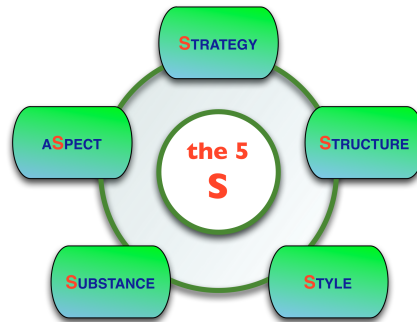


## WRITING WITH IMPACT

# I. Strategy first: think before you write



*“The art of writing is first of all to be understood.” Eugène Delacroix.*

The objective of this eBook is to familiarise you with some principles of professional writing in a multilingual and multicultural context.

In order to write a clear and effective text, that also complies with the standard codes in your professional environment, you need such skills as being able to:

- **analyse and understand** the essence of a message;
- **understand the reader** and respond to his needs;
- **structure** your thoughts precisely in order to express them clearly in writing;
- **attract the interest** of the reader and obtain the desired action from the reader;
- **improve the readability** and understanding of your text so that it will be read from cover to cover.

These different skills are presented in the **“5 S model”**, an approach that will serve as a guide throughout this eBook. They will help you to write more effectively and clearly in your language or in another language.

This document is a tool for the course proposed by the European School of Administration ([http://europa.eu/eusa/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/eusa/index_en.htm)), as well as a self-learning tool that you can use any time, even independently from the course. You can find various elements (theories, models, film clips, presentations, exercises and links to external resources) that will allow you to develop your skills to write more effectively and clearly.

## I.1 Precision, clarity and conciseness

Your main objective when writing a professional document is to get your reader to read your text, help him understand your text and then act in line with the intention of the text.

Nonetheless, several obstacles make this apparently simple process more difficult. One of the most important obstacles is, without a doubt, the abundance of documents you need to read in your professional environment.

Therefore, you need to concentrate your efforts on three main qualities of a well-written professional document:

- **precision:** a professional document has a goal (and, if one wants it to be effective, it ideally should have only one goal) and should develop and expand this goal;
- **clarity:** the use of simple, common, explicit words as well as short phrases promotes readability, understanding and the desired reaction from the reader;
- **conciseness:** even if certain texts are longer (this is the case for some official reports), you need to remember that, in a world where everyone is so busy, being concise is always a virtue.

The text of Churchill (<http://www.slidemagic.com/blog/2016/2/14/brief-memo-by-churchill-on-brevity>) strongly reinforces this (EN).



Links with my work?

Answer the following questions in order to become more aware of your reading habits:

- On an average, how many documents do you read each day at work? How much time does it take?
- In the table below, indicate the documents you read and your approximate reading time.
- Given the documents you receive, which ones would you not even take the time to read? Why?

Type of document	Read entirely	Read in part
<b>Service note</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Informational note</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Correspondence</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Letters, Emails</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Minutes of meetings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Technical documents</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Professional text</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Various reports</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- When you begin to read a document, how do you proceed?
  - Read the table of contents and then the chapter headings?
  - Read passages in bold face, tables with illustrations, graphics and/or sections with quotes?
  - Read only the introduction and the conclusion?
  - Read at certain points on a page or only the information in boxes?
  - Read the beginning of paragraphs?

Source : Exercise from “ Améliorer ses écrits professionnels

([https://books.google.be/books/about/Am%C3%A9liorer\\_ses\\_%C3%A9crits\\_professionnels.html?id=fy4RHAAACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.be/books/about/Am%C3%A9liorer_ses_%C3%A9crits_professionnels.html?id=fy4RHAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y)) ” by Corinne Abensour et Philippe Domont pp. 12 à 15, ed. Retz, 2003.

## 1.2 First define your strategy



In order to write effectively, think about “**Strategy**”, the **first S** of our method.

Ask yourself the following 4 questions:

1. **What are your intentions or objectives?**
2. **For whom are you writing? (rank, level of expertise, etc.)**
3. **What is the appropriate format to achieve your objectives?(Is it necessary to do it in writing? Is a short Email or a more formal text more appropriate?)**
4. **What information would you like to include and highlight in your text?**

Your answers to these questions are not only the basis for your writing strategy, but also reinforce your confidence about the **purpose** and **value** of writing a particular text.

## 1.3 Define your intentions and your objectives

First of all, ask yourself the question: “ **Why am I writing?**”. By doing this, you define your **real intention and the objectives** of your document:

- “I am writing this note **because it** will help my head of unit to **argument** in favour of a particular reorganisation measure”.
- “I am writing this Email **so that** the IT service may implement **a procedure to effectively deal with** recurring breakdowns and glitches”.
- “I am writing this report **in order that** the project team may **evaluate the** existing possibilities to improve our

resources, etc.”

Of course, your objectives can be of a diverse nature: to inform, sollicite an action, persuade, criticise, encourage a debate, answer a question, etc.

You will gain a tremendous amount of time if you keep the essence of the objective in mind while writing the text right from the start. This will help you choose the **best type** and **the right quantity of information** for your document and **choose an appropriate plan** to follow.

Sometimes an Email may not be appropriate. A telephone call or a brief face-to-face encounter might be more effective. When you are more aware of the right type of document for the right situation, you will save time and will not waste your colleagues' time.



### Links with my work?

## Reflect on past experiences

Have you experienced some delicate situations when writing a text because of the environment in which you work? Describe two situations and the consequences they had for you and your work.

## 1.4 Be precise: know yourself and know your reader

When writing, you need to address a reader and engage in a dialogue. Therefore, you need to know **who you are** and also **who your reader is**. Who is your reader? Do we speak the same language? Do we share the same area of expertise? etc.

The answers to the following two questions will help you to choose the right language, terminology, style and type of document.

- **To whom am I writing?**

You do not write in the same way to your colleagues as when you write to your superior, experts or interns.

Moreover, in your professional environment, the levels of comprehension or expression in a particular language are often quite different. The basic rules are: be as clear and direct as possible, use simple and precise vocabulary, avoid trying to impress the reader with superfluous and stylistic effects and technical terminology. Remember, you want the reader to understand your text.



- **Whom am I addressing?**

An effective and successful writer puts himself or herself in the shoes of the reader(s), provides them with the necessary information and clearly states the precise reaction expected.

The empathy between the author and the reader reinforces the message and, as a result, its effectiveness. Your image as well as the image of your unit or institution are at stake.

Here are 3 possible categories of questions to ask yourself before beginning to write:

- **the recipient:** Who are my readers? Who is my target group? What is his name? His area of responsibility?
- **the expectations:** What am I supposed to write about? What should the recipient(s) do after reading my text? What do they expect from my text?
- **shared knowledge:** What do my readers already know? What is the reader's area and level of expertise? How much information should I provide him?

As a consequence, you will better adapt your structure, style, vocabulary, layout, etc. and your text will better achieve an optimal **degree of readability and effectiveness.**

## 1.5 Choose your format wisely

First of all, define the type of document you are going to write. You do not write a report as you would a note, minutes of a meeting, an Email or a speech, etc.

Each type of document has its own rules of structure, style and format. You will find a general overview of the main document types in [chapter 7](#) of this ebook.

The official texts published by the European Union for the public are very specific in nature. They follow certain rules defined by the institutions that produce them. You will find several examples of official texts ([http://europa.eu/publications/official-documents/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/publications/official-documents/index_en.htm)) (EN-FR).

## 1.6 Know your subject and choose the information you want to convey

In order to be clear and succinct you need to know your subject and your objective.

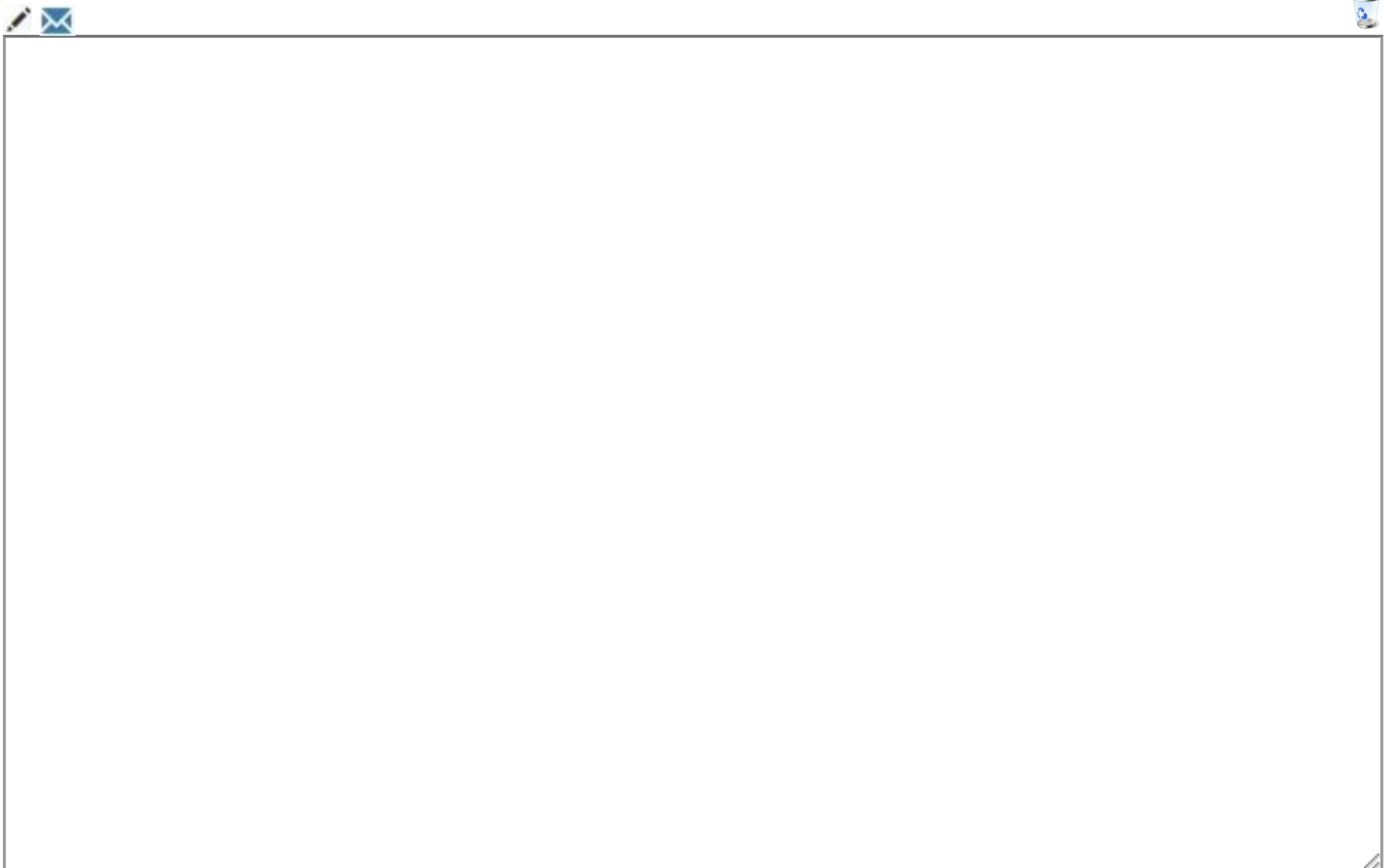
Before getting down to work, collect as many comprehensive bibliographies as possible. If you are not familiar with the procedure, documentarians and librarians can help you. Let them know your topic and your audience. This will help them to be more efficient in their research...

### ***Your words are your business card...***

Your written words remain forever. Thus, choose carefully what you write because it reflects your image and the image of your institution. Take some time to reflect on the importance of this.

