



R107

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy's *Fire Service Communications* course. This is a 2-week course designed to enhance your communication skills. During the course, two subject areas are covered in depth: written and oral communication.

Week 1, Written Communication, provides the requisite knowledge and skills for effective written communication. Writing workshops are designed to study common writing problems, drawing on fire department materials as illustrations. Group and individual evaluation of selected assignment papers submitted by participants is an important feature of the class study.

Week 2, Oral Communication, provides practical and theoretical concepts of effective oral communication, emphasizing public speaking skills. Oral presentations by participants are videotaped and evaluated by the individual, other participants, and the instructor.

This course includes an on-line computer-based instructional methodology that must be completed **prior to attending class at the National Fire Academy**. The software is called Skills Tutor (language and writing), which is a self-directed tutorial that will enhance your competency. Please refer to the document listed at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/pre-course/> for instruction on completion of this pre-course requirement.

Increasing numbers of students and instructors are bringing laptop computers to campus. You alone are responsible for the security and maintenance of your equipment. The Academy cannot provide you with computer software, hardware, or technical support to include disks, printers, scanners, etc. There is a limited number of 120 Volt AC outlets in the classrooms. A Student Computer Lab is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. It is open daily with technical support provided in the evenings. This lab uses Windows XP and Office 2003 as the software standard.

Should you need additional information related to the course content, feel free to contact Dr. Burton A. Clark, Management Science Curriculum Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1069 or email at [burt.clark@dhs.gov](mailto:burt.clark@dhs.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Onieal".

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent  
National Fire Academy  
U.S. Fire Administration



Dear *Fire Service Communication* Course Student:

The United States Fire Administration’s National Fire Academy (USFA/NFA) is making the web-based Skills Tutor Writing and Language tutorial available on-line for students to complete before attending the *Fire Service Communication* Course. We would appreciate your help in assisting us work through this system by taking the course before you attend the class. We encourage you to use the system so we can address any problems that may occur. However, if you do not complete the requirement before arriving at the NFA, you may continue to work on the materials while you are on campus.



The requirement is that you achieve an **85** percent passing score on each of 8 final exams (one final exam for each of the four modules in Language and the four modules in Writing). We suggest that you complete the Language portion of the requirement first, then the Writing portion. You can go directly to the exams or you can take the lessons or any combination of both. You can keep taking the final exams until you achieve passing scores. The average time of completion for the entire assignment is 20 hours or more.

***Requirements for Skills Tutor***

Supported Browsers	
Windows	Macintosh
Windows 98, 2000, NT, XP • Internet Explorer versions 5.5 SP2 or higher • Netscape Navigator versions 4.75, 6.x or 7.x • AOL version 6 or higher	OS 8.6 or above and OS 9.x • Internet Explorer version 5.1.5 • AOL version 5 or higher • Netscape Navigator version 4.08, 4.51, 4.61, 4.75 or 4.76 only  <b>OS X</b> • <b>Internet Explorer</b> version 5.1.4 or 5.2.1 • Netscape Navigator version 4.08, 4.51, 4.61, 4.75 or 4.76 only • AOL version 5 or higher

You must have a hardware configuration and operating system that meet the specified requirements for the browser you intend to use for accessing the SkillsTutor lessons.

