Report Writing at The World Bank

Course Guide

Introduction

Welcome to the course *Writing E-mails and Letters at the World Bank*.

The overall goal of this course is to help you improve your confidence and your competence in writing professional-quality correspondence in English within the World Bank context.

Throughout the course, you will explore principles and strategies of effective writing for the Bank's written communication needs. Your work will consist of a number of readings and self-marked activities followed by module assignments that you will upload in Moodle for your course tutor to review.

You will have a personal tutor to help you throughout the course. In addition to helping you with any problems with learning materials and learning approaches, your tutor will assess your assignments and give you detailed, individualized feedback. You will communicate with each other through Moodle e-mail and forums.

In this course, you will be working with several sample documents from the World Bank. These documents are also available in the Resources and Documents section of each module.

QUOTE

"It is easy to achieve good writing skills if you set your mind to it and really want to improve."
—Country Manager

Course Outcomes

On completion of this course, you should be able to

- Identify your own strengths and challenges in writing correspondence.
- Assess the writer's purpose, the reader's needs, the main question, and the main message of the correspondence.
- Plan and draft responsive and initiative correspondence.
- Revise correspondence as needed to improve structure, mechanics, style, and tone.
- Plan and draft "bad news" correspondence.

In addition, each module includes detailed learning objectives that support the overall goal of improving your confidence and competence.

Course Outline

Writing E-mails and Letters is organized into five modules. Below is an estimate of the amount of time it will take you to complete each module.

Note: Time required to complete each module includes time needed for reading course content and completing assignments. Use these as estimates only because time varies by learner. Make sure you allow more than enough time to complete the course.

Module 1: Writing Effectively for the World Bank (2-3 hours)

This module gets you thinking about writing at the World Bank and helps you assess your current writing skills and establish your expectations for the course. Through examples and activities, you consider the idea of effective writing in the World Bank context.

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Module 2: Planning and Drafting Correspondence (5-7 hours)

In this module, you analyze the different types of correspondence that you will likely encounter in your day-to-day writing tasks. You also consider appropriate strategies for writing correspondence at the World Bank. By using the technique called the **Dialogue with the Reader**, you begin thinking about how best to achieve your purpose in writing a document.

Module 3: Correspondence Mechanics (4-6 hours)

This module introduces you to the fine details of writing. Mechanics include punctuation patterns, parallel structure, grammatical trouble spots, and specific writing requirements of the World Bank such as spelling and capitalization. In this module, you review and revise sample documents to bring them to a higher standard.

Module 4: Correspondence Style (3-5 hours)

This module continues the focus on good writing and revising practices that you began in Module 3. This module covers the details of style, which includes both how to write clear, direct sentences and how to adopt a proper tone for your readers.

Module 5: Bad-News Correspondence (3-4 hours)

In this module, you focus on a particular type of writing known as bad-news correspondence. Writing an effective bad-news document requires a command of style, tone, and structure, and a recognition of the reader's expectations and needs. In this module, you practice writing bad-news correspondence for a variety of purposes, and you apply the lessons and skills you have gained in the previous modules.

Total: approximately 20 hours

Features of the Study Materials

This course challenges you with Bank-focused information about correspondence writing that is designed to improve your professional writing skills. It encourages you to reflect on your current work-related writing practices and helps you approach them more effectively.

Learning Objectives

At the beginning of each module, we present you with some specific learning objectives, detailing what we expect you to get out of the module. The objectives are not all-encompassing. You will also have your own goals, which you set out in Module 1. Once you have completed each module, we encourage you to revisit your overall goals and the specific objectives to reflect on whether you have achieved them.

Activities

Many of the pages in this course are interactive, providing examples, exercises, quizzes, activities, and so on. These activities give you the chance to think about the topics you have been reading about, to give personal responses to the material, to test your knowledge, and to analyze case material. In most cases, you can simply enter your answers right on the screen. For each of these activities, you will be able to compare your answers with those that we have provided as model answers. You should not send your responses to these activities to your tutor. (Send only completed assignments for your tutor to review.)

The activities form a key element of the teaching in these modules, so you should not skip them. Make a commitment to completing the activities, and you will be able to improve your writing skills through this course.

Assignments

For each module, you will submit an assignment to your tutor by uploading it in the assignment section in Moodle. Each assignment builds on the activities in the module and on the previous assignments. By the end of the course, you will have experience with writing all kinds of correspondence and receiving constructive critiques on them.

Assessment: How to Pass the Course

The activities discussed on the previous screen will provide you with a measure of self-assessment for your progress through the course. In addition, you will receive a formal assessment of your assignments from your tutor.

For each module, you will submit an assignment to your tutor by uploading it in the assignment section in Moodle. Your tutor will review the assignment and provide detailed written feedback on the quality of your work and give you advice on any areas needing

improvement. Your tutor will then upload your assignment with his or her comments in the same place. You can retrieve the comments and check the status of the assignment there.