## Going deeper...

- The guide *How to write clearly* of the European Commission is available in all the official languages of the European Union on the EU Bookshop site (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/how-to-write-clearly-pbHC3212148/>) (EN)
- A useful guide on writing for a public administration (<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf>) is the *Federal Guidelines on Plain Language* (EN)
- The song “Clarity” for the Clear Writing Campaign ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxzU2UH9j\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxzU2UH9j_I)) at the European Commission gives you musical advice on the importance of clear writing (EN)
- Here is some additional information on the importance of knowing your audience (<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/know-your-audience.html>) or another (<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/audId.cfm>) (EN)
- *Business Writing Skills Tutorial: Learn How to Write More Effectively* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4OqrNMZKU>) (video) (EN)
- *The Language of Europe. Multilingualism and Translation in the EU Institutions: Practice, Problems and Perspectives* (<http://www.editions-universite-bruxelles.be/fiche/view/2742>) (EN) offers further information on the language of European documents and the need for clarity in EU documents





## WRITING WITH IMPACT

# 2. Preparing to write



In order to be an effective writer, here are some practical tips that can help you prepare to write and increase your confidence when writing.

## 2.1 Take the time to know yourself and your habits

Writing seems to be a straightforward task. However, think first about the level of your writing both personally and professionally:

- How frequently do you write?
- What do you write?
- When do you write?
- Where do you write and under what conditions?

Most of the answers to the questions above reveal your personal effectiveness. You are generally more effective at work when you **schedule** specific tasks at precise times. If you are a morning person, it does not make sense to start writing at 16:00!



You write better and more effectively if **you are relaxed** (of course there are exceptions to the rule) and in a calm state of mind and environment.

Thus, take the time to **schedule the time** that you think you need to write your document. Often you will need several days for an important document. In addition, you are generally not effective if you write two or three hours in a row. We suggest the “Pomodoro” method where you alternate periods of effective writing with another activity, and this several times a day. If you already have a precise deadline, organise your writing by breaking up the phases of intensity of work over the course of the day: a draft of a paragraph or a sub-chapter requires less concentration than expanding the entire structure of a text. You need a fresh

and clear mind for the first draft.



[Links with my work?](#)

**Preparing for your writing task**



Keeping in mind a text that you have to write in the future, complete the table below:

Subject	What is the subject of my document?
Objective	What is my objective to write? Inform, get approval, ...
Reader	Who is my reader? My potential readers/audience? Names, responsibilities, functions, expertise, etc.
Desired action	What is the reaction I wish to obtain?
Results	How can I measure if I have obtained my objective?

## 2.2 Five techniques to help you get started

*“It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare to do something; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult”.* **Seneca**

At the theatre we speak about stage fright, in psychological terms it is inhibition and in writing it is the **“blank page syndrome”** or **“writer’s block”**. Sometimes, you just cannot get down to business and write. The reasons for this can be numerous: trying to be a perfectionist, too many distractions, a lack of motivation, confidence or preparation, etc.

Take the time to understand writer’s block and possible ways to overcome it as explained on the first video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>) or the other one (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mOBQhKHN6A>).

“Finding Forrester” by Gus Van Sant, with Sean Connery, is a funny way to illustrate the situation:



Here are five techniques to help you to generate some good ideas and to jot them down before actually writing the final version:

- **Talk about it/tell your story**

Some of you do not like to write. Why? You are inhibited to the point that you do not have any ideas. Do not despair. There are dictaphones and highly-perfected recording systems. Often we can talk about something more easily than write about it. We have more ideas when we speak. Subject What is the subject of my document? Objective What is my objective to write? Inform, get approval, ... Reader Who is my reader? My potential readers/audience? Names, responsibilities, functions, expertise, etc. Desired action What is the reaction I wish to obtain? Results How can I measure if I have obtained my objective? (and when walking) than when we sit in front of a blank page or a blank screen. When we speak about something out loud, the process of writing becomes considerably easier. Try it.

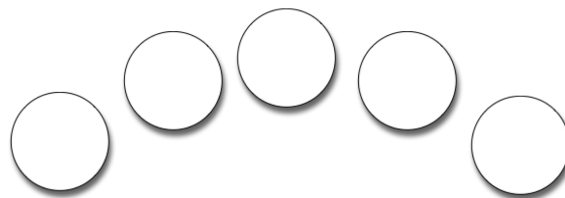
- **Long live the draft!**

By definition, a draft is a paper without any value. We do it in five minutes when we need to write a particular document. Here is a helpful way to remove any inhibitions: jot down the key words you do not wish to forget, etc. You do not need to organise them yet. Just write. The more you do this, the easier the task becomes.



### Exercise: Key words

A draft is a blank page. Fill in the bubbles in the diagram below. Put in the key words that come to mind **concerning your current topic/issue. You could also for example develop a string of ideas on justice or the key words Europe or Italy.** Then, try to connect them in order to obtain a logical flow of ideas. You are now on your way to filling in that blank page!



- **Play on words**

There are other ways to link ideas about your topic. Little is needed to make the process work:

For example, you can:

- start by researching the definition of a key word;
- then move on to questions about the topic;
- make note of some obvious synonyms, related thoughts or opposing thoughts. If you need to argue in favour or against something, find an example that supports your argument (e.g. a situation from real life, another similar case study, etc.).



### Exercise: Generate ideas

Using one of the five ways to generate ideas, make note of what comes to mind on the following topics:



Triggers to generate ideas	Italy	Europe	Justice
1. Consider the problems			
2. Associate thoughts spontaneously			
3. Associate ideas in a rational way			
4. Look for examples according to sector. Make use of all types of media, check out resources, literary works...			
6. Formulate value judgments			

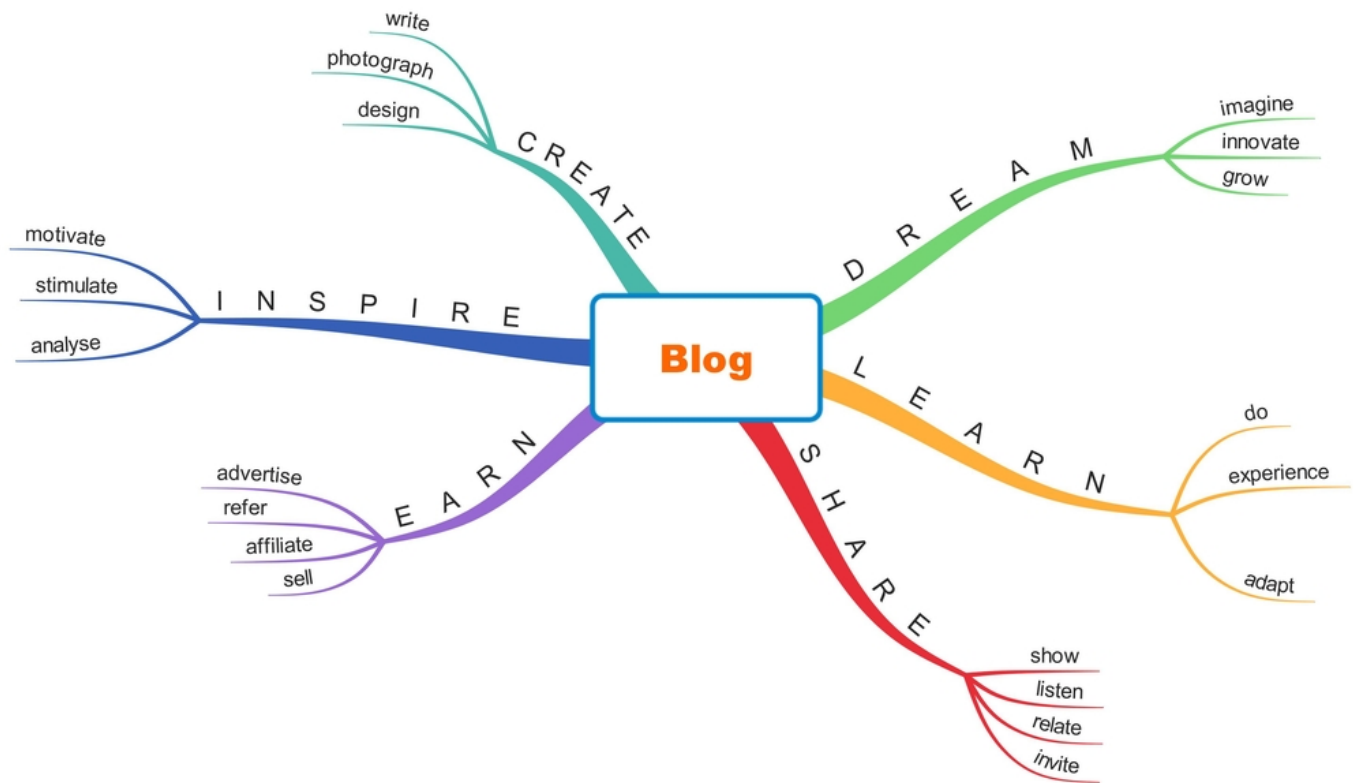
Source: inspired by [http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4\\_idee.htm](http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4_idee.htm) ([http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4\\_idee.htm](http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4_idee.htm))

- **Just 5 minutes!**

Many people think that it takes an eternity to write something. Each professional asked about this will reply that it depends on many factors as well as one's knowledge and familiarity with the subject...

In fact, in five minutes, you can put together an enormous amount of words and ideas, especially if you say: "I will do it for only five minutes." Thus, you **dramatise less** the amount of work that awaits you. When you do this often, you will discover that you will begin to write a bit longer than five minutes! Moreover, when you consider the work accomplished in five minutes, you will be proud of yourself, and even more so if you set a reasonable objective from the start. Then it is up to you to increase the amount of five-minute periods.

• **Mindmapping**



This technique stimulates creativity, and in the case of professional writing, the production of ideas. This technique was developed by an English psychologist, Tony Buzan (<http://www.tonybuzan.com>) who believed that our brain works more on the principle of radial association than on linearity. In other words, many of us work more easily when we associate and group words and ideas! A mental map is therefore a perfect tool if you would like to visualise a complex subject before getting down to writing a document. It is easy to create your own mental map (<http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/>) (EN) or this other link (<https://www.novamind.com/mindmapping-software/writing/>) (EN)

**Some programmes can** help you to do so (<http://www.howtogeek.com/128753/the-best-websites-and-software-for-brainstorming-and-mind-mapping>) (EN).



