

Written Communication Competency Development Activities

Competency Definition

Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Developmental Activity Levels

All (A)

Applies to all competency levels

Beginner-Basic Knowledge (B)

A person at the Beginner-Basic Knowledge level has limited experience applying the competency. He/she applies general knowledge in common situations but has limited practical experience in applying the competency in a work environment presenting more complex situations.

Mid-level (M)

A person with mid-level proficiency has applied the competency repeatedly and successfully in the performance of his/her job but still has much to learn about the advanced aspects or behaviors associated with the competency. A person at this level can usually apply the competency on his/her own.

High (H)

A person at the High level has extensive knowledge of and experience with this competency and can apply the competency exceptionally well on the job without assistance. At this level one is an expert and has enough experience to teach the competency to others.

Articles, Books, and Websites

A Bell, Arthur H., Writing Effective Letters, Memos, and E-mail, Barron's Educational Series, August, 2004.

This book advises career-minded men and women on how to succeed at all levels of management, marketing, and other business undertakings, with emphasis on survival in the corporate environment. The author helps make business writing easy, with tips on matching business language to the proper format—memos, reports, proposals, letters, and more. This new edition also gives attention to e-mail, which in recent years has become a dominant medium for business communication.

A Davis, Kenneth W., The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Course in Business Writing and Communication, McGraw-Hill, May, 2005.

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In business, whether you are crafting a three-line message or a 300-page report, how and what you write defines who you are. This book will give you the skills you need to write for success, regardless of your profession or position.

A Piotrowski, Maryann, Effective Business Writing, HarperCollins, 1996.

This useful guide helps the reader write clearly and in an appropriate format, style and tone. Numerous examples show how to overcome writer's block, organize messages for maximum impact, achieve an easy-to-read style, find an efficient writing system and much more.

A Blundel, Richard, Effective Business Communication: Principles and Practice for the Information Age, Prentice Hall Press, January, 1998. ASIN: 0137427018

Coverage includes: how to overcome "noise" to get your message across; effective ways to use language and images; the power of persuasion; and special issues surrounding communication in an organization. The book focuses on communication in practice, covering forms and questionnaires, business letters and direct mail, reports, memos, briefings, presentations, meetings, negotiation, advertising, news releases, interviewing, listening skills, and much more.

A Roebuck, Chris, Effective Communication, AMACOM, April, 1999.

Success at work isn't just about working harder. It means thinking and working smarter. Effective Communication addresses how to: improve your communication skills using a simple, effective program. It includes getting your message across to your boss, your team, and your peers; making written reports; and learning not only how to communicate your ideas to others, but also how to get them to communicate effectively with you.

A Arredondo, Lani, Communicating Effectively, McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 2000.

This book shows readers how to combine proven techniques and strategies with the latest technologies for successful, results-directed interaction. Included are techniques for shaping positive perceptions, tips for giving instructions and corrective feedback, strategies for making your points in presentations and e-communications, and more.

M "The Harvard Business School Publishing Guide to Better Business Writing", Harvard Business School Press, Harvard Management Communication Letter, April, 2005. HMCL: 1002

This collection of Harvard Management Communications Letter articles lay out proven strategies for improving writing by guiding busy executives and employees in organizing their ideas quickly and communicating them clearly and concisely

H Booher, Dianna, Communicate With Confidence!, McGraw-Hill, July, 1994.

In this book you will find a compilation of 1,042 tips, all with explanations, directed toward better governance with words, both written and oral. Language of all kinds, from appropriate

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body language to the effective use of silence is included in the 23 sections of this book, ranging from small talk and gender communications to the best ways to criticize, apologize, and negotiate.

Activities

B Take a lead role in communicating organizational strategy to regional or Headquarter organizations.

M/H Write an article for one of your own TSA organizational publications.

M/H If you don't do so already, create an outline before you start writing a report, memo, or letter. Check with others who receive/review your writing to see if this has a positive impact on your overall writing effectiveness.

M/H Have a colleague proofread your writing for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure errors. Take note of the errors made most often and learn rules for improvement.

M/H Ask a superior, peer, or friend to give feedback on your writing. Revise it if their understanding of your ideas does not match your intent.

H When writing for diverse or non-technical groups, keep technical language to a minimum. If you use technical terminology and jargon, provide definitions. Have a non-technical person give you suggestions on what jargon to explain or eliminate.

H Review each report that you write and change passive verbs to active ones whenever possible to make your writing more expressive. A way to ensure that your sentence ends up in the active voice is to start the sentence with the subject.

Coaching Suggestions for Managers

H Have staff members save and share examples of effective written communication (copies of presentations, handouts, etc.) drafted by people inside and outside their work group. Have them discuss the specifics of what works and doesn't work. Encourage them to identify benchmark examples of effective communications that they can use when they need to write formal documentation, presentations, handouts, etc.

H Review staff/team members' writing. Critique their clarity, logic and presentation. Review any issues with grammar and spelling, if necessary. Work with them on drafts as they develop more effective written communication.