



# INTRODUCTION TO BASICS OF WRITING



## GOALS

Learners will be able to-

1. To enable learner to understand the basic requirements of writing.
2. Students should be able to write appropriately and effectively.
3. Familiarize the students with the various styles writing.
4. Realise importance of learning business writing.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Understand the need to develop writing skills.
- ◆ Understand steps in writing and organising content logically and systematically.
- ◆ Learn strategies to organise content.
- ◆ Comprehend the various styles writing.
- ◆ Realise importance of learning business writing.
- ◆ Write well in all styles.



## INTRODUCTION

Language has four basic components-listening, speaking, reading and writing. A child first listens to conversations around him/her, and then repeats the sounds and words which have been learnt from the environment. Thus, the next step is learning to speak. Thereafter, the child begins to recognise alphabets and words and starts to read. The last skill to be mastered is that of writing. Beginning from writing alphabets, then words, moving on to sentences, paragraphs and finally producing complete written compositions on their own, the process takes many years for the individual to master.

The reason is that, writing is a complex activity that requires vast vocabulary, knowledge of varied sentence structures, and correct grammatical usage. Presenting content in a logical and sequential manner is another essential aspect of writing. Multiple areas of brain are used in creating text, organising words and sentences sequentially so that they make sense to the reader.

**Writing is a skill that needs to be honed and developed as:**

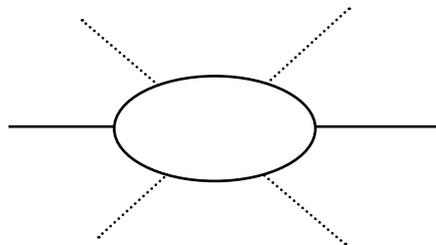
- It is an important medium of communication, used to express ideas, opinions and exchange information.

- It is essential to content development and composing any kind of text.
- Official and personal records are maintained in the written form.
- Creative Writing brings to us valuable fiction and non-fiction work in form of novels, short stories etc.
- It is the source of earning a livelihood for many people.
- Writing down ideas helps in bringing clarity to the thought process.
- It is a means of saving information for later reference.
- Writing also creates a permanent documentation, available for ready reference anytime (text books, financial statements, minutes of meetings, etc.). Knowledge creation and propagation happens largely through carefully documented research procedures and their outcomes.
- It is the most used form of official communication.
- More and more companies are looking for people with good communication skills.

### Steps for writing:

1. **Selecting a topic:** The process of writing begins by selecting a topic for writing. The selection maybe made by a teacher, a manager or by the writer himself/herself. The first step is to have an idea, theme, issue or any subject matter clearly stated.
2. **Brainstorming:** The next step is to brainstorm. Once you know the topic you have to write on, random thoughts, ideas, information related to it, begins to crowd your mind. You may also search for content related to the topic. Note down all the points that come up.
3. **Organising your content:** This is the framework on which your written work stands. First make a list of the main sub points you wish to include. Thereafter, put all the subject matter that can be included in that point, under the subheading. Next, decide the sequence or order of the points. Creating a diagram or outline helps you organize your ideas appropriately. Some graphic examples are as follows:

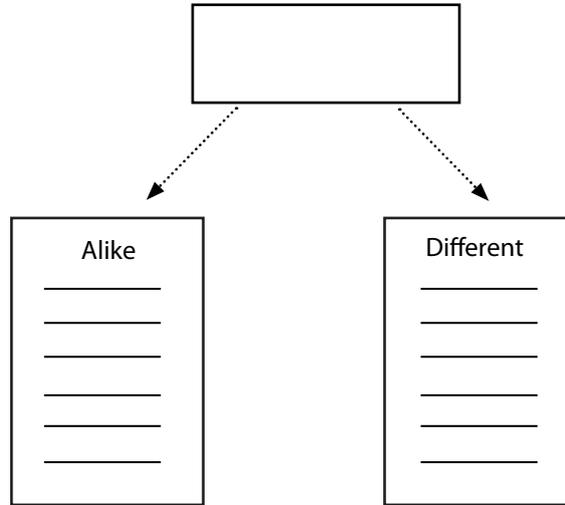
**Ray diagram:** write the main topic in the circle and related characteristics/ features at the end of the lines.