**Exercise: Mindmapping**

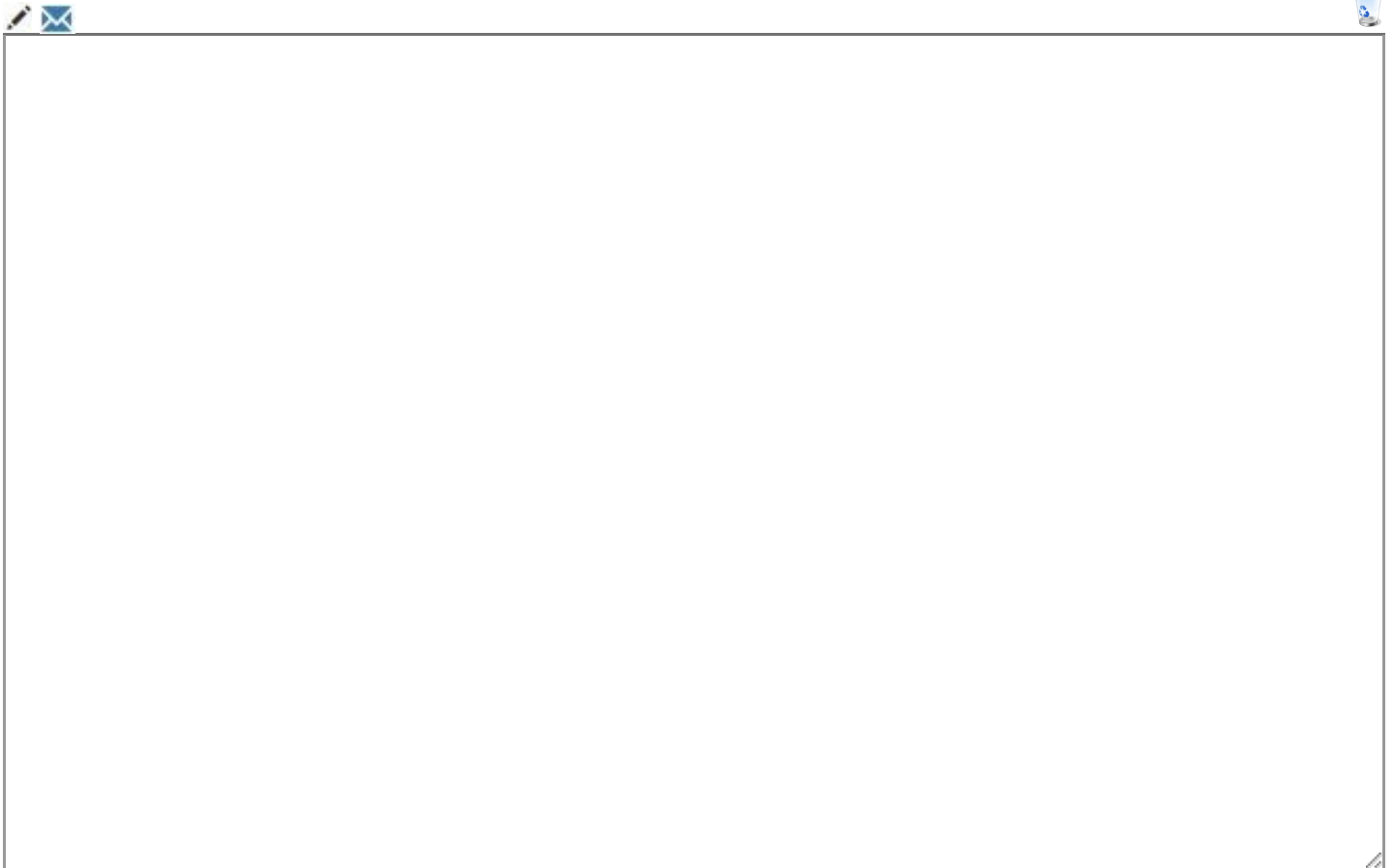
You need to write a follow-up note for your colleagues before going on summer holiday.

Try to use the technique of mindmapping to structure your content. Here are tips to facilitate the task:

1. Write down the main topic in the middle of the page. Draw a circle around it.
2. Write down the key points in circles around the main topic. Remember to add a circle for the introduction and another one for the conclusion.
3. Jot down the secondary points near the key point to which it corresponds the best.
4. Analyse all the possible links and possible duplications and adapt your mental map accordingly.
5. Finally, choose the key points you would like to use and prioritise them...

## Going deeper...

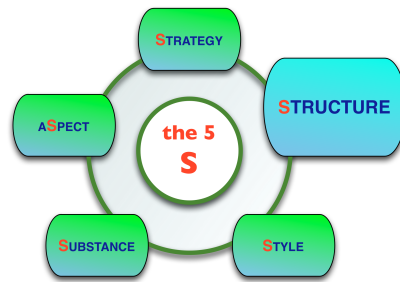
- Tedsx talk on imagination: the power of creativity (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP24xpWcXyl>) (EN) to help you generate ideas by Tom Bates
- 9 Tips for Getting More Writing Done (<http://www.writewithimpact.com/9-tips-for-getting-more-writing-done/>) (EN)
- To help you with your writing at work (EN): Storytelling (<http://www.writewithimpact.com/paul-smith-shows-you-how-to-lead-with-a-story/>)
- On mindmapping ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlabrWv25qQ>) (EN)
- How to boost your own writing speed (<http://www.writewithimpact.com/monica-leonelle-shows-you-how-to-triple-your-writing-speed/>) (EN)



## WRITING WITH IMPACT

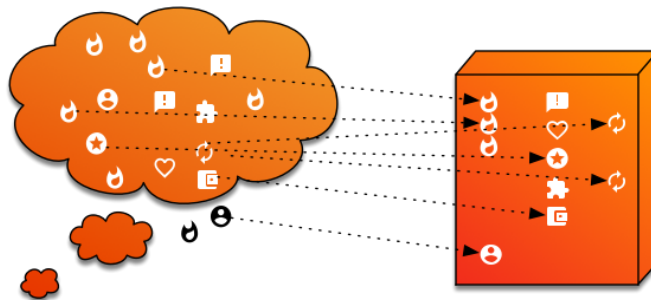
### 3. The importance of good Structure

You now know how to define the intention and objective of your document, identify your reader/ target audience, which format to use for your documents and who you are when you are writing a particular document. You have already gathered the facts and, if necessary, supporting documentation to help you write the text. Before finally writing the document, we are going to go through at least three more important stages that are related to the second “S” of the proposed method, i.e. “**the structure**”.

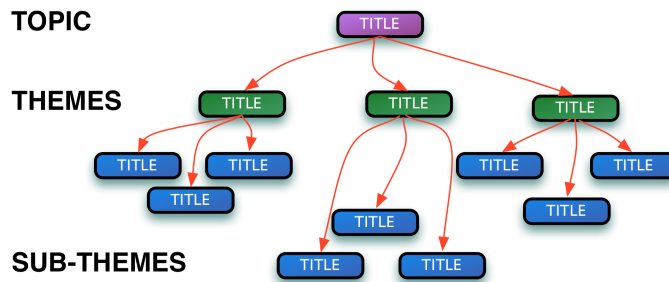


#### 3.1 Analyse and sort out the information

You have a gamut of information at your disposal to help you nourish and structure your subject. You are going to analyse and define which information is pertinent for the subject of your text as concerns your objectives, your readers and the context of your message. You are also going to verify the coherence and examine whether or not the information is directly useful for your subject and your defined goals. This process is depicted in the illustration below:



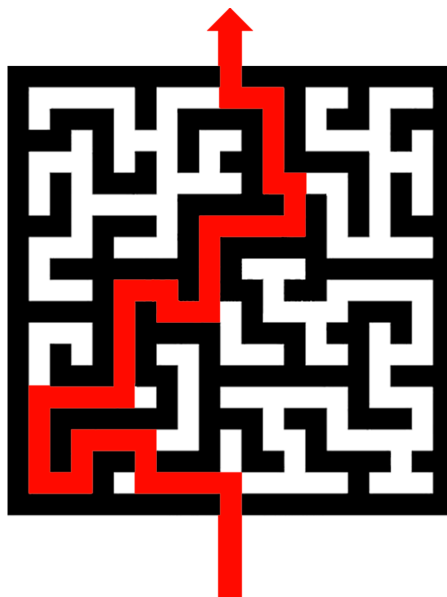
The graphic below was inspired from <http://www.alloprof.qc.ca/BV/Pages/f1446.aspx> (<http://www.alloprof.qc.ca/BV/Pages/f1446.aspx>) (FR):



We are not yet writing. To do this you use a telegraphic language, symbols and numbers, which help you to concentrate on the task of “sorting”.

### 3.2 Organising, sorting, structuring...

... in other words, devise a **plan and structure** for your document. The steps for doing this are similar to what an architect does to draw up his blueprint. There is not a universal plan or a onsize- fits-all solution; the choice depends on functional criteria (type of document, subject, target reader, objective of the writer) and cultural factors, which should not be underestimated in the case of the European institutions. Nonetheless, each building, even a labyrinth, has at least one entrance, an exit...



**For francophones, the “blueprint” of a report, needs to be imperatively visible. In English-speaking cultures, the procedure is not the same:** *“The building blocks of the English building stand on their own.”*

A French conference speaker will tell you that he is ready when he has his plan. This means that he made an itinerary that will guide his audience/readers to follow.

This does not mean that the English-speaking world does not structure their texts. On the contrary, good outlines are important and texts can be very well-structured. English speakers often do it in a less restricting way (<http://www.writeexpress.com/writing-outline.html>) (EN)...

In general, the basic structure of every written text in the professional world generally contains the following elements:

- **an introduction;**
- **the body of the text;**
- **a conclusion.**

Using this simple structure, here are the points that you should consider in order to draft effective introductions and conclusions and then the “structure” of the body of the text (the labyrinth!).

## Introduction and conclusion



These two parts are critical for any document. They transmit your image to the readers. They are the first and main contacts between the reader and you, and often the only contact if the reader is in a hurry.

The content of the **introduction** will vary, of course, depending on the document in question.

For example, if the text is about an answer to a question you asked in an Email, the classic model would be to make reference to this Email and remind the person of the question:

*“Dear Sir,  
In your correspondence of 12 mars 2016, you asked us about...”*

For more complicated documents, e.g. a report or a note, the introduction could go something like this:

- a sentence to remind the person of the subject;
- a more complete text on the question asked without being too long;
- suggested points or process to follow.

A captivating and clear **opening** phrase encourages the reader to continue reading, and perhaps also to act and/or to take a decision.

As for the **conclusion**, its role is to generally present the most important elements that you would like the reader to retain as succinctly as possible. Go back to the question you asked at the outset: “**What is the goal of the document?**”. Your conclusion needs to completely focus on these elements.

If your goal is to obtain an action from the reader, then make sure that you clearly mention this again in your conclusion. Likewise, if you would like to give some information about two or three important points, do not hesitate to briefly repeat these points in your conclusion even if you have developed them in the body of the text.



For some documents (for example, reports on a study or analysis), the conclusion is also a place to **consider an opening** or suggest deeper reflection in one direction or another. It is, however, very important to avoid digressions or personal remarks, especially in the context of a public administration. If you would like to use the conclusion to stimulate the thought process on new areas or new approaches, we also recommend that you avoid reflections that are too far-fetched or opposite to what you wrote in the body of your text.

Finally, in the particular case of an Email, your concluding paragraph should also inform your reader that you remain at his disposal should he have further questions. You can also simply mention that you expect that your Email provides the answers the reader expected. Remember that a written document does not only transmit information, but that it always aims at **establishing a relationship**.

### The rule of three

An interesting approach to structure your introduction and conclusion is the rule of three:

3

- say what you are going to say;
- say it;
- say what you said.

This approach is applicable for written documents as well as for oral presentations.

## Pay attention to titles!

They are the trump cards of your document. They also help to structure your document as well as serve as tools of reasoning (see also [Chapter 7](#)).

The **main** heading is the business card of your work. It immediately attracts the attention of your reader and his curiosity as well as influences the decision of the reader to keep reading the text or not. **The chapter headings, sub-headings, sections, subsections** are all possible means to attract the attention of the reader. Yet, you should not The rule of three An interesting approach to structure your introduction and conclusion is the rule of three: • say what you are going to say; • say it; • say what you said. This approach is applicable for written documents as well as for oral presentations. 3 confuse headings and sub-headings of professional documents with headings of newspapers or editorials unless you are working for a press service or writing a website.

A document often has a working title that is not necessarily the final title. **The title needs to be informative.** It unveils the subject to the reader and the angle of attack, yet still needs to be to the point. A long title is discouraging for the reader...

From a technical point of view, we prefer headings or sub-headings where we find at least the following elements:

**a definite article + a noun + a qualifier**

It is then up to you to keep your eyes open and have a critical mind while reviewing possible headings and sub-headings. Keep the following rules in mind:

### Avoid where possible:

- **long headings and sub-headings** that are longer than one line; they can discourage the reader;
- **binary structures or headings (or sub-headings)**: “law and order”; “unemployment and depression”;
- headings (or sub-headings) that are **too abstract** or vague, etc. ;
- headings using a **play on words**: these are not necessarily adapted to a professional nor a multicultural environment.

### 3 formulas to use often:

- a heading in the form of a **promise** when it is possible : “Ten methods to be effective”. A promise is motivating, but try to remain realistic!
- a **question** disguised as a heading (or a sub-heading): “What to do in the presence of a schizophrenic patient?”
- a **heading and a sub-heading** indicating the direction of your text: “The Japanese market. An approach in terms of flexibility...”



### Exercise: Headings quality

Based on the criteria presented above, select the four best titles. When you click on the best titles, they will appear in green.

