meeting will end by 6:30 p.m.

Who? Your name was included on the distribution list, but you do not know who is sponsoring the meeting.

What? An in-service meeting is being held, but you do not know what kind of a program is planned.

When? The meeting begins at 5 p.m. and ends by 6:30 p.m., but you do not know which Thursday to attend.

Where? You do not know the location of the meeting.

Why? The reason for this particular meeting is unknown.

How? You do not know how the meeting will benefit you.

Maintain Goodwill

Develop clear, complete messages so readers will understand you. Your complete message will more effectively promote goodwill when readers know exactly what you are asking for or what you are offering to do.

Summary

Make sure your messages incorporate the six Cs of effective messages.

Quality	Purpose
Courtesy	Show concern for the intended receiver.
Clarity	Compose messages that are simple and easy to understand.
Conciseness	State what needs to be said in as few words as possible.
Concreteness	Convey a message with precise terms.
Correctness	Provide accurate details in an acceptable format.
Completeness	Include all pertinent information.

All six Cs are necessary for effective communication. Use effective communication to promote goodwill and to obtain positive responses from your readers.

Complete Communication Skills Development 2, pages 67–68. For additional pronoun review, see the Reference Guide, pages 412–415.

Ethics in Action



Access <http://brantley.swlearning.com>. Analyze the Ethics in Action for Chapter 2.

Exercises

2 - 1

Directions: In the space provided, rewrite the sentences to incorporate the *you* attitude.

1. We need to know the rates for your delivery service.
2. We will show the annual dividend from Plano Investments on your December statement.
3. I have added your name to our preferred customer list.
4. We've made your new statement easier to read.
5. We're delighted you chose an Orion scanner.
6. I think your report was interesting, well researched, and well written.
7. I am giving you a bonus for your energy-saving suggestion.
8. We need to receive up-to-date sales figures from you each day.
9. We offer three billing options from which you may choose.
10. I will deliver your products on Tuesday.
11. We appreciate your buying our products.
12. We accept credit cards.
13. We think your quarterly report will become a useful document as you plan your investments.
14. Allie, we want to thank you for completing the survey.
15. I want you to change the sexist terms to gender-free terms.

Exercises

2 - 2

Directions: Change the negative statements to positive statements.

1. Do not use negative words in your messages.
2. Do not hesitate to call us when you need additional information.
3. You should not react negatively to constructive criticism.
4. Avoid separating the icons from the margin notes.
5. Never fail to clean your work area before you leave each day.
6. Do not use the express lane if you have more than ten items in your shopping cart.
7. Refrain from opening sentences with the word *there*.
8. You should not misspell names in a message.
9. You may not use the drive-through banking service before 9 a.m.
10. Do not forget to lock the door when you leave.

Exercises

2 - 3

Directions: Change the sexist terms below to gender-free terms.

1. A personal trainer must have her current CPR card.
2. The realty company is seeking a new salesman.
3. Maxum Productions needs two cameramen to film the performance.
4. A student who plans to become a computer engineer must include higher-level math courses in his degree plan.
5. Three firemen were injured while they brought the fire under control.
6. The mailman used proper lifting techniques to move the heavy bag.
7. A lawyer should do her best to defend her clients.
8. Does the league need a soccer linesman?
9. The labor force needs skilled workmen.
10. Ask the waitress to bring our check.

Exercises

2 - 4

Directions: Underline the word that makes the statement complete and correct.

1. When the area code changes, please order new (stationery, stationary).
2. (Your, You're) analysis covers all sides of the issue.
3. The (cite, site) for the new clinic is 1107 Jackson Street.
4. Because the temperature was (to, too) cold, the ceremony was rescheduled.
5. We (complimented, complemented) the caterer who prepared the dessert.
6. Dr. Hallock asked the (personnel, personal) to please be quiet.
7. He has the (rite, right) to expect their cooperation.
8. Mrs. Kruger asked Dr. Hallock for permission to (lay, lie) down for five minutes.
9. The clinic administrator asked Dr. Hallock to serve on the local medical (council, counsel).
10. Dr. Fitzpatrick (preceded, proceeded) Dr. Hallock as the clinic representative.
11. Dr. Hallock will travel (farther, further) than other medical representatives.
12. The clinic is located two blocks (past, passed) the Wingate Store.
13. The administrator gave two directions; the nurse followed the (latest, latter) one.
14. Dr. Smythe and Dr. Lambert earned (their, there) degrees from the same university.
15. (To, Too) many graphs and charts can be confusing for the reader.
16. The office manager purchased (loose, lose) pages to refill the training manuals.
17. Our staff members appeared (quiet, quite) pleased with the manuals.
18. The members asked (weather, whether) they could keep the manuals on their desks.
19. The office manager encouraged everyone to make a (conscience, conscious) effort to review the manuals.
20. Since the (fiscal, physical) year ends on June 30, please send your reports to Dr. Lambert by July 10.

