

On the Job **WRITING**



BASIC EDITION

Lesson 1

In this lesson, you will discover:

- Why writing matters in the workplace
- Three reasons why on-the-job writing may feel awkward

ANYONE CAN WRITE

Drew, a recent community college graduate, stays busy in his new job for Environmental Solutions, Inc. ESI is a start-up company owned by two young partners who grew up mowing lawns together to fund their field hockey tournaments around the region.

When Drew was hired, the partners made clear that writing to customers would be part of the job. That was fine with Drew because he had always gotten good



grades in English. Writing essays in school had never been a problem for him.

Today, though, he's struggling after Lex, the partner who handles marketing and advertising for ESI, asked him to write a draft email to customers about the company's expanded service hours.

"Trees need trimming, bushes have

to be pruned and fertilized and plant beds are screaming for a good weeding. Customers need us to work longer days," said Lex.

Seeing that Drew is having difficulty getting started with the draft, Lex takes a few minutes to share his own history with writing on the job. He tells Drew his story.

"I'm a dig-in-the-dirt guy, not a writing guy, and I didn't have good school grades like you. But it didn't take long for me to know that ESI's survival depends on how successful we are in getting the word out about our little company.

Since Matt is the bookkeeping guy, I turned into the writing partner. I taught myself to write with a lot of online lessons and even more practice. Let me tell you, if I can write, anyone can write!"

DEFINE IT! Motivation

Motivation is an internal stimulus that influences you to try something new, reach an achievement or engage in an activity.

WHY WRITING MATTERS

Today's companies depend on information to maintain their competitive edge. That means all employees, in every position from the CEO to the newest hire, must be able to write well.

- Engineers draw project plans, but they also prepare proposals, write technical instructions, and create presentation materials.
- Physical therapists write treatment plans for patients to use on their own at home.
- Legal assistants draft preliminary documents for their supervising lawyer.
- Childcare aides write snack menus and notes for parents.
- Automobile specialists order supplies, prepare estimates and fill in insurance forms for customers.
- Chefs write recipes and prepare instructions for dishes they create.
- Scientists explain their experiments and studies.



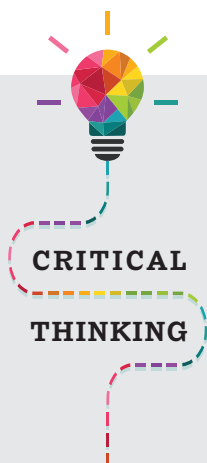
You, too, will be expected to write on the job. Some of the items you may prepare include the following.

Workplace Writing Tasks

Fill in forms
Write proposals
Request information
Create brochures
Prepare directions
Record telephone conversations

Compose letters
Prepare catalog descriptions
Respond to customers
Send email
Write reports
Write website copy

Develop an employee manual
Prepare business tweets
Take notes for a team
Develop a blog
Write minutes of meetings
Other documents



Why do you think Drew, who made good grades in English during school and had no trouble writing essays, is struggling with writing on the job?

THREE REASONS WRITING MAY FEEL AWKWARD

Writing comes more easily for some people than others. To become a better writer, you need to recognize three of the most common obstacles.

Fear of Failure

Fear of writing may be triggered by an unpleasant writing situation in your past. Did you write something embarrassing that others saw? Did an overly strict instructor or supervisor mark up your writing with a red pen?

Try these recommendations to overcome your fear of failure.

That was then; this is now Tell yourself that a bad writing experience from the past does not mean bad future writing experiences.

Identify the negative association Face up to what is scaring you about writing. Admitting a problem is the first step to correcting it.

Do what works Some people need privacy to write. Others prefer soft music or a snack. Make yourself comfortable.

Lack of Formal Training

Neither Mark Twain nor William Shakespeare finished high school, and yet they were very successful writers. If you lack formal writing training, as they did, these techniques will help:

- Read, read, read. Read books, cell phone stories, websites, instructions and other things.
- Choose a topic you know well and write about it. Revise until it is clear.
- Ask a friend or family member to review something you write and point out parts they don't understand. Revise your sample and ask again.

Poor Motivation

When you do something well, you are motivated to do it more. Improving your writing skills will increase your interest in writing. Try these motivations:

- Take short breaks from writing.
- Know that writing well makes you a more valuable employee.
- Allow time. Squeezing a big writing project into limited time won't do.

LESSON 1 ACTIVITY



Are you comfortable with writing tasks? If yes, explain why writing is not a problem for you. If no, which of the reasons for avoiding writing applies to you?

Think about a career that may be in your future. From *Workplace Writing Tasks*, identify types of writing you may be called on to do in this career.