Non-renewable resources and taxation

The economics of natural resources

The stability of the price of non-renewable resources

Public debt and economic growth: empirical research on the Euro zone, the European Union and advanced countries

The symptoms of bankruptcy: the case of Belgium

Information versus persuasion: the controversy around the impact of advertising on consumers' preferences

The monetary union of the countries of the Council on Cooperation in the Gulf Region: viability and future perspectives

Economic realities of the confederation

Incidence of linguistic mobility on the economic situation and social rank among workers in Montreal in 1971

## The structure of the body of the text

The structure of the text is the sum of all the paragraphs between the introduction and the conclusion. These paragraphs should be logically connected.

A paragraph corresponds theoretically to an idea.

It is now a question of deciding the way in which you are going to organise them and answer the question: “Where will this paragraph/ this idea be the most effective in my text?”

### Good to know

The European Institutions put together an Institutional style guide that calls for clarity and simplification in a working environment with 28 nationalities and 24 different official languages. It is identical in all languages and can be consulted on line (<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-000100.htm>) (EN).

## 3.3 Which structure for whom? Why ?

The list of possible structures is, of course, infinite. However, there are a number of classical structures among which to choose from depending on your objectives.



- A Yes
- B Yes
- C Yes
- D Yes

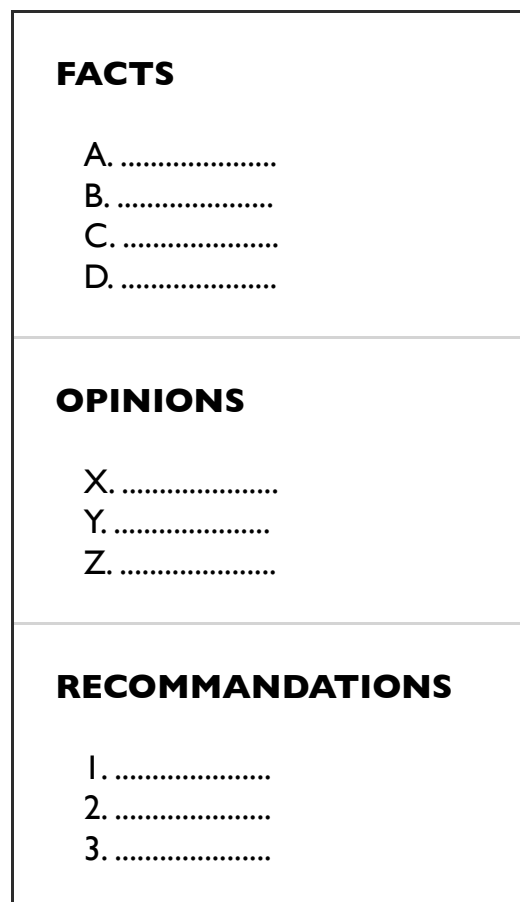
The structure you choose will depend on the type of message, your objectives and your audience. If your objective is **to inform or convey knowledge**, the following structures are useful:

- **Binary structures:** in general they compare or contrast two concepts that oppose each other, e.g. Before/After (chronological), Good/ Bad (evaluative), To do/ Not to do (operational), Advantages/Inconveniences (comparative), etc.
- **Simple, tertiary structures:** they are set up like the previous ones. You only add one element, e.g. Before/During/After, Positive/Neutral/Negative or also Done/In process/To do.
- **Cumulative structures:** you join together diverse types of simple structures (chronological, evaluative, etc.) according to the needs of the reader and the message you would like to transmit. A useful tool here is the PESTEL analysis (<http://pestleanalysis.com/what-is-pestle-analysis/>) (EN) (in which you develop political, economic, social, technical, environmental and legal aspects of a project. Within each of these dimensions, you can discern, in a cumulative way, the strengths and the weaknesses of a project).
- **Progressive/additive structures:** as their name indicates, you move “from the general to the specific” or, on the other hand, “from more to less” or the inverse, etc.

If your **objective is to pass on arguments** or to support an option, you will then be interested in the following structures:

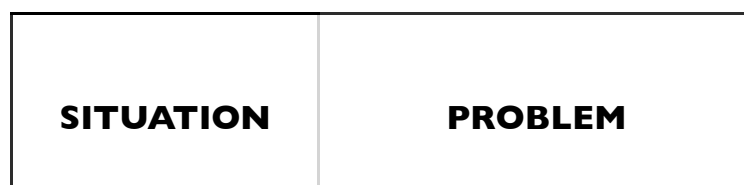
- A structure of a **dialectic** nature: it is organised according to the classic model thesis/ antithesis/ synthesis. (We can also say: argument/ contra-argument/ compromise.) We recommend this structure when you want to evoke polemical topics or evaluate complex problems.
- An **analytical** structure: this is one of the most difficult to develop. It presupposes a personal analysis of a subject or a problem. The logical approach is predominant. This structure is common in the professional environment, e.g. a study on a given situation, reasons and results. Two analytical structure, i.e. the **FOR** plan (Facts, Opinions, Recommendations)

### The FOR plan



or the **SRPI** plan (Situation, Problem, possible Solutions, Implementation) are suitable for opening up a debate or a discussion.

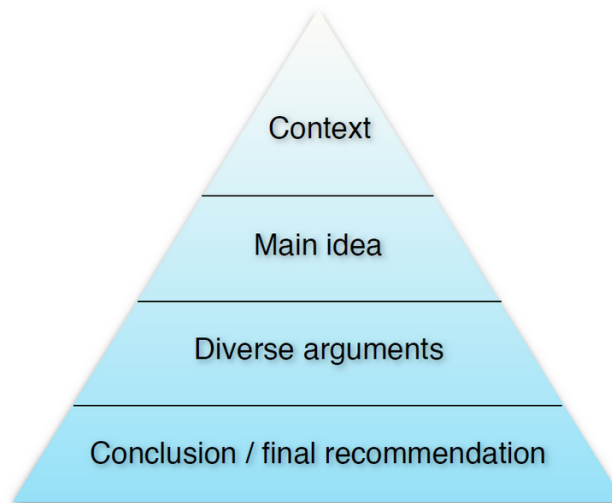
### The SRPI Plan





There are also a certain number of other structures for texts that are relatively flexible and can be adapted according to the intentions of the writer and the needs of the reader(s). Two of the most common ones are without a doubt:

- The **pyramid** structure or **SAP Plan** (Situation, Analysis, Proposal for a solution to the problems): one of the most simple and logical structures. First, there is an introduction and then a presentation of the main idea. Afterwards, you present arguments before concluding. It is also one of the most classic and open structures, also known by the name “ plan à la française ([http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4\\_plan.htm](http://www.unioviedo.es/ecrire/m4_plan.htm))” (FR).



- The **inverted pyramid** structure: often referred to as the “journalistic plan”. In order to attract the attention of the reader, you should start with the conclusion, the strongest part of the message that you want to pass on to the reader. Then, you go back, for example, to the arguments in order of increasing importance, etc. This is one of the most common structures in the Anglo-Saxon world.

**Whatever your choice, it is important to keep in mind that you have to think about the structure before starting to write and then maybe modify or adapt the structure.**



[Links with my work?](#)

It is crucial to plan, structure and organise. You are starting to realise this. Here is a method that can help you to structure your ideas, if you have not found the right method up until now.

## The 4 P Method

Think about the the next document you have to write at work and use this table to help you to outline the basic structure and the strong points...

P1	<b>Position - Situation</b>	This is the situation. It contains the facts and the new information. Reference is also made to modifications since the last discussion on the subject.
P2	<b>Problem</b>	It is the question (or the problem or the opportunity presented).
P3	<b>Possibilities</b>	These are the specific choices or options that are possible.
P4	<b>Proposition</b>	It is about your conclusion and your recommendations.

### 3.4 From the first draft to the final one



**Armed with your detailed plan**, in which you have prioritised your ideas according to concepts and key words, **think about the logical sequence** of your paragraphs and their sequence before writing the “first draft”.

In the “**first draft**” (or rough draft), you outline the text while adhering mainly to **the substance and the main points** of the text. You set aside the most detailed aspects of the format. You make sure that the chosen plan and structure work well, the possible breakdown into chapters or sub-chapters is clear, the ideas take root and the paragraphs are well-organised and properly connected. **If needed, you adapt the structure.**

You should not hesitate to start with the chapter, sub-chapter or paragraph that inspired you the most at this stage. It is not necessary to respect the principle of linearity in writing. You can easily start in the middle of the text or even at the end. You can verify later the coherence and the logical flow of the text.

In the course of writing drafts, you will fine-tune your final version until you are completely satisfied and then move on to the “pure” writing phase, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

## • Paragraphs and logical connecting phrases

A **paragraph** is a piece of text which, as a general rule, develops an idea, and only one. In order to be effective, a paragraph should be ideally short (a maximum of ten lines).

Its place in the text primarily defines the function of paragraphs and influences, in part, the way to write a particular text.

The function of a paragraph could be:

- **introductory**: if it is at the beginning of a text, chapter or sub-chapter, it should help the reader to understand what it is all about right from the outset. This is generally the goal of the first sentence of every paragraph (which helps you to launch the text!).
- **pivotal**: explanatory/informative, argumentative. If the paragraph is located somewhere in the middle of the text, it is a cog in a wheel or a transition... It helps the reader to move forward. Thus, you need to pay particular attention to the choice of words (logical connecting words) which evoke this move from one idea to the next.
- **conclusive** : if it is in the final position of the text, chapter, sub-chapter or section, it should conclude this part or the group of paragraphs. It can be interrogative, encourage reflection or synthetic in form.

What we refer to as logical connecting words, connecting words (<http://www2.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/transitions.htm>) (EN) or transitional words (<https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Transitions.html>) (EN) are, in a way, **the motor oil that makes everything work**. These little words that help paragraphs and text to flow logically. These connecting words make the paragraphs and text more dynamic enables the reader to better understand the text. The table below is a good overview of the “essentials”:



Type	Examples	Role
<b>Addition</b>	in addition, additionally, furthermore, moreover, also, another as well as, besides, not only... but also	To indicate an addition, a development, an increase
<b>Concession</b>	although, even though, even if, be that it may, then again, in spite of, in	To indicate a limitation in the development or scope of an idea

	as much as, however	
<b>Explanation</b>	Explanation this is to say, therefore, thus, notably, in particular, for example, especially, with respect to, for instance	To clarify or illustrate a point (moving from the general to the more specific)
<b>Opposition</b>	but, yet, on the other hand, in contrast to, on the contrary, conversely	To add an opposing element to an idea, piece of information or an argument
<b>Condition</b>	if , on the condition that, in case that, provided that, given that, assuming that, should	To indicate the existence of a state of being, a situation of a fact that is indispensable in order that another one may exist
<b>Consequence</b>	so, as a result, as a consequence, therefore, thus, consequently, for this reason, as, because	To show the effects of an action, message or decision
<b>Goal</b>	in order to, with the intention of, with the aim of, in the hope of, so that, so as to	To indicate an objective that one hopes to attain
<b>Comparaison</b>	similarly, likewise, just as, similar to, in the same way as compared to/with, not only...but also, more than, less than, equally, correspondingly, to a higher (lesser) degree	To indicate a relative degree of superiority, inferiority or equivalence
<b>Chronology</b>	after, before, later, up to the present time, in the first place, secondly, thirdly, as soon as, hence, presently, finally, in conclusion, as a conclusion	To indicate a sequence in time, to highlight process, progress or action
<b>Emphasis</b>	obviously, generally, in fact, particularly, especially, clearly, more importantly	To emphasis a particular point in a text



### Exercise: Transitional words



Do the quiz on transitional words ([https://www.oupcanada.com/higher\\_education/companion/literature/9780195425154/eng\\_l35/quiz\\_transitions.html](https://www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/literature/9780195425154/eng_l35/quiz_transitions.html)) (EN). You will also find the answers on the website.

