

Cheat Sheet Module 2

Summary

Writing for the Reader

The key to effective communication is to consider who your audience is and what their reaction will be to your message. In targeting your primary audience, you will need to consider whether your communication flows upward or downward so that you can adjust the level of formality in your writing. Your message should be tailored to contain only the necessary information based on whether the message will be received in a positive, neutral, or negative way.

Word Choice and Tone

Generally, business writing should stay away from clichés, jargon, slang, euphemisms, and doublespeak to avoid confusing the reader. It is also important to intentionally use language that avoids bias so as to be as inclusive as possible.

Improving conciseness and clarity, using parallel structure, and effectively indicating emphasis are crucial in business writing to ensure messages are understood quickly and accurately. Conciseness eliminates unnecessary words, making messages straightforward. Clarity helps prevent misunderstandings by using simple language and concrete examples. Parallel structure enhances readability by keeping grammatical forms consistent, making complex information easier to digest. Emphasizing key points guides the reader's focus to critical information, supporting efficient decision-making.

The Writing Process

The three-step process of planning, writing, and revising helps to ensure that business writing is clear, purposeful, and effective. Planning allows the writer to define the message's purpose, understand the audience, and organize thoughts coherently. The writing step translates these plans into a structured format, focusing on clarity, conciseness, and appropriateness of tone. Finally, revising is crucial for refining the message, correcting errors, and improving readability, which ensures the communication achieves its intended effect.

Key Terms

active voice

sentence written in the form of "A does B"

buffer

a neutral or positive opening statement used to soften the impact before delivering bad news or a sensitive message, helping to prepare the recipient emotionally and mentally for what follows

cliché

an overused expression or phrase that has been overused so that it has become unoriginal and commonplace

complex sentence

consists of at least one dependent clause followed by at least one independent clause

compound-complex sentence

combines at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, linked by conjunctions to express multiple related ideas

compound sentence

consists of two or more independent clauses attached by a comma and a conjunction

doublespeak

a more deliberate form of euphemism that disguises the meaning of words so that the idea the words represent seems less unpleasant

downward communication

the flow of information from higher levels of an organization's hierarchy to lower levels

euphemisms

words or phrases used to talk about unpleasant or taboo topics in a way that is perceived as less offensive or more agreeable

goodwill

the positive relationship and mutual respect cultivated between two parties, characterized by gestures, messages, or actions

horizontal communication

the exchange of information, ideas, and feedback between individuals or departments at the same level of an organization's hierarchy

jargon

specialized terminology used by a particular profession, group, or activity and is often difficult for outsiders to understand

negative messages

messages where the audience is expected to react in a negative manner; also called bad news messages

parallel construction

a technique in writing that involves using the same grammatical structure for similar elements within a sentence or across sentences to ensure clarity and balance; also called parallelism

passive voice

sentence written in the form of "B is done by A"

persuasive messages

communications designed to influence the attitudes, beliefs, or actions of others

positive messages

messages where the audience is expected to react in a neutral to positive manner

sans serif font

fonts that lack the embellishments of serif fonts, presenting simpler lines

serif font

characterized by small lines or decorative features called "serifs" at the end of strokes within letters

simple sentence

consists of a single independent clause

slang

informal, often novel words and phrases used within a specific social group, culture, or context

subject line

a brief, descriptive headline of an email or message that summarizes its content or purpose, guiding the recipient on its relevance and urgency

upward communication

the flow of information from the lower levels to the upper levels within an organization's hierarchy

you-view

framing messages from the perspective of the audience's interests and needs, emphasizing benefits and considerations relevant to them, rather than focusing on the sender's perspective