Exercises

2 - 5

Directions: In the space provided, rewrite the sentences to eliminate the words *it* and *there*.

1. There are hundreds of claims that have been filed.
2. It is a good idea to arrive early for an interview.
3. It is a requirement for you to attend every meeting.
4. It is important to maintain a balanced diet.
5. Can you see if there is anyone outside the building?
6. There were eight times when we had to reschedule patients.
7. It was stated by Heather that an hour of dancing can burn between 200 and 400 calories.
8. There is a Mr. Stuart from Omni Associates here to talk with you.
9. It will be February 10 before you will receive your materials.
10. There are numerous learning projects available on the Internet.
11. This letter isn't dated, is it?
12. We expect a demand for this printer, and we may not have enough stock to meet it.
13. It was recommended by Eric Templeton that you form the habit of rewriting to improve message clarity.
14. There is no other entrance requirement except a 90 percent test score.
15. It is necessary to balance the budget by next year.

Exercises

2 - 6

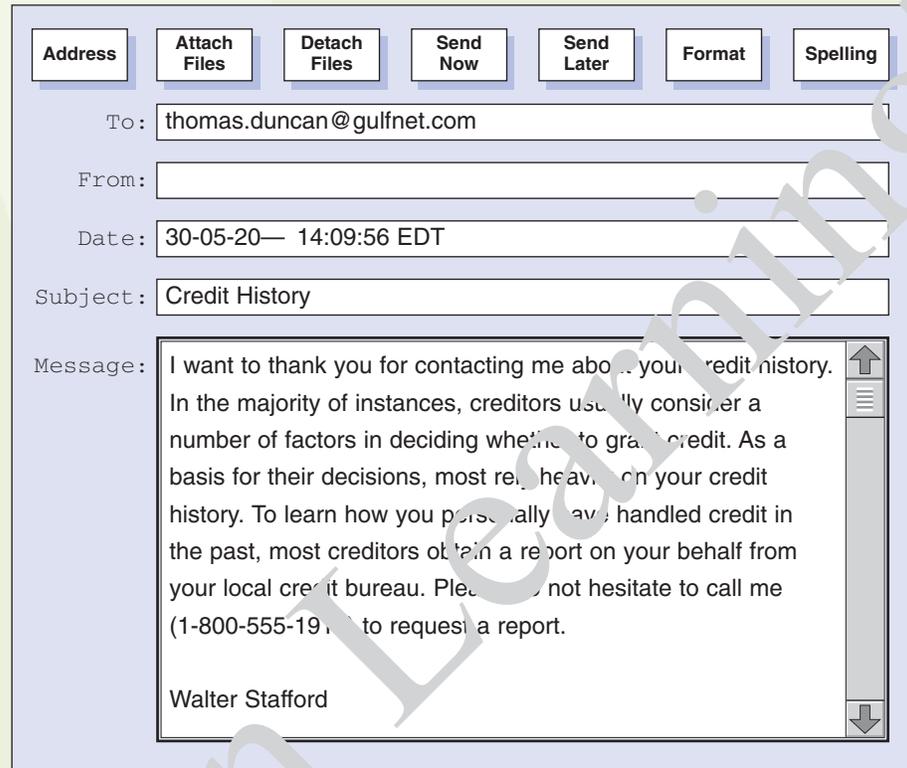
Directions: In the space provided, rewrite the following sentences; use action verbs and efficient words and phrases.

1. The new mouse pads are exactly identical to the old ones.
2. The coach stressed the basic fundamentals in basketball.
3. The watch was mailed under separate cover.
4. In the majority of instances, credit isn't free.
5. You may preview the tapes for an extended period of time.
6. Rosa said, "The mayor's speech was long in length."
7. Please find enclosed your dividend check.
8. Did you know that the first major league night baseball game was played in the city of Cincinnati in the year of 1935?
9. James has made a decision to give each and every employee a two-week holiday in the month of December.
10. Every one of the employees accepted his offer.
11. I would appreciate it if you would send me a catalog.
12. Ralph made a contribution of \$5,000.
13. The chest was made out of walnut.
14. Victor signed a contract in the amount of \$125,000.
15. Chris and Elizabeth provided a solution for the traffic problem.

