

Writing Skills

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Are writing skills really that important? Take the survey below to find out!

Answer "T" for True or "F" for False

1. ___ Email reduces the need to write effectively.
2. ___ Writing skills on an application really do not matter ...you are just filling in blanks.
3. ___ Email is the most common form of writing in most companies.
4. ___ Two thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility.
5. ___ The National Writing Commission recommends that students should spend double the amount of time writing than they do now.
6. ___ Most companies do not look at writing skills for promotions.
7. ___ 80% or more of companies expected to have the greatest growth take writing into account when hiring.
8. ___ Writing skills are used for creating simple problem reports.
9. ___ Writing skills really don't affect employment for first jobs or entry level jobs.
10. ___ Clearly written cover letters put applicants above others who just turn in applications alone.

***"People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired"*



Answers on page 5

Writing an essay: 5 Simple Steps



3. Create a topic statement.

What is the main thing you want to say in this essay in one sentence?

1. Choose a topic.

2. Narrow the topic down.

What do you know about this topic?



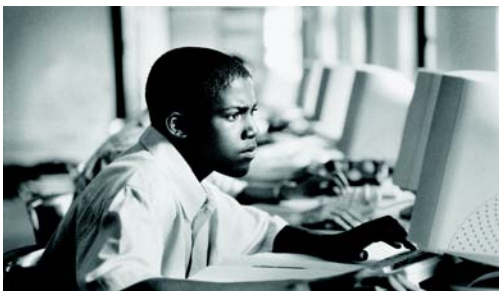
What is interesting about the topic?

What information would you like to convey about this topic?

4. Answer the question Why? At least 5 times to support your topic statement.

**" Half of all companies take writing into account when making promotion decisions. ...You can't move up without writing skills."*

5. Wrap it up: Write a conclusion/ summary.



*Source: Report of The National Commission on Writing: College Board September 2004
http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf

Say it Loud!



Say out loud what you want to write. Read what you have written before you send it out or turn it in. Read the words below and rate how it sounds:

"I saw your ad in the newspaper advertising for a job that I think I might want to apply for because I think I would be interested in the job and like it a lot."

Now rewrite what you think this sentence says in a better form:

Simplify

Use simple language. Simplify the sentence below:

I believe that my studious nature proves that I am a worthy candidate for the prestigious position of corporate director that I have so diligently worked toward during the course of my educational pursuits.

*"The need to write clearly and quickly has never been more important than in today's highly competitive, technology-driven global economy."

Good Grammar

Check your grammar and punctuation. Use *Strunk and White's Elements of Style*, available on the Web at www.bartleby.com/141/index.html. Use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Write down the web sites for an online dictionary and online thesaurus below:

Less is more

Get to the point! Avoid wordy sentences. Rewrite the sentence below in short simple terms.

I wanted to take time to thank you for the time it took for the interview on Monday afternoon with the manager and the assistant manager at your company.

Speak Now!

Write in the active voice. Turn this into an active voice.

The sales increased when I developed the brochures and included graphics I designed that represented our mission.

*Source: Report of The National Commission on Writing: College Board September 2004
http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf



Writing Skills

Six Ways to boost writing skills

1. **Write Often:** *Journal, take notes, free write (write for 10 minutes without thinking about grammar, spelling, or organization.)*

Free write now about what you want to accomplish today.

2. **Experiment with different types of writing.** *Choose one type of writing below to complete:*

-Letters to the editor, Story, Poem, Business Letter, Memo, Article

3. **Get Feedback from others about your writing.** *Name 3 people that could give you feedback :*

4. **Read to expand your vocabulary, learn about different writing styles, and more.** *List three books, articles, magazines, etc. you will read this week:*

5. **Write about what you know.** *List 5 things that you know about from your life experiences:*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. **Revise and edit several times.** *Select something you have written and complete the following:*

Read 1: *Read aloud. Do the words make sense? Can the reader understand what you are trying to say?*

Revise 2: *Check for grammar. Is there subject / verb agreement? Is the punctuation correct?*

Edit 3: *Check for spelling.*

Get Feedback 4: *Read aloud and pass on to someone else for review. The reviewer is _____.*

Writing Skills:

Skills for Life



Check out the answers below. If you have more than 3 incorrect, read up on the importance of writing skills.

1. F Email reduces the need to write effectively. Since most people work with computers, more people must write and respond to work related issues several times each day through email.
2. F Writing skills on an application really do not matter ...you are just filling in blanks. Poorly written applications are actually not considered for interviews based on the writing. Writing seems to be just as important as the individual skills.
3. T Email is the most common form of writing in most companies. Email and other technology actually increases the need for good writing skills because communication is expected frequently and information is expected to be documented.
4. T Two thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility. "Over 120 major American corporations agreed that writing is the ticket to professional opportunity."
5. T The National Writing Commission recommends that students should spend double the amount of time writing than they do now. Students are not demonstrating the writing skills needed for employment.
6. F Most companies do not look at writing skills for promotions. Writing is a critical skill for determining promotions in the work place.
7. T 80% or more of companies expected to have the greatest growth take writing into account when hiring. These companies include those in the service, finance, real estate, and insurance sectors.
8. T Writing skills are used for creating simple problem reports. Not only is writing required for these types of job procedures, but also for manufacturing, operation procedures, safety, and more.
9. F Writing skills really don't affect employment for first jobs or entry level jobs. Writing skills are being considered more and more to determine who is even interviewed.
10. T Clearly written cover letters put applicants above others who just turn in applications alone.

