

# Writing About Business

**This guideline applies to various Business sub-categories, such as Accounting, Economics, Finance, and Marketing.**

## **I. General Purpose**

Written communication is essential in business. Business writers may convey information about services or products of an organization; assign tasks; present a plan of action; adopt a plan; instruct, persuade, inform, or convince audiences. Business writing tends to be concise, straightforward and clear, and consideration of audience and purpose is vital to the style and intent of the writing. **Audiences** include executives, managers, employers, employees (in accounting, research and development, clerical support), donors, stockholders, clients, potential customers, and colleagues.

## **II. Types of Writing**

1. Reports: Factual information (formal or informal)
  - Feasibility report (pros and cons)
  - Investigative report
  - Progress report (updates about a project)
  - Activity report
  - Trouble report
  - Trip report
2. Proposals: To convince an audience to adopt a plan
  - Solicited (requested from an audience)
  - Unsolicited (audience has not expressed interest)
  - Internal (to others within an organization)
  - External (to clients and potential customers outside the organization)
3. Business plans
  - Mission statement, vision of project, financial projections and budget, market research, competition
4. Executive Summaries
  - A concise summary of key points of larger document
5. Information reports
  - Gather, organize and present research or information as straightforwardly and as opinion-free and argument-free as possible
6. Memos and Correspondence
  - Letters (internal or external; more formal than memos)
    - Application letter
    - Acceptance letter
    - Rejection letter
    - Adjustment letter
    - Good News letter

- Bad News letter
  - Inquiry
  - Refusal
  - Emails
  - Internal memos (within an organization)
7. Presentations
    - Usually oral to instruct, persuade, or inform groups
    - Presentation software may be used (PowerPoint, Prezi) with charts, graphs, transparencies, etc.
  8. Brochures
  9. Newsletters
  10. Web sites

## II. Types of Evidence

Purpose and audience will determine the type of evidence used:

- With reports or proposals, interviews, observations, surveys, or questionnaires may be used.
- For investigative reports, use facts and statistics or researched sources.
- For job applications, include past experience and qualifications.
- To promote a service, use testimonials from satisfied customers.

## III. Writing Conventions

- Present information in easy-to-read formats with tables, graphs, charts, etc.
- Writing should be straightforward and professional, but not overly formal.
- Use respectful tone and project credible image.
- Avoid passive voice and unnecessary words.
- Use clichés and buzzwords only rarely as they can be seen as flippant, phony or insincere.
- Refrain from offensive language based on race, gender, sexual orientation or disability; be inclusive.
- Personal pronouns (*you* and *I* or *we*) can be used.
- Write in a clear, straightforward, focused, concise manner.

## IV. Citation Style

- APA (American Psychological Association)
- CMS (Chicago Manual of Style)
- Instructors typically indicate the style they prefer.

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Alred, Gerald J., Charles T. Brusaw, and Walter E. Oliu. *The Business Writer's Companion*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2011. Print.

Cullick, Jonathan S. and Terry Myers Zawacki. *Writing in the Disciplines: Advice and Models*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2011. D-15-20. Print.