To pass the course, you must submit all assignments within the time allowed, meeting the performance criteria for each assignment. Your tutor will inform you that you have successfully completed the course. At that time, you will be encouraged to fill out an evaluation of the course and explore options for further professional development, including taking individual tutorials.

Scheduling Your Study

As with any distance-learning course, you have considerable autonomy in the way you organize your method of study. You can study wherever and whenever you choose and at whatever pace suits you best within the 14-week time frame of the course.

Remember when you are scheduling your study that the time required for the modules is not equal. You will likely complete the first module very quickly. Later modules take considerably more time. To receive the maximum benefit from the course, you should be sure your assignment submission schedule allows time for your tutor to give you feedback and to ask for revisions on your work if necessary.

Inform Your Supervisor

You should inform your supervisor that you are taking this course and gain support for the duration of your studies. If possible, try to organize some regular time away from your other duties to work on the course.

Work Out a Schedule

The entire course requires roughly 20 hours of study time. Completion times vary from learner to learner.

With distance learning, you are responsible for organizing yourself to complete the course in an appropriate time frame. You will need to carefully schedule your study time so that you can complete the activities, make your own notes, and complete the assignments.

Set Your Own Assignment Submission Dates

Although there are no set dates for submitting assignments, we strongly advise you set yourself target dates for submitting assignments in advance. This will enable you to work more easily around your various work commitments. Note that learning is cumulative: you will need time to incorporate feedback from one assignment into the next.

Your tutor will ask you for your proposed dates for assignment submission early in the course. Use the Study and Assignment Submission Schedule template to create your own schedule for completing the course. Send your proposed schedule to your tutor by Moodle e-mail as an attachment. It is printable, so if you wish you can post it in your work space as a reminder. Here is an example of what a completed schedule might look like.

Writing E-Mails and Letters   The World Bank

My Schedule of Module Progress and Assignment Completion

Course start: *June 1*
Course end: *August 31*

	1	2	3	4	5
I'm working on Module...	Writing Effectively for The World Bank	Planning and Drafting Correspondence	Correspondence Mechanics	Correspondence Style	Bad News Correspondence
Date	*June 1 - 15*	*June 20 – July 10*	*July 15 - August 1*	*August 3 - 12*	*August 15 - 25*

	1	2	3	4	5
I'm submitting my assignment...	Share Your Goals	Planned and Drafted Documents	Revise for Mechanics	Evaluate Your Writing	Writing a Bad-News Letter
Date	*June 15*	*July 10*	*August 1*	*August 12*	*August 25*

Time Limit

There is a time limit of 14 weeks to complete this course. The course administrator will provide a list of critical dates for the cohort in which you are participating. The Key Dates are also available in the Resources section in Moodle.

Support and Contacts

Although the course materials are designed to enable you to work alone, sometimes you will need help. A support system has been developed to assist you and your fellow World Bank course participants with any difficulties that you may experience.

Course Content

If your problem concerns understanding the course learning materials, how to proceed, or the assignment requirements, you should contact your tutor by Moodle e-mail. Your tutor is there to help you find your way through the learning materials and will understand how you are feeling. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, even if you think the question is too simple to ask.

Your tutor will contact you early in the course. Please reply promptly by Moodle e-mail so that he or she knows you are in contact.

If your tutor contacted you before you received this CD-ROM, now is a good time to let your tutor know that you have received your course materials and are ready to start the course.

Occasionally, you will see an e-mail link for your tutor like the one above. You will notice that there is no e-mail address provided. This is because there are different tutors for this course. The link will automatically open to the Moodle website in your Internet browser. When you log in to Moodle, you will find a link to your personal tutor's Moodle e-mail there.

Course Administration and Technical Problems

You may experience administrative problems that require attention, such as changes in your work schedule or inability to access course materials. For assistance, contact the Commonwealth of Learning "Learner Support" address found in the contacts list in Moodle e-mail. For technical problems, we strongly recommend that you contact your local IT support.

Navigating Through This Course

This online course has been constructed in a way that allows you to work through activities at your own pace, while also having the benefit of support from an online tutor. To help you with using the course, we have adopted some conventions that should make your learning journey a bit easier to navigate.

The Top Menu

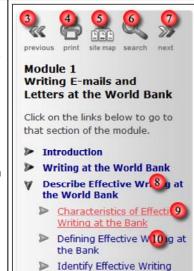Every page has a menu at the top to navigate to the modules in the course.

1. Click on a **Tab** to open that module.
2. The **active module** (the module you are in) will appear with the color bar extended below the module tab.

The Right Navigation Menu

In addition to the above, each module has a menu on the right for navigating within that module and accessing the search tool and printable pages.

3. **Next / Previous.** Clicking on the **next** or **previous** buttons will take you to those pages in the module.

4. **Print.** The **print** button will open a printable version of the module (pdf format).

5. **Site Map.** The **site map** button will open a site map showing all pages in the course.

6. **Search.** Click on the **Search** button to search for specific text within the course.

7. **Sections.** Click on a **section link** to go to the first page of that section, and expand the section menu so that you can see the pages within.

8. **Active Page**. The **active page** (the page you are on) will appear with the menu link in red text.

9. **Page Links.** Clicking on any of the **page links** will take you to that page.

Tips for Searching

Use these tips to make searching easier.

- Enter multiple terms with a space between them. The search tool searches for any instance of each term in the list.

- Enter terms in any combination of upper and lower case. Search terms are not case sensitive.

- Include any of the following characters in your search terms: **A-Z a-z 0-9 _ - . ' , $ %**.

- Place a plus sign (+) in front of each word that must appear in the results. For example, if you enter **+briefing +notes +record**, the search tool will find all pages that have all three words in them. Note that the three words may not necessarily be adjacent to each other, but they will be in the same page.

- Place a minus sign (-) in front of words that you do not want to appear in the results. For example, if you enter **+briefing +notes -record**, the search tool will find all pages that have the words "briefing" and "notes" but not "record."

- Exclude common words (**a**, **an**, **the**, etc.) from your search terms; these words are not part of the search index.

Storing Files

Each module has three different kinds of activities.

- **Interactive activities**, where you complete a task within the course module using your web browser. You can complete these activities as many times as you like. They are not saved.

- **Reflections File activities**, where you complete a task in preparation for your module assignment. You must save these reflections files on your computer.

- **Module assignments**, which you complete when you have worked through the module. You must save the module assignments and upload them to Moodle so that your tutor can review them and provide you with feedback.

For Reflections File activities and module assignments, you will need to save your work somewhere safe. We recommend that, for each module, you create new folders in your personal folder system, one labeled *Reflections* and one labeled *Assignments*. You can then store all of your work as you progress through the module. Remember to save the assignments with tutor comments for future reference from Moodle to your computer's hard drive.

Moodle: The Virtual Learning Environment

You and your tutor will communicate with each other through the online course environment called Moodle. Go to http://www.col-vle.org, log in, and use the e-mail function to contact your tutor. (You will have been provided a temporary password to this site via regular e-mail by the Commonwealth of Learning administration.)

This is the area where you will submit all your assignments. Your tutor will review your assignments and return them here as well. Remember to take some time to familiarize yourself with this environment.

A few related guides for working in Moodle are provided here:

- Mastering Moodle
- Moodle Information Sheet
- How to Upload Your Assignments into Moodle

These guides are also available in the Resources Section of Moodle. Please refer to them whenever necessary.

If you still have questions, please consult your personal tutor via e-mail in Moodle.

Technical Requirements

This course is designed to work on all Bank ED5 desktops. If you are using another computer, you'll need the following to play this CD-ROM correctly:

- A World Wide Web browser (Internet Explorer 5 or greater, or Mozilla Firefox version 6 or greater), with Javascript enabled
- Adobe Flash Player
- Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Screen size setting of 1024 x 768 pixels recommended

If you have technical difficulties, please check first with your local IT specialist before contacting COL.

Installing Adobe Flash Player and Adobe Reader

If you are using an ED5 desktop and cannot view the flash activities or PDF documents, you will have to contact your IT department to upgrade **Adobe Flash Player** and **Adobe Reader** on your computer.

If you are using a computer other than an ED5 desktop, you may need to install **Adobe Flash Player** and **Adobe Reader**. There is no need to worry about this: it is a very simple process that can easily be accomplished by following the instructions on the download pages at the Adobe web site.

Get Adobe Reader	Get Adobe Flash Player

If you do not have a live connection to the Internet, you can install Adobe Flash Player and Adobe Reader from this CD-ROM.

Acknowledgments

Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is the only international intergovernmental agency that focuses exclusively on using technology to expand the scope and scale of human learning. It operates on the premise that knowledge is the key to individual freedom and to cultural, social, and economic development.

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The Acting Chairman of the Board of Governors is His Excellency, the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, O.J. Jamaican High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. COL's President and Chief Executive Officer is Professor Asha Kanwar. The project manager for *Writing E-mails and Letters* is Ms. Angela Kwan, COL Learning Manager, International Organizations.

www.col.org

World Bank Trainers

This course was produced in close consultation with former and current trainers in the World Bank's Communications Skills Program: Barbara Thomas, Brenda Barbour, Diane Ullius, Meredith Griggs, Susan O'Shaughnessy, Sylvia Van Ziegert, and Patricia Beckmann.

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