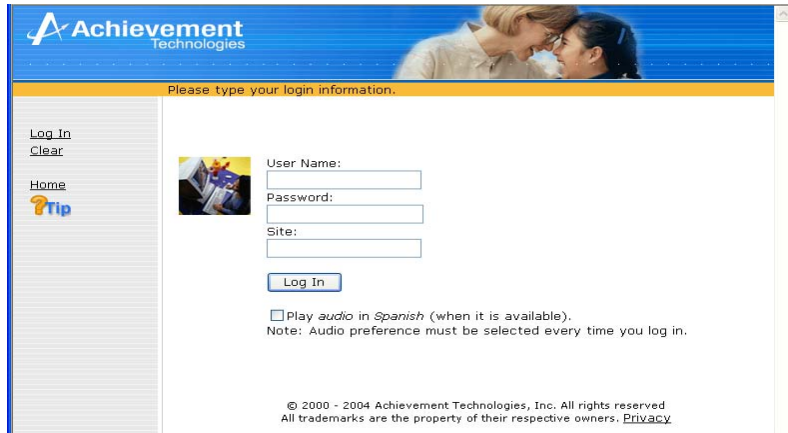
**Downloads and Plugins**

Macromedia Flash Player Windows: Version 6 or higher Macintosh: Version 6 or higher  	Adobe Acrobat Reader version 6.0.1 or higher  
• No Pop-up window managers • Display Settings Minimum 800 x 600 (1024 x 768 recommended) 256 colors (Thousands recommended)	• Browser Settings Javascript enabled SSL 1 and 2 enabled Access to secure pages Access to Temporary Internet Files • Connection Speed Minimum 56 Kbps

Please use this link if you need to download Adobe or Flash. These are free downloads.  
<http://www.skillstutor.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=STLMSupport.STLMDownloads>

### *Directions for Skills Tutor Online*

Log on at: <https://www.myskillstutor.com/login.jsp>



The screenshot shows the login page for Achievement Technologies. At the top, there is a blue banner with the Achievement Technologies logo and a photo of two students. Below the banner, a yellow bar contains the text "Please type your login information." On the left side, there is a vertical menu with links for "Log In", "Clear", "Home", and "Tip". The main content area features a "User Name:" field, a "Password:" field, and a "Site:" field, each with a corresponding input box. Below these fields is a "Log In" button. A checkbox labeled "Play audio in Spanish (when it is available)." is present, with a note below it stating "Note: Audio preference must be selected every time you log in." At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: "© 2000 - 2004 Achievement Technologies, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners. [Privacy](#)"

**\*\*User name will be your first initial and last name. The example used below would be for the name John Smith.\*\***

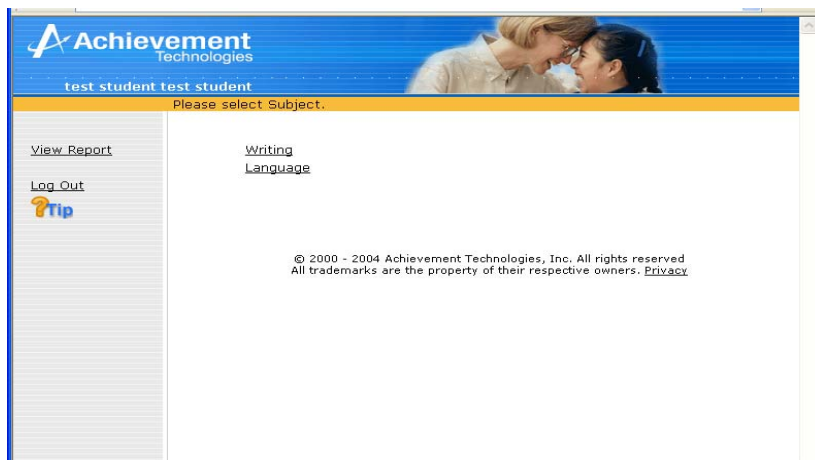
User Name: **jsmith**

Password: **student321** (the password is the same for all students)

Site: **national15** (national fifteen)

**<Now click Log In>**

**Next** you should see the below page. You can now select either Language or Writing assignments.



The screenshot shows the subject selection page for Achievement Technologies. At the top, there is a blue banner with the Achievement Technologies logo and a photo of two students. Below the banner, a yellow bar contains the text "Please select Subject." On the left side, there is a vertical menu with links for "View Report", "Log Out", and "Tip". The main content area features two options: "Writing" and "Language", each with a corresponding input box. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: "© 2000 - 2004 Achievement Technologies, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners. [Privacy](#)"

Any problems or questions accessing SkillsTutor online please call 301-447-1660, our classroom support 'Technology Coordinator' will provide assistance as needed.

Thank you for participating in this new and exciting learning opportunity the USFA is bringing to the American fire service. This is another step toward achieving our mission to "...increase the professionalism of the nation's fire service..."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Burton A. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'B' and 'C'.

Dr. Burton A. Clark, EFO, CFO  
Training Specialist  
United States Fire Administration