Clearly written cover letters demonstrate professionalism, dedication to the job, good writing and communication skills. Cover letters show that you really want the job and you are willing to go above the minimum application to make yourself stand out.

Writing Skills Checklist

Skills for Life

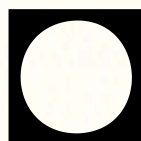


Use this checklist to evaluate your writing. After completing a writing assignment check for the following:

- My paragraphs are sound.
- Each of my paragraphs has one main idea.
- I have used correct grammar.
- I have used correct punctuation.
- Periods are at the ends of my sentences.
- I have quotation marks around dialogue.
- My spelling is correct.
- My print-out contains no typos.
- My sentences begin in different ways.
- My sentences are different lengths.
- The meaning of each of my sentences is clear.
- My sentences flow and use correct grammar.
- There are no run-ons.
- My sentences are complete.
- My report is sequenced in order.
- My introduction is exciting.
- My ideas flow and are well connected.
- I have a satisfying conclusion.
- I have capitalized proper nouns.
- I used a lot of describing words (adjectives and adverbs).
- I help the reader visualize what I am writing.
- I use action verbs like created and exclaimed.
- I used synonyms to add variety.
- I used brainstorming to create and organize ideas.
- My ideas are written in my own words.
- My report is clear and focused. I stay on target.
- I understand my topic.
- My details give the reader important information.
- My ideas relate to one another.
- I have listened to suggestions from the teacher or peer writers.

Highlight items that are the most difficult for you on this list?

How can you improve?



Total Checkmarks:
What percentage of items above did you complete?

Virginia Career VIEW

www.vacareerview.org

Source: <http://4teachers.org/projectbased/58wrt.shtml>



Writing Skills

This page includes a template for common types of business correspondence. Use this template as a model to practice writing business correspondence. Use your own words and writing style guided by the template below.

Cover Letter Template to accompany a job application and/or resume.

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]
August 9, 2006

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [Recipient Name]:

I could not be more eager to join forces with you! If hired as the new leader of your sales team, I will use and foster effective sales skills and follow through until the deal is closed.

That's why I'm writing you again—to remind you of the uncommon benefits I will provide as your sales manager:

- The advantage of existing profitable relationships with decision makers at top retailers in all major markets.
- Unusual strength in perceiving industry trends and challenges, and translating them into sales opportunities—well before others do.
- Proven ability to put these advantages to work for you from day one.

As you know Ms. Stahl, I am very excited about working with you. Please let me know if I can help you make your selection by providing any further information or coming in for another interview. Feel free to call me at work or at home.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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Download more templates from www.microsoft.com

This Microsoft Office template is provided by: McGraw-Hill, '201 Killer Cover Letters' by Sandra Podesta and Andrea Paxton
Virginia Career VIEW www.vacareerview.org



Writing Skills

This page includes a template for common types of business correspondence. Use this template as a model to practice writing business correspondence. Use your own words and writing style guided by the template below.

Basic thank you letter following interview

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]
August 9, 2006

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [Recipient Name]:

Thank you for the interview today. I appreciate your consideration of my qualifications and application for the job of escrow representative. I will check with you next Monday to see if you have made a decision about the position. If I can answer any questions, please call me at 555-0199.

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]



Writing Skills

This page includes a template for common types of business correspondence. Use this template as a model to practice writing business correspondence. Use your own words and writing style guided by the template below.

Basic memo

Memo

To: [Click **here** and type name]

From: [Click **here** and type name]

CC: [Click **here** and type name]

Date: 8/9/2006

Re: [Click **here** and type subject]

Place the body of your text here:

What do you want to communicate to the person receiving the memo?

What is the main purpose of the memo?

Practice typing memos for the following :

Change of meeting time and date

Extend project deadlines

Give assignments to team members

Announce evaluations

Announce a special meeting

Writing Skills

Skills for Life

Additional Activities to promote and develop writing skills:

- Keep a daily journal.
- Read newspaper articles.
- Participate in writing a school, church, or community newsletter, newspaper, or create a school yearbook.
- Write and read book reviews, film reviews, and article reviews.
- Interview a newspaper writer, editor, or others that write regularly such as a college professor, company manager, or researcher.
- Talk to a graduate student about writing requirements for their program of study.



Standards of Learning met by the completion of this Skills for Life Booklet include:

9th Grade: English: 9.4, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9

10th Grade English: 10.1, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.11

11th Grade English: 11.4, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10

12th Grade English: 12.4, 12.7, 12.8

Standards for School Counseling; Grades 9-12

Academic Development: HA2, HA3, HA4

Career Development: HC1, HC2, HC3, HC4, HC5, HC6, HC7, HC8

Online resources for Writing Skills:

http://dmoz.org/Kids_and_Teens/School_Time/English/Writing/
Provides tips, tools, and resources to help improve writing skills.

<http://fictionwriting.about.com/od/startingtowrite/>

http://www.google.com/Top/Kids_and_Teens/School_Time/English/Writing/

http://www.onestopenglish.com/Young_Learners/Teenage/Writing/index.htm