## Going deeper...

- Overview of six logical writing structures (<http://www.writersdigest.com/tip-of-theday/six-logical-writing-structure>) (EN)
- More on inverted pyramid (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/04/>) (EN)
- In order to understand better the difference between argumentative, informative and narrative texts (<http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/writing/secondary/writingtypes.html>) (EN)
- Tips on writing argumentative texts (<https://www.roanestate.edu/owl/argument.html>) (EN)
- Identifying text structures (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVU8xoXRHys>) (EN)
- To develop argumentative paragraphs (<https://www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/doc/writingC/handouts/generalwriting/ParagraphDevelopment.pdf>) (EN)
- Developing structured paragraphs (<https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Paragraphing.html>) (EN)
- Overview of types of arguments, in particular deductive and inductive arguments ([http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/conted/critical\\_reasoning/talbotcr02.pdf](http://media.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/conted/critical_reasoning/talbotcr02.pdf)) (EN)
- Some exercises on analysing arguments (<http://www.indiabix.com/logical-reasoning/analyzing-arguments/>) (EN)
- If you would like more information on the more humorous side of arguments (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQFKtl6gn9Y>) (EN), watch the clip on the Argument Clinic from Monty Python's Flying Circus





## WRITING WITH IMPACT

## 4. Style and substance: writing effectively

We have now come to the most practical part of our subject: the rules of writing effectively. You have the structure of your text in your head. Everything seems to come together and you can now concentrate on **writing**:

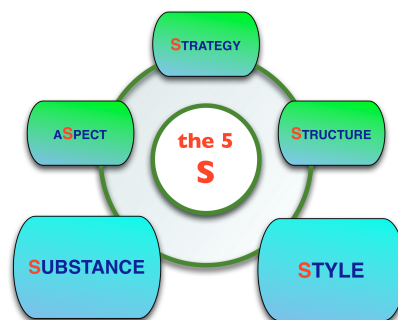
*“To write a text in a form which follows the rules of the genre to which it belongs.” Larousse*

In order to this, you need to focus on the **substance** as well as the **style** of the text you are going to write.

### An effective text:

- achieves its objective (to inform, convince, etc.);
- can be read quickly and easily;
- can be understood;
- complies with the rules in place in your professional environment;
- can be memorised with ease.

We will now focus on **substance**. Are the words used able to transmit the desired message? Are the most important elements of the message clearly highlighted? Does the text avoid double meanings, ambiguities and other sources of misunderstandings?



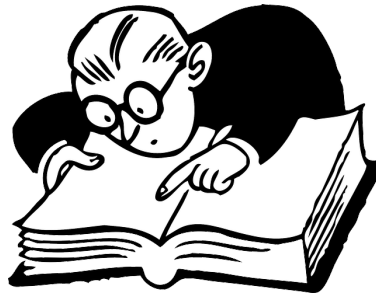
Moreover, in the case of a professional document, it also needs to:

- be pleasant to the eye;
- have precise and polite language;

- give the impression of objectivity which is expected of an official document.

It is also a question of **style**: Is it professional, but also pleasant to read? Does it conform to the image your institution wishes to project to the outside?

## 4.1 The readability of the text



The question of **readability of a text** is of particular importance in the environment of the European Institutions. Given the diversity of languages and the levels of linguistic competency, you should use **simple and clear language** in order to make your text more understandable by foreign speakers as well as more easily adaptable/translated into another language.

The whole idea of evaluating the readability of a text is American in origin. It dates back to the 20th century. Already in the 1920s American educators discovered a way to use vocabulary difficulty and length of sentences to predict the readability of texts. One of the most important developments in this area were made by Rudolf Flesch ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf\\_Flesch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Flesch)) (EN) from Columbia University. He developed the Flesch Reading Ease test and was the co-creator of the Thomas Flesch-Kincaid readability test ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch-Kincaid\\_readability\\_tests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch-Kincaid_readability_tests)) (EN).

Without getting into the details of the various readability tests, you simply need to remember that the readability of a text depends primarily on:

- **the sentence length**: the shortest sentences are the most effective (10 to 18 words);
- **simple construction**: subordinate and complex relative phrases (the use of such words as “that”, “which”, “whose”, “of which”) make the texts less readable;
- its **positive or assertive** nature;
- the use of **everyday**, short, concrete, personal **words** as much as possible;
- **the placement of the words** in the sentence: the most important ones are preferably put at the beginning of the sentence.



### Links with my work?

If you would like to evaluate the readability of some of your written work, you can:

- activate the readability statistics in MS Word, Menu Tools > Options > Spelling&Grammar > Show Readability Statistics;
- calculate your own index of reading ease (<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/gunning-fog-readability-formula.php>) (EN) with the Gunning Fog Index, that globally indicates the number of years of study needed to understand the text and shows how easy or difficult a text is to read. This index implies that short sentences written in plain English achieve a better score than long sentences written in a more complicated language.

$$\text{Reading Level (Grade)} = (\text{Average No. of words in sentences} + \text{Percentage of three or more syllables}) \times 0.4$$

(To simplify matters, the criteria for calculating the difficulty of word is whether it is composed of three syllables or more.)

- You can copy an extract of one of your texts and insert it into the following site which automatically calculates your readability index (<http://gunning-fog-index.com>)

## 4.2 Methods for writing clear and effective texts

Simplicity, precision, conciseness and effectiveness are all attained in many ways and after numerous drafts. Experience, practice and patience help you to constantly improve your writing skills.

To be effective in your writing, try to keep to one objective per draft page. We concentrate better on a limited number of specific points at a time. Otherwise, we tend to feel overloaded and cannot tackle the task of writing so easily.

In addition, separate the task of writing into several stages: concentrate first on the words, then the sentences and then the layout and visual aspects of your text.

### • First the words

Use simple, precise and common vocabulary familiar to all. In addition, try to avoid misunderstandings and focus on the understanding of the text by the reader as well as the transmission of the message.

Key pieces of advice:

- Use **simple and commonly-used words**. They always have more impact than erudite words or technical terms.

Use	Avoid
<b>finish</b>	accomplish
<b>improve</b>	ameliorate, optimise
<b>expect</b>	anticipate
<b>list</b>	enumarate
<b>find out</b>	ascertain

<b>show, prove</b>	disclose
<b>can</b>	has the capacity
<b>instead of</b>	in lieu of
<b>because</b>	due to the fact that
<b>try</b>	endeavourt
<b>before</b>	prior to
<b>since</b>	inasmuch as
<b>after</b>	subsequent to

In other words, use plain language (<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>) (EN).

Your text is in plain language if your audience can:

- find what they need;
- understand what they find and;
- use what they find to meet their needs.

Nonetheless, certain technical terms are unavoidable. Do not hesitate to explain them simply. There is a useful eurojargon guide. (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/glossary.html?locale=en>)

- Choose **precise and correct words**:



<b>Use</b>	<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>start</b>	initiate	Initiate can also mean “to admit or accept into an organisation or group, etc.  It can also mean “to introduce into the knowledge of some art of subject”.
<b>diary (calendar in American)</b>	agenda	An agenda is a list or

<b>English)</b>		programme of things to be done or considered. It is not a book in which you write down your appointments.
<b>difficulties/ preoccupations</b>	problematics	A fashionable word that is sometimes misused.
<b>draft/ draw up/ prepare</b>	elaborate	It is Eurojargon and the public may not understand it properly.
<b>computer</b>	PCs	Avoid abbreviations where possible.

 **Exercise: Your sentences on a diet:**

Put your sentences “on a diet”. Take this short quiz (<http://data.grammarbook.com/blog/effective-writing/sleek-writing-put-your-sentences-on-a-diet/>) (EN).

Don't clutter your text with redundant expressions like "as is well known", "it is generally accepted that", "in my personal opinion", "and so on and so forth", "both from the point of view of A and from the point of view of B".

Instead:

- Use **short words**. They help to improve the readability of texts:



<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use</b>
in the amount of	<b>for</b>	legislation	<b>law</b>
transmit	<b>send</b>	viable	<b>workable</b>
relating to	<b>about, on</b>	limited number	<b>few</b>
however	<b>but</b>	in an effort to	<b>to</b>
until such time as	<b>until</b>	In the case that	<b>if</b>

o **Avoid false friends** (French-English)

French is also one of the main administrative languages of the EU with many native or nearnative speakers of French. Therefore, French influences the writing of some texts. We need to be careful of false friends when writing and reading documents in the EU environment..



<b>French</b>	<b>False Friend</b>	<b>Why is it wrong</b>	<b>What is the correct word</b>
actuel	<b>actual</b>	means 'real'	<b>current</b>
assister à	<b>assist at</b>	means 'help'	<b>attend, participate in</b>
éventuel	<b>eventual</b>	means 'ultimate'	<b>any</b>
important	<b>important</b>	correct if you mean	<b>large</b>



		'significant'; wrong if you mean 'large'	
perspective	<b>sensible</b>	means 'reasonable'	<b>sensitive</b>

### Pay attention to false friends!

The translation service of the European Commission has clearly listed a series of terms (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/how-to-write-clearly-pbHC3212148/>) (EN) that are falsely translated from French into English in one of its documents. Although the words look similar, their meaning is generally different. Be careful. Source: How to Write Clearly, European Commission, 2010.



### Exercise:

Here are 5 sentences using a French “false friend” in English. Find the false friends and replace it with the appropriate English word. When you **click on each sentence, the correct English word will appear**.

1. Mrs Benassutti elaborated the report on the economic crisis.
2. I am sorry, but I do not have the joined document.
3. The delay for the submission of the tender is on Monday.
4. Please respect the deadline.
5. Do you have an adequate answer to the problem?



### Exercise: Quiz on False Friend

Take the short quiz on false friends (<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/quiz/jeux-quiz-false-faux-eng.php>). You will also find the answers on the same site.

- **Words and phrases to avoid.**

Certain words or phrases are superfluous. You can generally remove them without changing the meaning of the sentence:



a total of	<b>each and every one</b>	other things being equal
absolutely	<b>in the final analysis</b>	really quite
all things being equal in	<b>in view of the fact that</b>	the fact of the matter is
as far as I am concerned	<b>it should be understood</b>	to all intents and purposes
at this moment in time	<b>obviously</b>	to one's own mind

◦ **Commonly mistaken words**

In English there are many words that resemble one another or even sound alike. Make sure that you use the right word in the right context.



affect	to change or make a difference to
effect	a result; to bring about a result
all together	all in one place; all at once
altogether	completely; on the whole
assent	agreement; approval
ascent	the action of rising; climbing up
complement	to add to so as to improve; an addition that improves something
compliment	to praise or expres approval; an admiring remark

concil	a group of people who manage or advise
counsel	advice; to advise
discreet	careful not to attract attention
discrete	separate and distinct
elicit	to draw out a reply or a reaction
illicit	not allowed by law or rules
ensure	to make certain that something will happen
insure	to provide compensation if a person dies or property is damaged
foreword	an introduction to a book
forward	onwards, ahead
imply	to suggest indirectly
infer	to draw a conclusion
loose	to unfasten; to set free
lose	to be deprived of; to be unable to find
prescribe	to authorise use of medicine; to order authoritatively
proscribe	to officially forbid something
principal	most important; the head of the school

principle	a fundamental rule or belief
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For a video on this and a more complete list (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/commonly-confused-words>) (EN)

 **Exercise: Avoid wordiness**

Your writing will improve if you eliminate wordiness (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/6/9/24/>) or redundant words (1) (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/6/9/56/>) and redundant words (2) (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/6/9/57/>) (EN).

Take the following online multiple choice test on commonly-confused words ([http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/english/langan/sentence\\_skills/exercises/ch29/p4exr.htm](http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/english/langan/sentence_skills/exercises/ch29/p4exr.htm)) (EN).

For each of the categories above, we have listed many common mistakes made in documents. Even native speakers of English make these errors. So do not despair. Practice makes perfect.