Exercises

2 - 7

Directions: In the space provided, rewrite the following e-mail message to improve conciseness and clarity.



The screenshot shows an email client window with a toolbar at the top containing buttons for Address, Attach Files, Detach Files, Send Now, Send Later, Format, and Spelling. The email header fields are: To: thomas.duncan@gulfnet.com, From: (empty), Date: 30-05-20— 14:09:56 EDT, and Subject: Credit History. The message body contains the following text:

I want to thank you for contacting me about your credit history. In the majority of instances, creditors usually consider a number of factors in deciding whether to grant credit. As a basis for their decisions, most rely heavily on your credit history. To learn how you personally have handled credit in the past, most creditors obtain a report on your behalf from your local credit bureau. Please do not hesitate to call me (1-800-555-1911) to request a report.

Walter Stafford

Exercises

2 - 8

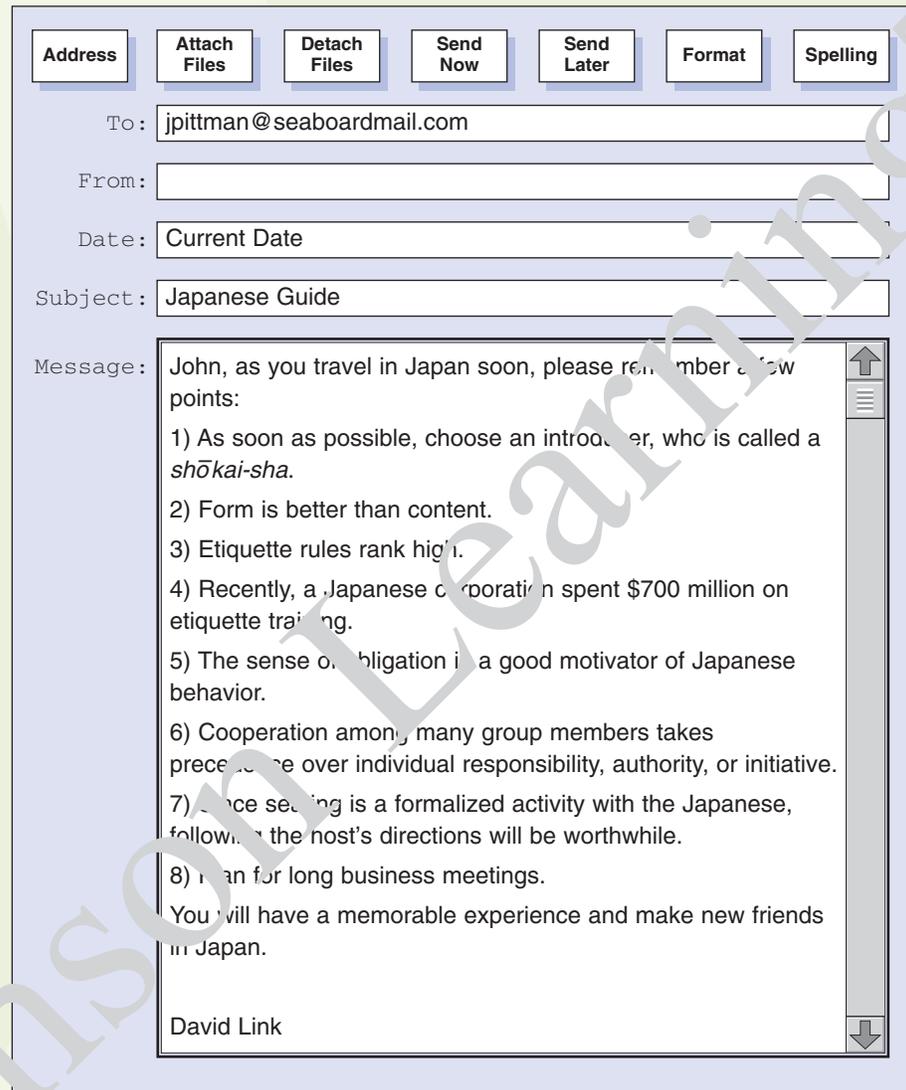
Directions: In the space provided, rewrite the sentences. Change the passive voice to the active voice.