**Sequential form:** List the sequence in which you want to present the content

1)	_____
2)	_____
3)	_____
4)	_____
5)	_____

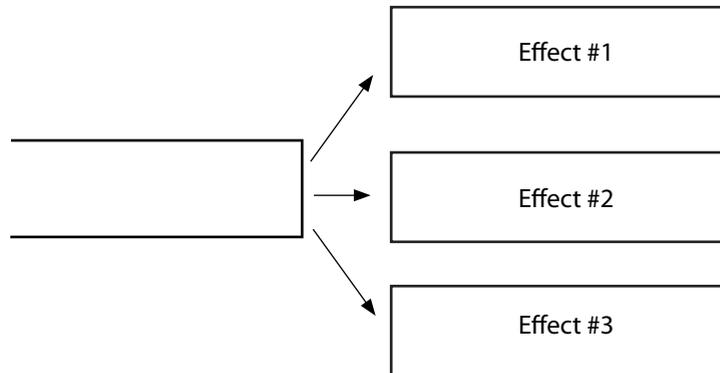
**Comparison and contrast:** List the similarities and dissimilarities/ advantages and disadvantages in different columns.



**Problem and solution:** State the problem/ problems and the recommendations to solve it/ them.



**Cause and effect:** State cause of situation and its various effects separately.



Diagrammatic presentations bring a great deal of clarity in organisation of content.

4. **Writing:** The most important step is writing. The choice of words, an interesting beginning of the article, framing of suitable sentences, division of paragraphs, inclusion of anecdotes and dialogues and use of illustrations and examples, decide whether your written content makes an impact on your readers. This is a time consuming and laborious task. You write, delete and rewrite before the final product is ready.
5. **Revising:** Give yourself a break before you revise your text. This gives you a fresh perspective and an enhanced ability to notice errors. At this stage you can add or delete content, reorganise matter, and improve upon certain sections of your work.
6. **Editing and proof reading:** Once the text is ready, it is time to proof read it for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure errors. This can be done by an expert in the field.

7. **Publishing and printing:** Once the final document is ready, it can be sent for printing, put on a website for readers or be used as a resource document.

### Styles of writing:

**Every writer has his/ her own style of writing. It is a reflection of the author's mood, tone, perspective, personality, and objectives of writing a particular piece. However, there are four main types of writing;**

1. Expository
  2. Persuasive/Argumentative,
  3. Descriptive
  4. Narrative
1. **Expository:** Expository writing is writing that seeks to explain, illuminate or «expose» (which is where the word «expository» comes from). The main purpose of this type of writing is to spread information. This style of writing attempts to relay facts for a purpose. It is objective in nature. The writer's opinions, emotions, biases, or points of view have no place in it. This type of writing includes-
    - textbooks,
    - research papers
    - news stories
    - encyclopedias
    - instruction manuals
    - Recipes/ any process description
    - Essays
    - Reports

### Sample-1

#### THE TAJ MAHAL

The Taj Mahal is an impressive mausoleum built in white marble by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The construction started in 1631 and took twenty years to complete. It is a stunningly beautiful piece of Indo, Persian and Islamic architecture and has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1983.

The structure is built from gleaming white marble which changes its colour in moonlight and sunlight. It is reported that over 20,000 thousand artisans and 1000 elephants were employed in the construction of the monument. Artisans were brought in from all over the world for its construction.

The mausoleum is constructed on a high platform so that its pearl like translucent beauty can be viewed from a distance. Its central dome has a height of 240 ft. and is surrounded by four smaller domes. It has four slender minarets at the corners. Pietra Dura, a technique of forming intricate designs with cut and fitted highly polished coloured stones has been used with inlaid semiprecious stones like amethyst, jade, turquoise etc. to create motifs to enthrall the visitors. Verses from the Quran are etched on the arched entrances of the monument and at other places in the complex. The cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal is housed in a perfect octagonal marble chamber. The highly polished and richly decorated lattice screen encircles both the false tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan.

The mausoleum is surrounded by perfectly laid gardens and many fountains. The combination of lush green surroundings, red buildings and pathways, the beautiful shining white marble monument and the blue sky above create a picture of unparalleled beauty.

### Sample-2

#### Memory

The human memory remains an interesting research subject for psychologists. Typically, human beings live in the present. However, the past constitutes an integral component of life, and this makes the memory a fundamental element in daily operations.

According to Zimmerman and Kelley (2010), the recall of the past and recent events involves intricate mental processes that integrate the multiple complex domains of the brain. Our memory is not a physical object, nor a component within our body; rather, it is comprised of past events and the meaning that is attached to them. The ability to store past recollection of experiences makes up our memory.

The work done by the brain involves processing information and classifying each piece by its importance. The ability to break down information into manifold relevant and irrelevant parts ensures that the most relevant information is stored. Consequently, the human memory is comprised of the complex process of perception and retention of events.

Schwabe and Wolf (2010) assert that without memory, one cannot learn. Memory is the internal mental record that gives people access to personal and past events. The human brain captures succinct information from the environment and stores it for future use. Encoding experiences or personal information embodies a mental process that allows for the retrieval of information from the various compartments of the brain.

Scientists suggest that the hippocampus in the brainstem is the center where information is kept. Our brain has the ability to recall bits of information and discriminate said information in which the most relevant data is retained appropriately (Wimer & Shohamy, 2012). Human memory underpins learning the process; through retention of information, learning takes place.

(Source: Essay pro com)

2. **Persuasive/ Argumentative:** The aim of persuasive writing is to convince and influence a reader of a certain idea or position on an issue. The writer persuades the reader to accept his point of view through arguments supported by reasoning and facts. Persuasive writing is common to-
  - editorials
  - speeches
  - business idea
  - complaints
  - critical analysis
  - reviews (books , films, events)
  - advertisements

### Sample-1

#### Safety First in Mobile Use

The mobile phone has become an extension of our personality. It functions not only as a means of

communication but also our watch, calendar, calculator, reminder, diary, music provider, album and the list goes on. Most of us feel lost and cut off from the world without it. However, this useful device has become a threat to our lives.

A car slows right before you, somebody stops suddenly, and at times, the vehicle seems to have gone wayward on the road. Are you familiar with this scenario? Then you also know that the reason is the use of the cell-phone while driving. Statistics indicate that talking on the cell phone while driving increases by four fold your chances of meeting with an accident. As the driver converses on the phone, his attention is diverted and reflexes are slow. Many times, people are driving with just one hand while holding the phone in the other. More horrifying is the trend now among youngsters to read or send text messages while driving. With your eyed being off the road for any period of time, where split second reflexes are required, you are definitely endangering your own and others life on the road.

More and more research studies are pointing towards radiation risks from cell phones. Using cell phones over long periods of time daily increases your risk of developing cancer. It is advised that the phones are kept away from our bodies and that we use hands free devices and loud speakers to converse with others. This lets the radiation emitted from it dissipate before it reaches you. Keeping the cell phone at least a couple of feet away from us when it being charged or when you sleep is advocated. However, many of us place it close to us while sleeping, and others, literally, take it to bed with them.

Talking on the phone and walking? Well everyone does it. But the risk is high. We are so engrossed in our talk that we fail to notice oncoming traffic, pot holes, other impediments and even people in front of us, leading to injuries and accidents.

Is our life so cheap and worthless that we risk it every day just because we fail to change our habits? Why can't we just pull off the road to talk on the phone or sit and converse in peace with our friends and family or keep the phone away from us when we sleep or talk to others? Being safe is any day better than having cancer, getting injured or even dying just to talk. So friends, please be safe always.

3. **Descriptive:** The style involves description of a particular action, object, person, place, event, or sense. The expository and descriptive writing both entail describing what is being written about, but a description is more detailed, personal, and subjective. It is vivid, uses figures of speech and allows the reader to sense, see, and feel everything that a particular phenomenon evoked in the writer.

**To distinguish between an expository and descriptive explanation, the reader has to assess whether the writing is more subjective or objective. Expository writing is impartial and based on facts, whereas descriptive writing is a more personalized account by the author. Descriptive writing truly attempts to captivate the reader.**

The descriptive type of writing is common to

- Poetry
- Diaries
- Parts of larger stories
- Novels
- Travelogues

**Sample-1****The Tunnel**

I passed through an area where the trees closed a cover above my head and over the road. The shade fell upon the hairs on my exposed arms like a cold blanket. Not being in direct sunlight focused my attention back to myself, my breathing was elevated, my chest raised just a little more than usual on each breath, my hands were clamped in a tight grip around both handlebars and the whizz of my tires was drowned out slightly by the constant moving air passing my ears. Of course this all vanished as I re-emerged from the tree cover. The warmth of the sun was experienced again as it tickled my arms and face. The gentle tugging the breeze did to my loose shirt felt like nature's way of affection, almost like it appreciated my exploration of its glory.

**Sample-2****The Perfect Summer Holiday Home.**

My maternal grandparents' home in rural Punjab was the perfect holiday destination for all children in the family. A large family home, it was built on almost an acre of land. Its location amidst green swaying fields, the roads leading to it flanked by numerous mulberry and mango trees, the water flowing in the small gullies amidst the fields and, of course, most importantly the canal flowing just two hundred meters behind the house was the source of much pleasure for the kids.

The house itself had many treasures for all of us. The large iron doors, ten feet high and seven feet wide each, opened into a huge compound. Right at the entrance, on the left side, was the formal sitting room where my grandfather met all his male friends and associates. It had a collection of his magazines and formal documents. Sneaking into this august place was a desire harbored by many of us.

At the far end of the compound was a row of large cavernous rooms with huge canopied beds, ancient wooden almirahs and large tin trunks holding beddings for at least fifty people. In one of the rooms was an iron mesh cupboard which had goodies stored in it. It had to be kept locked by my granny as it would be raided and emptied in no time by the brood. Delicious aromas always wafted from the open and enclosed kitchens with something cooking on the mud chulhas with wood fires and clay ovens.

The left of the compound had a hen coop and the right side housed the buffaloes. Excitement ran high when we went looking for eggs laid by the free range hens, helped feed the buffaloes and were given rides on buffaloes and bullock carts. The entire area was surrounded by large sheesham and neem trees; just perfect for playing hide and seek. Bathing in the large tube well of the house and the canal behind was frowned upon by the adults but the children could often be found chilling and cooling in them with their clothes on regaling each other with stories, playing games or simply squabbling among themselves.

I cannot envisage a better place for a vacation even now. But I wonder whether the current generation, with their smart phones and overload of information, would enjoy such simple pleasures or be able to enjoy only the company of other human beings?

4. **Narrative:** The narrative style is about story telling/narrating a tale, complete with characters, actions, dialogue, plot, and setting. It is usually fictional, but can be non-fictional as well if it depicts real life events and stories. Narrative writing is mostly personal and imaginative. It is original and self-expressive. Writers attempt to relate universal truths through poetry and telling stories.

**Techniques used in narrative writing include:**

- Develop interesting, well-fleshed out and rounded characters.
- The plot of the story/novel/narrative should be well developed.

- The setting has to be vivid and vibrant. The reader should be transported to place/ era while reading about it.
- The theme of the narration must be clearly identifiable. Do not try to convey too many messages in one narration. The main thrust is lost in too many themes and sub themes.
- State your point of view lucidly.
- Include dialogues to break monotony of narration, to define characters and build interest of reader.
- Incorporating anecdotes, especially in oral narration is an effective device in building curiosity and holding attention of hearers/ readers.
- Using metaphors and similes adds to beauty of language.
- Figures of speech put in the sugar and spice in the story line.
- Imaginative language and coining your word groups/ figures of speech is the creative license of the writer.
- Adding emotional appeal is a significant part of writing which often leads to catharsis for readers.
- Detailed and elaborate description creates a mental image of the setting/ character/ place for the reader.

It is often found in-

- **Novels**
- **Screen scripts**
- **Plays**
- **Stories**
- **Legends**
- **Poems**
- **Autobiographies/ biographies**
- **Memoirs**
- **Songs**
- **Personal essays**

### Sample-1

#### Life at Crossroads

I stood at the cross- roads, waiting for an opportunity to cross over to the other side. A gleaming, sleek, red coloured Audi standing outside an apartment block drew my eyes. As I was admiring the car, its owner emerged from the complex. A handsome young man in grey pinstriped suit, crisp white shirt, a light pink tie with perfect Adonis like features, swept back hair and immaculately groomed, he was the cynosure of many eyes. He was the epitome of sophistication, youth and wealth.

My gaze strayed to the corner where a fruit vendor was laying out his produce. The care with which he polished the apples, mangoes and pears was a pleasure to behold. The not so perfect ones were hidden under the pile whereas the glowing, fresh products were displayed at the top. A lady stopped by to purchase some apples. The haggling began. After reaching a compromise, the selection process started. In an attempt to get the perfect weight, I saw the wily fruit seller slide in a bruised apple. I smiled as I looked on at the perennial businessman.

A wracking cough attracted my attention. I saw a middle- aged old man plodding on with heavy steps. His peach shirt and brown pant were clean but threadbare. A shabby grey cloth bag held in his hand completed his ensemble. A weary and sad expression bespoke of many cares and troubles besides lack of sufficient finances and failing health.

Sounds of gleeful laughter wafted toward me like the cool, fragrant spring air. Two children aged about seven and five came racing into my line of vision. They chatted incessantly playing some game, racing up and down the footpath. The warm summer breeze that tugged at their clothes and hair did not bother them. Their mother could be heard admonishing them repeatedly but to no avail. Their carefree, bright, joyous faces personified the best of childhood.

A hand touched me. An old lady almost bent over with age was seeking my assistance in crossing the road. In pristine white clothes, hair tied back neatly, a purse clutched in her hand, she had a determined look on her face. The jutting lower lip stated her stubborn resolve to be independent in no uncertain terms. I labeled her 'aging with dignity'.

The traffic light turned green. I gently held the old lady's hand and led her across the road, leaving behind a slice of life at the cross roads.

### Significance of Writing for Students:

Writing is an essential part of the educational process. Developing good writing skills is the key to success in academic life.

Why is writing effectively important for students?

1. **Improves communication skills:** Writing is a tool for expression and communication. An effective writer is skillful and comfortable in expressing his/her thoughts and feelings.
2. **Helps students review and remember recently learned material:** It is an excellent way to reinforce newly learnt material, recall key lesson points and build writing skills at the same time.
3. **Means by which educators assess student learning:** Written assignments help teachers assess the comprehension and progress of the students. They are the primary tools for grading learners.
4. **Encourages creative expression and exploration:** It helps students to develop creativity and imagination, explore possibilities, employ problem solving techniques, and engage in storytelling.
5. **Essential for self-understanding:** One of the best ways to understand anything is to write an assignment / essay related to it. As you begin to search for relevant content and organize it logically, the concept becomes clear. Creative writing helps the author understand his/her thoughts and feelings.
6. **Future Career prospects:** Employers are increasingly complaining of the lack of adequate communication skills amongst youngsters. Possessing good communication skills is a prerequisite in many jobs. Ability to write well can help you get selected for a particular job and is helpful in your future career growth.

### Characteristics of Good Business Writing

Our world is increasingly dependent on the clear and effective communication of information. This is especially important in business communication. What does effective business writing look like?

The following characteristics need to be taken care of in business writing.

1. **CLEAR PURPOSE:** People working in the fast paced world have busy schedules and time lines to adhere to. They have no time to waste. Therefore while drafting any written piece, ensure that there is

absolute clarity about your purpose for writing. Anything that is ambiguous or confusing is likely to be designated to the trash bin. What you write should be worth taking out the time to read.

2. **CLARITY AND CONCISENESS:** Creative figures of speech and poetic phrases are not be used in business correspondence. The aim in business writing is the effective communication of required information. Therefore, clarity and brevity is of utmost importance.
3. **TARGET AUDIENCE:** The audience you are writing for ascertains your language and tone. The manner in which you communicate with a superior, a colleague, a customer or a service provider will differ. Do not use phrases and expressions that could be misunderstood or offensive. Tailor your content and words keeping in mind what your reader needs and wants to hear.
4. **SUITABLE TONE:** One tricky aspect is tone of the writer. It can easily be misinterpreted. Always be polite and courteous in your communication. Do not be overly informal or friendly.
5. **APPROPRIATE FORMAT:** Business modes of writing have specified formats. Letters, proposals, memos, and many other types of business writing follow the standard format as it helps avoid any kind of misinterpretation or confusion. The reader is able to quickly identify the purpose of the document. Attention to format is more important in business writing than most other kinds of writing.
6. **PERSONAL OPINIONS/ EMOTIONS:** Business communication is based on facts and figures. The writer's personal opinion or perspective on a matter does not carry any weight. He has to follow the company policy or directive. Avoid use of phrases like, 'I think', 'I feel', 'in my opinion' etc.

**SUMMARY:** This chapter attempts to familiarize the students with the need for building proficiency in writing, steps involved in the process of writing, the basic styles of writing, the significance of learning to communicate effectively in the written form and the characteristics of good business writing.

#### Practice Exercises with Answer hints:

1. You are Ashish Batra, the Sales Manager of Vibhuti Agarbaties. You had a meeting with a client, Mr. Ashok Goyal, regarding bulk supply of agarbaties to their company 'Evergreen Traders'. Write a brief summary of the meeting for your superior in about 125 words.(Expository style)

**Hints: place, time, and purpose of meeting, whom you met, what you discussed, outcome of meeting, further steps that need to be taken.**

2. You visited the Google office in Delhi and were impressed by the building and infrastructure. Describe the office in your own words, stating your perceptions and feelings. Word limit 125. (Descriptive style).

**Hints: location, huge building....ten floors, interior tastefully decorated, plush furnishings, well ventilated and lighted, eco friendly, ample office space for every employee.**

3. You wish to join journalism instead of engineering. Write a short paragraph (125 words) persuading your parents to let you join the course of your choice. (Persuasive style)

**Hints:** You understand the concerns and viewpoint of parents but have no interest in engineering, have an aptitude for writing well and are very keen on joining the journalism course, many good career options available in journalism these days, feel you may not do well in engineering since did not score high marks in science subjects in school, any other valid point you want to include.

4. Narrate a short anecdote from your life, real or imaginary, in about 125-150 words. Add all the elements of storytelling. (Narrative style)

**Hints: should have characters, theme, and emotional appeal.**