<b>Grammar point / expression</b>	<b>British English</b>	<b>American English</b>
past simple + ed for such verbs as burn, lean, learn, smell, spell	<b>dreamt, learnt</b> , etc.	<b>dreamed, learned</b> , etc.
present simple of “have got” (indicating a possession or relationship)	<b>I’ve got</b> a colleague...	<b>I have</b> a colleague...
shall (to indicate the future)	<b>shall</b> with I and we	prefer to use <b>will</b>
prepositions	<b>at</b> the weekend	<b>on</b> the weekend
	<b>in</b> Payne Street	<b>on</b> Payne Street
	Monday <b>through</b> Friday	Monday <b>till</b> Friday

	fill <b>in</b> the questionnaire	fill <b>out</b> the questionnaire
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• **Make your sentences clear and concise**

Remember that a readable sentences contains 15 words maximum. **Write simple and short sentences as they generally have more impact:**

Timeframes of all kinds having a tendency to become longer during the summer period, these longer periods need to appear on the schedule.	<b>Timeframes tend to become longer in the summer. The schedule should mirror this.</b>
---	---

Do not hesitate to:

- **Break down longer sentences into two shorter sentences. Use logical connecting words for emphasis:**

With a view to implementing systems of community subsidies not liable to the present legislation, and without consideration of the specific dispositions of said systems, notably the ones relating to granting conditions, the Member States can integrate into their management and control mechanisms one or several administrative, technical	Member States can integrate one or several administrative, technical or IT elements of the integrated system into their management and control mechanisms. This makes it possible to implement community subsidy systems, which are not liable to the present regulation. This can be done without any consideration of the specific dispositions
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or IT elements of the integrated system.	provided by said systems, notably the ones relating to granting conditions.
--	---

- **Track down relative phrases and adjectives that often make the sentence heavy**

Mr X who is a director of the efficient department and who has been working 15 years for our company will leave us when Mr Y arrives.	Mr X, our department director for the past 15 years, will leave upon the arrival of Mr Y.
---	---



### Exercise: Concise sentences

Click on the link and do the exercise (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/6/9/24>) on writing concise sentences (EN). Sample answers are provided.

- **Simplify the punctuation, i.e. avoid using the parentheses, phrases inserted between dashes and a long sentence with many commas. All of this makes reading more complicated**

*Their cats, and they were a lot of them were named after flowers.*  
 → *Their numerous cats were named after flowers.*

- **Substitute wording expressions with direct expressions**

*In agreement with your request*  
 → *As you request*

- **Eliminate unnecessary nouns, adjectives or adverbs, avoid repetitions**

*Balancing the budget by Friday is an impossibility without some type of additional help.*  
 → *Balancing the budget by Friday is impossible without help.*

- **Use “verbs over nouns” as much as possible and avoid paraphrasing**

*We have undertaken some changes to the layout.*  
 → *We changed the layout.*  
*We arranged for the investigation of the entire project.*  
 → *We investigate the entire project.*

- **Try to keep a logical order of words**

Subject + Verb + direct object + indirect object + circumstantial complement

*We will provide, to this target group, rather general information.*

→ *We shall provide general information to this target group..*

- **Use the active voice over the passive voice. Your text will be more clear. Yet, the passive voice may be used if you want to avoid naming a particular person**

*Taking over the responsibility of hundreds of hungry refugees can not be done by the municipal authorities.*

→ *The municipal authorities cannot take on the hundreds of hungry refugees..*

- Try to write your ideas **in an affirmative and positive manner, but do not forget the advantages of the negative form**
- **Avoid longwinded enumerations in a sentence;** put them in lists instead

<p>The priorities for the upcoming quarter are the implementation of our new mission forms, the regulation of work hours at night and the reinforcement of quality standards.</p>	<p>Our priorities for the upcoming quarter are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to implement our new mission forms;</li> <li>• to regulate work hours at night;</li> <li>• to reinforce quality standards.</li> </ul>
---	--

- **Get rid of any ambiguities...**

They occur when clarity is missing by using personal, relative, possessive or demonstrate pronouns as seen in the example below:

*The minister was warmly greeted by his French counterpart. He will go to Spain soon. Who will go to Spain soon? The Minister or the French counterpart?*

→ *The minister (...) by his French counterpart, who will go to Spain soon.*

When in doubt, try Rewordify (<https://rewordify.com>) (EN).



### Exercises: Positive statement & Active voice

Take the quiz on the use of positive statements (<http://www.kwiznet.com/p/takeQuiz.php?ChapterID=12263&CurriculumID=58&Num=3.5>) (EN). An exercise on converting the passive voice to the active voice (<http://www.businesswriting.com/tests/activepassive.htm>) (EN).

## • Working on your punctuation

Punctuation marks contribute to the structure of the sentence and its clarity. They show the reader how the sentence is constructed and how it should be read. Several punctuation marks merit our attention here and can be summarised as follows:



Punctuation mark	Use
Full stop	<p>At the end of an affirmative or a negative sentence                      After an imperative                      In abbreviations in which the last letter is not the last letter of the abbreviated word (M. for Mister - American English)                      For abbreviations of commonly-used words, e.g. Sept., pp. , no.</p> <p>* We omit it in:  <i>Well-known abbreviations (UN, EU, etc.)</i>  <i>Units of currency and measurement</i></p>
Comma	<p>To separate equal elements in a series or list (three or more things)                      To separate several coordinate adjectives in a row                      Before a conjunction (and, but, for, yet, so, etc.) to connect independent clauses                      To emphasise a part of a phrase or a word                      After a relative phrase in order to avoid ambiguity (a phrase starting with: that, which, etc.)                      To set off parenthetical elements, i.e. parts of a sentence that can be removed without changing the essential meaning of that sentence (e.g. John’s ambition, to become a head of unit at some point in his career, is definitely within reach.)                      To set off phrases that express contrast (The colleagues were very bright, but not emphatic.)</p>
Semi-colon	<p>To separate closely-related independent sentences                      To separate items in a list when using bullet points in a text                      To sometimes separate diverse elements in an enumeration, e.g. John Bell, European Parliament; Frank Cislo, European Commission; and Robert Furmanek, Court of Auditors</p>
Colon	<p>Before a vertical list or an explanation that is preceded by a clause that can stand by itself                      To separate an independent clause from a quotation that the clause introduces</p>
Points in suspension	<p>Always three in number                      To indicate that a sentence is not completely finished or that a thought is still in suspense                      Sometimes put in between parentheses to replace a passage</p>



	omitted in a quote or a break in a text
Exclamation and question marks	This punctuation mark is placed at the end of an exclamatory sentence or a question, N.B. unlike in French, there is no space before these two punctuation marks in English.



### Exercise: Punctuation

Numerous exercises (with answers) punctuation (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/3/>) (EN) will help your to perfect your punctuation skills

## • Paying attention to grammar and spelling...

Errors in grammar, syntax and spelling can damage a clear and effective text. There are a number of useful tools, both online and offline, to check for errors in spelling, problems of agreement, use of tense, etc. You will find some of the most common ones below.



### Exercise: Grammar and spelling knowledge

You can also improve your grammar (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/>) (EN) and spelling knowledge (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/4/20/>) (EN)

## Going deeper...

- For a history (<http://www.impact-information.com/impactinfo/readability02.pdf>) (EN) of the principles of readability
- If you are interested in calculating (<https://readability-score.com/text/>) (EN) several types of readability scores, you can go to this site and insert your text there
- For the ultimate lists of online content (<https://raventools.com/blog/ultimate-list-of-online-content-readability-tests/>) (EN) readability tests
- On this French blog page you find out the Gunning Fog Index score for European directives (<http://boileau.pro/blog/fog-smog/>) (FR). To satisfy your curiosity now, go back to the link with the automatic calculation of the Gunning Fog Index and put in a section of a directive you know well.

- A useful site for writing in an international and multicultural environment: 4 Things to Be Aware of When Writing English Content for an International Audience (<http://www.thesitewizard.com/general/beware-of-english-variants.shtml>) (EN)
- Additional examples of differences (<http://englishplus.com/grammar/00000193.htm>) (EN)
- The Directorate-General for Translation at the European Commission wrote a document, “How to Write Clearly” ([http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/eu/fight\\_the\\_fog\\_en.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/eu/fight_the_fog_en.pdf)) as part of their Fight the Fog campaign. Check it out for more specific information on clear writing with before and after examples (EN)
- Likewise, the Ombudsman has an excellent overview of the importance of clear language (<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/activities/speech.faces/en/54331/html.bookmark>) (EN)
- Your text will be more readable if you use more common words. An excellent reference guide is the The A to Z of Alternative Words (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/alternative.pdf>) of the Plain Language Campaign (EN)
- For more useful tips on the choice of words (<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/complexabstract.cfm>) (EN)
- Before and after ([http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before\\_after/wordiness.cfm](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/wordiness.cfm)) wordy sentences (EN)
- Read these humorous headlines and see why you should not use ambiguous (<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/humor/headlines.cfm>) words (EN)
- Guide from the Plain English Campaign on punctuating sentences ([http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/punctuating\\_sentences.pdf](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/punctuating_sentences.pdf)) (EN)
- Guide from the Plain Language Campaign on punctuating lists of bullet points ([http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/punctuating\\_bulleted\\_lists.pdf](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/punctuating_bulleted_lists.pdf)) (EN)
- Some flashcards on punctuation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftkCKRgzx9o>) with some explanations (EN)
- Jane Straus' The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation (<http://www.grammarbook.com/>) is an excellent guide (EN)
- Jack Lynch's Guide to Grammar and Style (<https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/>) (EN)
- A comprehensive site on grammar and punctuation marks (<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/marks/marks.htm>) (EN)
- Exercise on correcting run-on sentences ([http://grammar.about.com/od/grammarexercises/a/CorrectingRunonsI\\_2.htm](http://grammar.about.com/od/grammarexercises/a/CorrectingRunonsI_2.htm)) with semi-colons and commas (EN)
- For additional grammar questions ([http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar\\_list/alle.htm](http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar_list/alle.htm)), check out (EN)

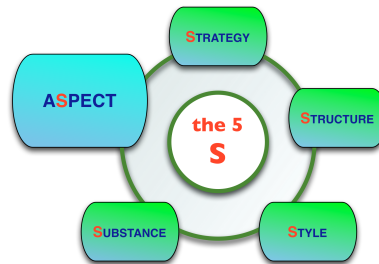




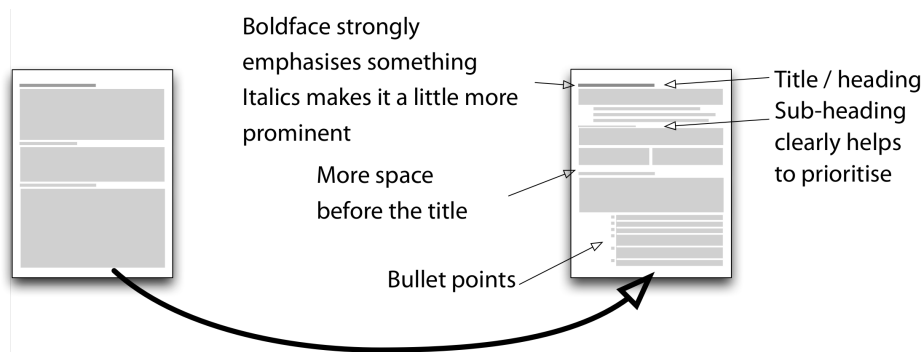
## WRITING WITH IMPACT

### 5. Shape and layout...

The **layout** should attract the eye and encourage the reader to read. It is about the **shape** of the document.



Below are two examples that can help you to understand better what we are talking about here:



A good text with a poor layout will certainly annoy the reader. You will not get the desired result.

A fairly good text with a good layout may sometimes reach its objectives and will be noticed more. However, an excellent text with an excellent layout is always the best.

#### 5.1 Layout that enhances the text

You should not make any mistakes in style or type of text. The text of a report or a note does not have the same layout as a website text or some advertising text, even if they all aim to “sell” something in writing.