1. Online communication courses are offered by six postsecondary schools in Florida.
2. The disclosures are checked by the escrow company.
3. Liability coverage was offered by the Panhandle Insurance Company.
4. A fence was built around the perimeter by the previous owner.
5. The grasslands are protected by the National Park Service.
6. A credit card was offered to Heidi Kendrick by Preferred Credit.
7. *Infobog*, meaning “information overload,” is a word coined by Charles Arlen.
8. Your position is tracked by a GPS system.
9. The telephone was answered by Mr. Johnson.
10. The application was given to Mr. Lopez.
11. A new software program was designed by the drafting department.
12. The documentation is read by the programmer and the systems analyst.
13. Modifications were made to the flowchart by the systems analyst.
14. A spreadsheet program was submitted to the accountant.
15. Two railways have been converted into bike trails by state officials.

Exercises

2 - 9

Directions: Underline ten vague modifiers in the following e-mail message. Discuss your suggested changes.



The screenshot shows an email client window with a toolbar at the top containing buttons for Address, Attach Files, Detach Files, Send Now, Send Later, Format, and Spelling. The email fields are filled with: To: jpittman@seaboardmail.com, From: (empty), Date: Current Date, and Subject: Japanese Guide. The message body contains the following text:

John, as you travel in Japan soon, please remember a few points:

- 1) As soon as possible, choose an introducer, who is called a *shōkai-sha*.
- 2) Form is better than content.
- 3) Etiquette rules rank high.
- 4) Recently, a Japanese corporation spent \$700 million on etiquette training.
- 5) The sense of obligation is a good motivator of Japanese behavior.
- 6) Cooperation among many group members takes precedence over individual responsibility, authority, or initiative.
- 7) Once seating is formalized with the Japanese, following the host's directions will be worthwhile.
- 8) Plan for long business meetings.

You will have a memorable experience and make new friends in Japan.

David Link

Exercises

2 - 10

Directions: Underline each word, phrase, spelling, and punctuation error in the memo. Write the correction above the error.

Tucker and Lambert Realty
Interoffice Memorandum

TO: Jose Garcia
FROM: Zachary Tucker
DATE: Febuary 3, 20—
SUBJECT: Stress Workshop

Thank you for sharing tips on how to handle stress during the workshop on Wednesday January 32. You were rite—I all ways cope with stress by attempting to ignore the sources. Now I can handle noise, one lesser known cause of stress, everyday by following your suggestions. Since noise is everywhere, weather from a clogged expressway, an airplane over head, or loud music in another room, I will lessen the affect by following these methods;

- 1) Lower the music volume.
- 2) Caulk lose windows.
- 3) Place foam pads under noisy appliances, such as blenders and keyboards.
- 4) Wear earplugs or use a white-noise machine which masks sounds.
- 5) Advise potential home buyers, irregardless of the location, to check airplane flight paths.

Exercises

2 - 11

Directions: Determine whether the following message meets completeness criteria. In the left margin, indicate where the message meets each criterion (*who, what, when, where, why, how*).

THOMPSON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Suite 1-B • 3110 West Palafox Street • Orlando, FL 32968-0110
<http://www.thompsonchamber.org>
Telephone: 619.555.1890 • Fax: 619.555.1820

May 13, 20—

Mr. Juan DeSantos
DeSantos Enterprises
2104 West Eva Street
Leonard, FL 32972-0104

Dear Mr. DeSantos

Please participate in the Third Annual Thompson County Business Development Conference. Dr. Williams Stevens from the University of East Florida will discuss urban redevelopment. The discussion is on Thursday, May 30, from 1:00 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. in the Great Oaks Convention Center, 1190 West Cervantes Street.

Dr. Stevens, a nationally recognized consultant, will provide a detailed overview of the pros and cons of urban redevelopment in Thompson County. His comments should initiate a positive action plan for our area.

Please call 619-555-1890, Ext. 59, by Friday, May 24, to confirm your attendance. Your call will reserve a seat for you during the session.

Sincerely

Alice Butler

Alice Butler
Executive Director

kw



2-1 Directions: Locate online sites that contain information and resources related to gender equity. On a separate sheet of paper, summarize your findings and give reference citations. Use one of the citation styles shown in the Reference Guide.

