

• 专门用途英语课程系列




College English Creative Writing
for Business Purposes

商务英语写作

Christopher Green



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Introduction

In Chinese universities and colleges there is an increasing emphasis on students' practical ability to write in English for both academic and general purposes. It is recognized that their writing skills in English also need to be linked to the development of a creative spirit, to cultural awareness and skills in intercultural communication, and to the active application of thinking and problem-solving skills.

The *College English Creative Writing* series of College English textbooks is aimed at helping students develop the writing skills and language competence necessary for their tertiary studies and other writing needs. The series systematically builds up students' writing skills from the foundation of sentence and paragraph structure, through different text types, and provides comprehensive notes about commonly used grammar and vocabulary items. The final two books help to develop the particular skills necessary for academic and business writing. The series also encourages students to be creative, to be aware of the intercultural aspects of using English, and to be able to express their own thoughts and feelings when writing.

Although the *College English Creative Writing* series is particularly suitable for students who will study at tertiary institutions, other learners who need to develop basic writing skills and build up basic language competence necessary for written communication in daily life and/or the workplace will also find the books to be very useful.

This book will train you in writing for business purposes.

Special Features of *Writing for Business Purposes*

Business writing is all about communication. *Writing for Business Purposes* focuses on developing the necessary clarity and techniques to communicate effectively. The main features of the book are:

- Carefully selecting grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary items to cater for students' needs when writing for business purposes;
- Raising students' awareness of the appropriate style and tone for various business documents;
- Enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of how to construct different business documents with well-constructed grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary exercises;
- Analyzing authentic written texts at the sentence, paragraph, and text levels, which enables students to thoroughly understand the fundamental elements of successful business writing;
- Training students to proofread and edit their writing;
- In-depth grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation notes which help students to construct effective business documents;

Variety of different texts from a wide range of industries to expand students' understanding and experience and, more importantly, to maximize their exposure to various text types; Expanding students' creativity by providing them with contextualized tasks which require them to write on a wide range of topics for various authentic purposes.

The Structure of *Writing for Business Purposes*

Writing for Business Purposes consists of sixteen units, each focusing on one particular aspect of business writing, from the fundamental “Principles of Business Communication” (Unit 1) to the more comprehensive “Writing Business Proposals” (Unit 14). In each unit, there are three parts:

- Part One: Improving Your Understanding
- Part Two: Developing Your Skills
- Part Three: Expanding Your Creativity

Part One: Improving Your Understanding

The first part in each unit explains some of the key features of business writing, as well as introducing students to the different types of business documents to ensure students have a solid understanding of:

- the aim and purpose of different business documents;
- language;
- style;
- structure.

To reinforce what students have learnt in this part and to prepare them for their own business writing, they are encouraged to complete various tasks, including:

- analyzing memos;
- sequencing information;
- using graphs;
- analyzing business proposals;
- analyzing mission statements.

Part Two: Developing Your Skills

The second part of each unit focuses on developing key skills that students need to construct a piece of business writing, including:

- writing memos;
- adjusting tone and style;
- understanding purpose and audience;
- responding to requests;
- writing instructions;
- assessing the layout of information on websites;
- interpreting information;
- evaluating material.

Part Three: Expanding Your Creativity

The final part of each unit builds on what students have learnt in the previous sections and asks students to put their knowledge into practice with various writing tasks including:

- memos;
- letters of complaint;
- speeches;
- application letters;
- CVs;
- advertisements;
- company profiles.

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Principles of Business Communication



Improving Your Understanding

Task A

Business documents are usually quite factual and written with a specific goal in mind. This means that business writing always needs to be concise and clear. The “three Cs” (conciseness, clarity, and correctness) are very important, and the task below gives you the opportunity to learn more about these — and other — features of effective business writing. Read the text below then answer the questions that follow.

Effective Business Communication

As with any form of communication, the most important factors in business communication are purpose and audience. Journalistic communication, for example, informs and sometimes persuades large sections of the general public about events in the world. Business communication conveys information or tasks that need to be addressed between staff in the workplace.

The first basic rule of workplace communication, whether spoken or written, is that it needs to be as short and succinct as possible. This rule applies equally to letters, memos, reports, emails, CVs, meetings, and telephone conversations. Busy businesspeople require communication which is clear and concise.

A clear and concise style is achieved by choosing appropriate language for the purpose and keeping this language as direct as possible. For example, in academic communication

the following sentence is perfectly acceptable:

“There are a number of reasons to account for the recent decline in America’s economy.”

But it is possible to adapt this to the workplace by making it more direct:

“America’s economy has declined recently due to ...”

It is important to remember that this concise style needs to be balanced by politeness. Workplace communication should avoid being abrupt. Indeed, politeness is essential for good working relationships. Politeness is achieved by making sure that emails, memos, phone calls etc. all have the right tone. The tone should achieve a balance between getting the point across and not being too abrupt. For example:

“This is our new product ...”

and

“I should be most obliged if you would give some of your precious time to consider our company’s newest product ...”

are both inadvisable. The first is too direct and may seem rude, or as though you are not interested in the product or the clients. The second is too wordy and may come across as a little false. A straightforward but more polite expression such as:

“I would like to introduce our company’s newest product ...”

is more appropriate.

A final and very important feature of effective business communication is language accuracy.

In most companies, it is very important to ensure there are no errors in formatting, spelling, punctuation, or grammar in any official correspondence, and even in internal mail within the company. So, careful and detailed editing and proofreading of a written document is essential. Employers and colleagues will form a negative impression of a person’s abilities and attitudes if he/she uses incorrect language in business communication.

Effective written workplace communication, then, needs to show:

- a style which is clear and concise
- a tone which is polite but not overly so
- a presentation which contains no errors of format and language

If any of these features are not present, the communication will not be effective, which can only be bad for business.

1. What three essential features should workplace communication have?
2. Why does workplace communication need to have these features?
3. How can a clear and concise style be achieved?

Developing Your Skills

Informative and Persuasive Writing

There are two general types of business documents you will encounter in the sales and marketing sectors, those that try to either:

- **inform** the reader about a product or service. This may include key facts or figures, how to use the product or service, or frequently asked questions (FAQ). The aim is to improve understanding.

or

- **persuade** the reader that this product or service is a good one and worth buying. The aim is to stimulate emotions and develop enthusiasm.

The business writer chooses **content** and **language** which will best achieve their aim.

Task B

Look at the two texts below. Which one aims to help the reader understand the product or service and its effects (i.e. is informative), and which tries to sell the product or service (i.e. is persuasive)?

Text 1

DO YOU WANT TO BE FIT AND HEALTHY?

Then you should try

SLIMTONE

— the fantastic fat-burning medicine —

Slimtone is a delicious tonic drink that burns fat and provides energy — all at the same time! There's no need to suffer exhausting exercise sessions or pay expensive slimming clinic fees. We deliver your course of Slimtone to you directly, avoiding expensive retailers. Order Slimtone now and take advantage of our great introductory offer:

a 20% discount on your first month's supply of Slimtone

Contact us at slimtone@org.uk for details

Text 2

Dr Jim Jones's Advice Page: The Benefits of Weight Loss

Losing just 10% of your body weight — and keeping it off — can bring significant health benefits to people who are overweight. It can help:

- Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke and can also minimize the need for heart medication.
- Reduce the risk of developing non-insulin dependent diabetes. If you have diabetes, weight loss could help keep your diabetes under control and reduce the need for medication.
- Reduce the strain on the joints, improve back and joint pain, and improve mobility.
- Improve asthma and thus reduce the need for asthma medication. Your lungs start to function better and breathlessness is reduced.
- Improve mood and self-esteem.

More at drjimj@org.uk

Task C

Complete the table below to compare and contrast informative and persuasive writing.

Features	Informative Writing	Persuasive Writing
Content	Provides unbiased information	Promotes a product or service
Format	Information provided concisely in bullet point form	Information presented attractively to sell a particular product or service
Language: use of pronouns		
Language: use of adjectives		

Task D

The terms "tone" and "style" were mentioned in the text you read for Task A. The text explained that style in business communication should be clear and the tone should be polite. This task will help you to understand the importance of appropriate tone and style in business communication.

The memos on Page 13 were written by a managing director to a security supervisor. Which one achieves an appropriate tone and style? How does it do this?