The layout of a standard text adheres mainly to the following rules:

- a **font** that encourages reading (generally Sans Serif);

- an easily readable **font size** (generally 11 or 12 for the body of the text);
- a **text that breathes and has good spacing** between the various titles and the text, the beginning and end of paragraphs, graphics and their legends, etc. It is important that the blocks of information are visually well-placed, homogeneous and logical;
- **highlighting techniques**: catch phrases, texts in boxes, or highlighting (boldface, colours), etc.;
- **selection of appropriate icons**: a balanced amount. The illustrations, graphics, etc., should support the page and not act as parasites. A report or a note is not a comic strip nor an illustrated book. The written word needs to remain the most important aspect.
- **colours**: you do not need too many colours, just the right amount. Pay attention to the choice of backgrounds, the vibrations of the colour of a font on a particular background (for example, white text on a red background), but also the technical and psychological effect of the colours. Dark blue, black, orange and green are the colours that inspire confidence.

## 5.2 Layout with the reader in mind

In the professional context the reader does not necessarily want to read all of the documents or Emails he receives.

The “**professional reading of a text**” is something between a partial reading or search for particular information (for example, when one checks a directory) and a reading of the entire text. It is a technique called speed reading. Everything in the layout needs to help guide the eye and brain to stimulate the analytical and memory processes.

To capture the attention of the reader:

- **pay attention to the spacing** between the characters. Characters that have too many spaces slow down the reading. Inversely, characters which are too close together hinder reading;
- **pay attention to the justifications**: It is important that the space between the words are uniform. A justification to the left or the right sometimes creates irregular spaces between the words;
- **arrange clearly** the spacing to form blocks of clear texts;
- **prefer small letters over capital letters**. Capital letters are always more difficult to read, even if one thinks they highlight a particular text more;
- **avoid italics**;
- use either **a list of bullet points** or **boldface characters** to structure and prioritise information.

### **Do not forget to check and double-check!**

If your document is for the public, verify first if your institution has its own graphical rules and regulations concerning layout and presentation of documents.



### Exercise: Correct the lay out

Here is an extract of a brochure published by the European Institutions. We introduced six errors into the layout of the text. Click on the section you think is wrong. A message will indicate the type of error or indicate that there is no error.

“The 'whistleblowing' procedure

You are obliged to report facts pointing to a possible illegal activity, including fraud or corruption, or to a serious failure to comply with the professional obligations of COMMISSION staff. This obligation only applies to facts discovered in the course of or in connection with your professional duties.

If you become aware of any serious wrongdoing, depending on who is involved, you should report it in writing and without delay to either your Head of Unit, your Director-General or the Secretary-General of the COMMISSION, or to the EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) directly.

Whoever receives this information is required to transmit it without delay to OLAF.

When such information is received from a whistleblower, OLAF or the Commission must:

- \* inform the whistleblower within 60 days of how much time is needed to take appropriate action; and
- \* take appropriate action within the period of time indicated.

If no appropriate action is taken within that time, the member of staff may turn to another EU institution – the President of either the COUNCIL, the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT or the COURT OF AUDITORS, or the OMBUDSMAN. Given the duties of discretion and loyalty, this should be an option of last resort, justifiable only if the staff member concerned honestly and reasonably believes that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true and he or she allowed the COMMISSION or OLAF a reasonable period of time to take appropriate action. If such an external disclosure is necessary, it is advisable to let the facts speak for themselves. The duties of discretion and loyalty imply that reporting serious wrongdoing beyond these other EU institutions (for example, to the press) is not permitted.

Any whistleblower who complies with these conditions will be protected from adverse consequences. This covers the identity of the whistleblower, as well as the mobility and staff report of the person concerned. Naturally, in order for the COMMISSION to be able to apply such protective measures, the person concerned will need to identify him/herself to the Institution, and to observe the whistleblowing procedure.”



### Links with my work?

Find an old document that you wrote a few weeks or months ago.

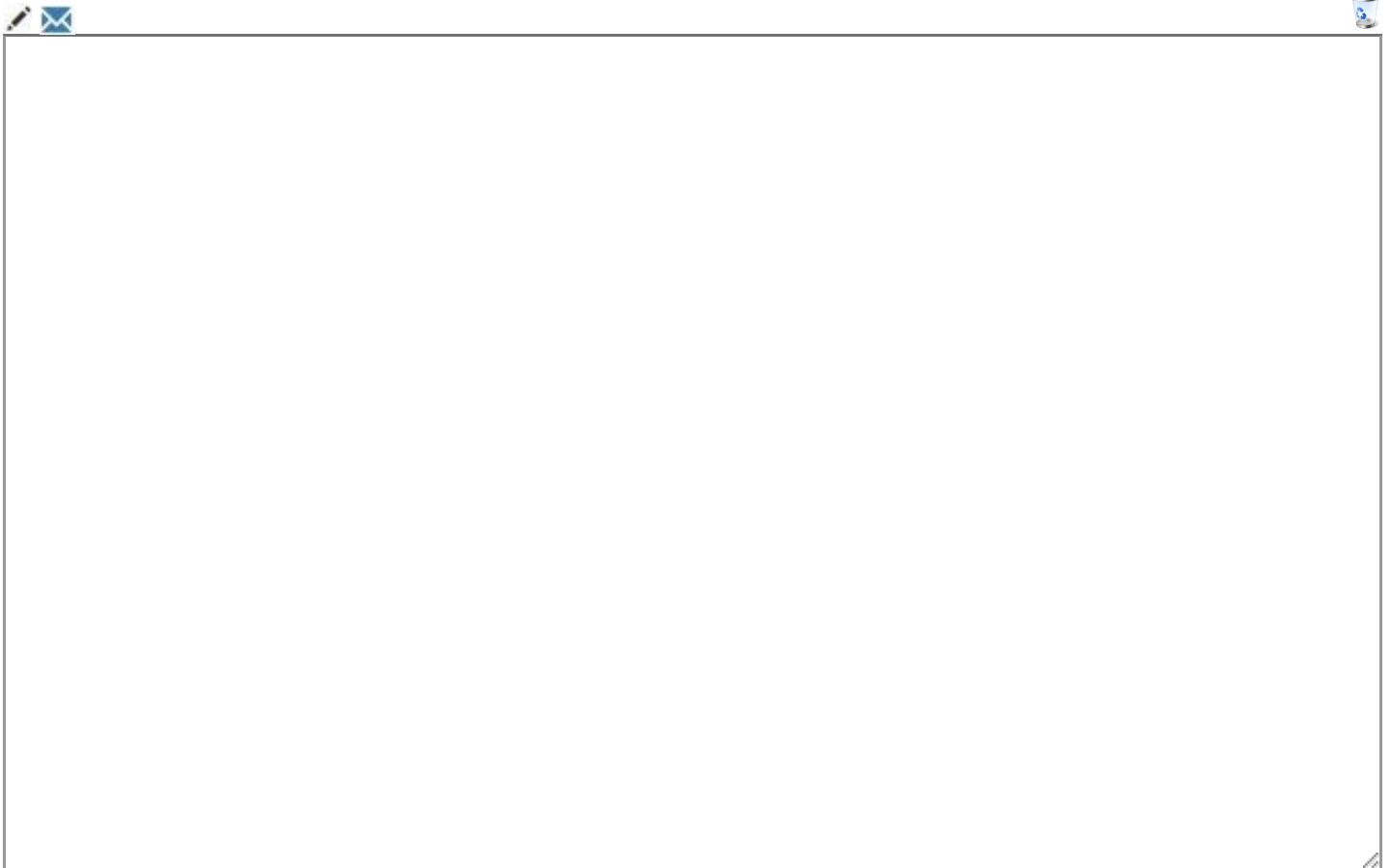
Given the points mentioned and the brief “checklist” above, evaluate the layout of your work:

- Is the presentation attractive and clearly structured?
- Do the headings, sub-headings, list of bullet points and blank spaces sufficiently highlight the important points?

- Are the fonts and the layouts appropriate for the type of text and audience?
- Should you include diagrams, annexes or a glossary?

## Going deeper...

- An overview of layout rules for business documents (<http://textmatters.com/resources/pdfs/businessdocs.pdf>) (EN)
- Some main tips for the layout of webpages (<http://www.creativebloq.com/web-design/steps-perfect-website-layout-812625>) (EN)
- An overview on visual layout and typography (<http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/2014/10/23/the-50-most-important-rules-of-document-design-color-crayon-tip-method/>) (EN)
- The guide on design and layout (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/designguide.pdf>) (EN) by the Plain Language Campaign



## WRITING WITH IMPACT

## 6. Editing and proofreading draft documents

Once you have written the document and completed the layout, it is important to have some distance from the text.

You will discover that you will save time in the long run and will have at least one less round of proofreading.

Why?

First of all, because a **little bit of distance** will always sharpen the critical mind. It is never wise to be so “totally focused” that you no longer “see the trees from the forest”. Imagine that you worked for hours on a text. Everything seemed clear, evident and just perfect. The following day it is perfectly normal that certain sentences or passages seem less clear or less brilliant than you thought. The ideal situation would be to have a third party proofread your text from the point of view of **substance**...

In addition, our **capacity to concentrate is limited**. We are more attentive and efficient when we concentrate on a defined number of points. It is, therefore, advisable to proofread several times with well-defined objectives in mind...



### 6.1 First proofread with the content in mind

The objectives of your first round of proofreading should be to make sure that:

- you do not forget any key information or arguments;
- the structure and the organisation of your text are completely logical. In order to do this, carefully compare your table of contents with your text;
- the entire text is coherent and has the right balance of text, illustrations, graphics, etc.

In the case of a very important document, the following comprehensive proofreading process should be carried out in a patient and calm manner as well as repeated several times. You can also use the proofreading tips (<http://plainenglish.co.uk/files/proofreading.pdf>) (EN) from the Plain English Campaign as a checklist or refer to the **editor's checklist** based on the 5 S model:



# The editor's checklist

## Editing strategy:

- Does the reader know, right from the beginning, your reasons for writing the text?
- Is the message clear and easily identifiable?
- Does the reader have the information he needs?
- Is the text clear and precise?
- Do you need to add, delete, modify or put some information in an accompanying document or in an annex?
- Did you achieve the objective(s) of your document? Will the reader act in the desired manner?

## Structure of the text:

- Would the information be more understandable and would the impact be stronger if you reorganised the information in a different way?
- Is there a logical flow from one idea to another?

## Writing style:

- Is each paragraph clear, concise and complete and contain only one idea?
- Are the length and structure of the sentences varied as well as short?
- Are the sentences easy to follow, user-friendly and keep the reader in mind?
- Are the words and terms easily comprehensible?
- Have you chosen clear, polite and current words?
- Have you used the proper form of address, i.e. Mr, Mrs or... (for letters, Emails and memoranda)?
- Is the tone of the text adapted to your objective(s) and to your audience?

## Substance, contents :

- Does the text flow? Did you use the connecting words wisely?
- Are the grammar, punctuation and spelling correct throughout the document?

## Shape, layout

- Is the layout of the text well-spaced and is it agreeable to the eye?



## Exercise:

Open the website (<http://www.englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Paragraph-Correction.htm>) and check out the advanced level exercises on paragraph correction at the bottom of the page. An answer key is also available.

## 6.2 An additional round of proofreading focusing on the format

Your second round of proofreading should concentrate on the format:

- Have you applied the required **codes** at your institution? (graphical chart, type of document, typeface, etc.). Check them as needed. The Institutions have published several documents about the required elements.
- **spelling, linguistic and grammatical checks.** Automatic spelling checks are not always 100% reliable. When in doubt, check out some online professional links that can help you if you do not have a dictionary on hand (see below);
- **hyphenation of words;**
- **punctuation;**
- **repetitions of words** at certain intervals, thesaurus of synonyms, etc.

Ideally you should have or make sufficient amount of time for two proofreaders to check your text. The first proofreader should be someone who is familiar with the subject and can perhaps advise you on any errors concerning content and specific details. The second person needs to be someone who is independent and does not know the subject area in detail. This person will more easily discover mistakes and can let you know when something is not clear.

Of course, both proofreaders should know English very well.

### **A good trick from a pro!**

When you reread a document, avoid systematically starting with the beginning of the text. You are generally more fresh and critical when you begin to proofread than at the end. Thus, think about proofreading your texts, at least once, by starting with the end of the document.



### **Exercise:**

For a short lesson in proofreading ([https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6488950/proofreading\\_exercise.pdf/85c26b23-a3ae-49e7-b62e-47130cfb9419](https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6488950/proofreading_exercise.pdf/85c26b23-a3ae-49e7-b62e-47130cfb9419))/editing texts (EN), try this exercise.

Here is the answer key ([https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6488950/proofreading\\_answers.pdf/2bed18aa-ed9-4945-a892-8346f88f7e76](https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6488950/proofreading_answers.pdf/2bed18aa-ed9-4945-a892-8346f88f7e76)) (EN).

Test your proofreading skills (<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/unit-8-proofreading>) (EN) at the British Council site on proofreading.



### Links with my work?

As in the exercise in the previous chapter, take one of your old documents and read through it carefully to find any errors concerning content and format. You will certainly be surprised by the number of errors that you are going to find and the remarks that you are going to make in the margin

...

## Going deeper...

- Three good online dictionaries are A (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/de/>), or B (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/essential-british-english/>), or C (<http://www.dictionary.com>) (EN)
- For American English (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>)
- One look (<http://www.onelook.com>) pulls up definitions from several sources (EN)
- A useful online proofreader (<https://www.grammarly.com/proofreading>) (EN)
- An excellent online thesaurus (also for American English) (<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/english-thesaurus>)
- For more proofreading tips, try this one (<http://grammar.about.com/od/improveyourwriting/a/tipsproofreading.htm>) (EN) or this one (<https://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/oxfordlearninginstitute/documents/pdg/mto-editing-and-proofreading.pdf>) (EN)
- Some sites have an excellent overview of English grammar (<http://grammar.reverso.net>) (EN)





## WRITING WITH IMPACT

# 7. Types of documents

Each attempt at classifying types of documents can lead to numerous discussions. However, one point is clear, i.e. the process has at least two advantages: It allows you to gather together information connected to a particular theme in a compact way. You become aware of the complexity of certain documents.



## 7.1 Classification of documents

Here are some criteria to keep in mind in order to classify different types of documents:

- **Objectives:**

- injunctive (to request an action): regulations, laws, instructions, directions, etc.;
- informative (to create knowledge): minutes, reports on internships, scientific articles, etc.;
- persuasive (to influence opinion): essays, analytical reports, plaidoyers, etc.

However, texts rarely have only one objective. Thus, an article can describe a current situation and also provide arguments for a future solution. In this case the article is informative as well as argumentative (persuasive).

- **Organisation:**

- explicative: based on the principle of Q & A: minutes, reports on internships, scientific articles;
- argumentative: based on the principle of thesis/antithesis/synthesis;
- descriptive: based on the principle of object/constitutive element/ownership/ relationship: descriptive notes, etc.

- **Genre**

- reports;
- letters and Emails;
- minutes;
- articles, etc.

When you carefully examine the particular characteristics of an injunctive, informative/explanatory or persuasive/argumentative text you may realise that:

- **An injunctive text** presupposes that an author puts himself in the position of authority and frequently uses:
  - imperatives, the simple future, the infinitive or the present;
  - chronological connecting words (first of all, then, finally...).
- **An informative or explanatory text:**
  - answers a question or a problem announced at the beginning of the text;
  - gives facts in a particular way;
  - uses a specific plan and various logical connecting words to guide the reader;
  - generally uses the past tense and the present tense as it is based on real experiences or true statements.
- **A persuasive and/or argumentative text:**
  - affirms the objective right from the start (to criticize, to convince, to persuade);
  - generally uses the present tense in order to convey a general truth or share a moral conviction;
  - develops arguments according to a complex structure;
  - relies on a number of logical connecting words.

## 7.2 Examples of different types of professional documents

In this last section we will examine 5 types of texts and reveal their specific characteristics. This will help to inspire you more when you have to produce a text of this kind.



### ◦ Letter or Email of complaint

**The objective is clear:** you complain or ask for a reaction (response to a question, request a document, a particular measure, a compensation, etc.).

The text needs to:

1. clearly state the nature of the complaint or the problem;
2. chronologically give the facts where possible;
3. clarify the consequences;
4. clearly state what you expect and your possible solutions;
5. use polite phrases.

This outline is valid for an Email as well as for a letter.

### **Good to know**

Treat only one subject per letter or Email. It is more effective and also helps you to classify, archive and retrieve the document more easily.

## ◦ A letter announcing some bad news

**The objective is clear:** to convey some negative information with the maximum amount of tactfulness.

A possible approach for this type of letter consists of the following steps :

1. explain the situation or the context;
2. convey the bad news;
3. explain the specific reasons for the bad news;
4. propose alternatives or show some empathy;
5. close in a polite manner.

We also recommend another approach in some cases. However, you need to use it with care and circumspection when an emotional point of view is involved. This is called the “sandwich” approach:

1. You announce some good news;
2. You present and explain the bad news;
3. You finish on a positive note.



### Links with my work?

We generally do not like to announce bad news. The “sandwich” approach described above is one of the simplest and most effective ways to do so. To inspire you a bit more, write a brief note informing your colleagues about a change in procedure that

you need to integrate in the unit in the coming months.

### **Email: a very specific type of correspondence**

The objectives of Emails are identical with those of classical letters. However, the degree of formality is not necessarily the same. We recommend the following steps:

- pay attention to the recipients in copy;
- clearly indicate the subject of your Email;
- include the message to which you are responding;
- limit the length of your Email to one screen as much as possible;
- make use of headings and sub-headings and a clearly organise your text into paragraphs if it is a longer text;
- carefully proofread your Email because generally we we tend to write eMails very quickly;
- do not answer an Email that makes you angry right away. (If you answer too quickly, you might regret what you said later on!)



### ◦ A letter of excuse / apology

**The objective is clear:** present your excuses for an absence, a blunder, an oversight, etc:

1. acknowledge the situation and present your excuses;
2. if possible, explain the reasons;
3. reassure the other parties that it was “not on purpose” and indicate the measures taken so that this will not happen again;
4. emphasize the importance of your excuse(s) and your relationship with the reader.



## More advice for classical Emails:

- Personalise the letter:
  - if you know the recipient, then use the correct form of address: Mr X, Dear X.
  - Express clearly that you know the hierarchy if this is the case: Mr X, Head of personnel.
  - If possible, find out the convictions of the reader so that you can better choose your arguments (Yet, do not write something to him that you cannot support with evidence!).
- Do not hesitate to state the main points right from the beginning of your letter, i.e. in the first paragraph, right after the general introduction. Your reader is “fresh” at this point. Be transparent about the objective of the message you are conveying.
- In the second paragraph, clearly state your request and indicate how important it is to obtain a particular action.
- Put forth your arguments in the third paragraph (supporting statistics, advice from experts, moral necessity or obligation, examples).
- Then, if necessary, try to defuse the arguments of the other party.
- End with a conclusion, i.e. remind the reader briefly of your request and the importance to act. Try to anticipate follow-up strategies by indicating them clearly.



### Links with my work?

An expression, a particular tone or an inappropriate style can use misunderstandings just as much as an error of agreement or a poor choice of words. Too much or too little information can also put off your reader and create confusion...

What do you think about the Email below:

*Dear Robert,*

*As you requested, I verified all the figures in your report. Everything seems to be perfect.*

*I also organised a meeting with you and the colleague that is coming to the office in two weeks. I set the meeting for 15:00.*

*What should I do tomorrow?*

*Marcia*

Answer the following questions:

1. What is your perception of the situation?
2. What misunderstanding could result from this Email?



### Exercise: Tests

Test your knowledge on the basic points of business letters (<http://www.english-test.net/esl/learn/english/grammar/ai139/esl-test.php>) (EN) You can also find the answers to the test on this site.

Improve your Email writing skills (<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-emails/unit-4-starting-and-finishing-emails>) by completing the tasks on the British Council site (EN).

## o Reports

We generally write a report on an event, a piece of work or a meeting. It is an informative/ explanatory type of text.

At the same time it is a text that is:

- narrative and objective because it relates given facts based on a particular reality;
- also subjective because it selects the facts according to a precise goal.

### **An outline for your text or report**

**introduction** describes the subject, a specific goal, a logical method, etc.);

**body of the text:** presents facts and ideas according to the specific goal. Depending on the topic, your approach here can be chronological, thematic or a combination of the two;

**conclusion:** summarises the lessons learnt, analyses positive and negative points and indicates any changes you would like if you were to repeat the situation again.



### Exercises: Introduction and conclusion:

Using a text or article you need to review for your work, use the guide for writing a critical review (<https://sass.uottawa.ca/sites/sass.uottawa.ca/files/awhc-critical-review.pdf>) (EN) and write a critical review of this text.

Here are some practical tips for writing introductions (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Introductions.html>) (EN) and conclusions (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Conclusions.html>). Find one of the documents you recently received and, based on the tips in these guides, put the introduction and the conclusion to the test. Are the introduction and the conclusion effective? Why or why not?

## ◦ An argumentative text

**The objective is clear:** whether it has to do with a report, a note, a letter presenting certain arguments to:

- defend a point of view, an opinion;
- to convince the reader of the validity and appropriateness of your request;
- justify your your point of view, perhaps after an analysis of the situation;
- provide a well-documented criticism to encourage a particular action.

For an effective argumentative text you need to:

- express **empathy** and put yourself in the shoes of the reader in order to choose and prioritise your arguments;
- **develop the structure**, logical flow and clarity of your thesis, your point of view and your ideas;
- give theoretical arguments and concrete examples to support your thesis. You need to be **very concrete and factual** and positively state your ideas. Use verbs of actions over nouns where possible;
- use various logical **connecting words**;
- express your line of logical reasoning, e.g. **deductive** (an argument moves to another) or **concessive** (you give credit to the opposite thesis in order to better express the thesis, or, in other words, move from the point of view of the reader and speak about the benefits), or **use analogies** (e.g. you compare);
- organise your arguments as **a follow-up to Q& A** if applicable;
- be very **assertive** in order to convince the other person...



## Exercises: Answers models

Test your writing skills ([http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/Writing\\_practice\\_test\\_I\\_IELTS\\_Academic\\_questions.pdf](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/Writing_practice_test_I_IELTS_Academic_questions.pdf)) (EN).

Here are some possible answers ([http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/Writing\\_practice\\_test\\_1\\_IELTS\\_Academic\\_Model\\_Answers.pdf](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/Writing_practice_test_1_IELTS_Academic_Model_Answers.pdf)) (EN).

If you are really ambitious, you can find additional writing tasks with model answers ([http://www.ielts-exam.net/academic\\_writing\\_samples\\_task\\_1/947/](http://www.ielts-exam.net/academic_writing_samples_task_1/947/)) (EN).

## Going deeper...

- For a compact overview of different types of text (<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eppcontent/glossary/app/resource/factsheet/4108.pdf>) (EN)
- For an overview of the genre of texts (<http://www.uefap.com/writing/genre/genrefram.htm>) (EN)
- Organisation and formats of business documents (<http://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/school-of-business-administration/undergraduate/SBAWR/APWS.asp>) and overview of technical writing for business ([http://www.kdingo.net/engl462group\\_3/index.php?t=genres](http://www.kdingo.net/engl462group_3/index.php?t=genres)) (EN)
- For more information on writing business letters: (1) (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/653/01>) (EN) and (2) (<http://www.dailywritingtips.com/letter-writing-101/>) (EN). This site also provides information on how to format business letters for the US and the UK
- Additional tips on accentuating (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/654/1/>) the positive points (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/654/1/>) in a letter (EN)
- Tips on writing report abstracts (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/656/01/>) (EN)
- The guide to writing reports in plain language (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/reportsguide.pdf>) (EN)
- An excellent guide for writing technical reports (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/forstudents/engineeringdesign/studyguides/techreportwriting>) (EN)