2-2 Directions: Search online sites for information helpful to doing business in Japan. On a separate sheet of paper, write a short article summarizing three concepts businesspeople should know if they plan to work in Japan. Try the following key phrases in your search:

- Japanese business etiquette
- Business in Japan
- Working in Japan



Using the InfoTrac search, locate an article that discusses reader-friendly writing. After reviewing the article, use a separate sheet of paper and create two paragraphs explaining how you can incorporate the suggestions into writing effective messages. Give reference citations. Use one of the citation styles shown in the Reference Guide.



Directions: Access your WebTutor Advantage product. Complete the short-answer portion for Chapter 2 and send the answers to your instructor.

Case Studies

2 - 1

Communication Situation: You are an assistant manager of the shoe department for a store in the mall. You supervise five salespeople during your shift. The store is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., but you work the afternoon/evening shift from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. You have been expecting tonight to be a routine evening even though one of your regular employees is out on vacation.

When you begin your shift, you discover that two other salespeople also will be off because of illness. In addition, you find a note from the shoe department manager that says: *Afternoon/night shift is responsible for taking inventory of all shoes displayed on the floor as well as the new shipment received yesterday.*

Taking inventory of the display shoes usually requires the full-time attention of one salesperson. The inventory of the last shipment received also requires the full-time attention of one salesperson. In addition, you quickly count 27 elderly shoppers who are circulating in the department. The elderly shoppers' name badges indicate that they are registered for the Southeastern Senior Spirit Conference, which meets in the hotel adjacent to the mall.

You and your reduced sales staff are expected to meet the increased number of customer assistance requests as well as complete both inventories. Needless to say, the inventories were not completed.

Task: In the space provided, compose a note to the shoe department manager explaining why the inventories were not completed. Make sure your message reflects courtesy, clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, and completeness.

Case Studies

2 - 2

Communication Situation: You work as a customer service representative for a local cable company. Your job is to take incoming calls from customers who have problems with their service. You begin working your normal shift on Super Bowl Sunday when the main satellite dish for your company is struck by lightning. The volume of calls rapidly increases as customers call to ask why they have no service. As you ask one customer to hold, he states in an agitated voice, “What do I have to do to get someone to talk with me about my not having cable service?”

Task: In the space provided, write your response to the customer. Use a positive approach that emphasizes how he is a valued customer.

Communication Skills Development 2

NAME _____

Part A Pronoun Usage

Directions: In the following sentences, underline the correct pronoun of the words given in parentheses.

1. The newest member of the team was (her, she).
2. Other speakers, along with Professor Lipscomb, stressed positive statements in (his, their) presentations.
3. Eliminating *it* and *there* in messages was (my, mine's) suggestion.
4. Dr. Farrow, as well as his assistants, presented (his, their) suggestions for writing clear directions.
5. Patient education sessions will be divided among Lisa, Joyce, and (I, me).
6. Dr. Farrow (hissself, himself) explained how to write concise reports.
7. Our patients find (themselves, theirselves) able to follow Dr. Farrow's instructions.
8. With (who, whom) should patients discuss (his, their) treatment?
9. (We, Us) assistants coordinate 11 doctors' schedules.
10. Dr. Farrow asked the coordinators to report any problems to Margaret and (him, he).
11. (Whose, Who's) willing to tell the staff how to write in the active rather than the passive voice?
12. Has (somebody, some body) benefited from (me, my) advising the patients?
13. Dr. Farrow explained to the patients that (were, we're) here to develop treatment plans that will satisfy (their, them) needs.
14. The plans contain specific details that (anyone, any one) of you can follow.
15. If you have any medications, please bring (they, them) for (we, us) to check the expiration dates.
16. Sometimes patients forget to bring (there, their) medical records.
17. (Your, You're) going to need some time to collect the needed information.
18. Your payment record is confidential; only you and (I, me) will have access to the payment codes.
19. (Our, Ours) billing staff will work with you on a payment schedule.
20. The medical-research grant winner was (he, him).

Part B**Skills Application**

Directions: Underline errors in noun and pronoun usage and spelling in the second paragraph of the following e-mail message. Rewrite or key a corrected version of the paragraph.

Address	Attach Files	Detach Files	Send Now	Send Later	Format	Spelling
---------	--------------	--------------	----------	------------	--------	----------

To:

From:

Date:

Subject:

Message: