



# How can you plan effective e-mails and letters?

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## Introduction

Effective correspondence writing is not just about keeping your sentences short and using correct punctuation. It is about having a clear purpose for writing and then choosing and organizing your information with the reader in mind.

Good planning is essential to effective writing. The type of document you are writing will help you determine its purpose and the best way to start it. To select and organize the information you will include in your document, a useful approach is to imagine having a **dialogue with the reader**. The dialogue approach uses a question-and-answer format that will help you anticipate and meet your reader's needs.

Your assignment for this module will take you through the process of planning a document and then writing a first draft. You will complete a Reader Analysis and a Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet based on whether you are planning to write a responsive or an initiative document. As you work through this module, you will develop the components of your Dialogue Worksheet. You will then turn the components of your dialogue into a written document.

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### QUOTE



*"The main message has to be clear at the beginning."*

*—Country Director*

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to

- Distinguish between two types of correspondence: responsive and initiative.
- Assess a document's purpose, the reader's identity and needs, the main question that the correspondence will answer, and the main message.
- Plan a responsive and an initiative document by completing a Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet.
- Draft an e-mail, a letter, or a short document based on the information developed in the Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet.

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## Responsive and Initiative Correspondence

As you saw in Module 1, there are differences between e-mails and letters, including the typical reader, the format, and the level of formality. In addition, there are also differences *within* each type of correspondence. One major difference has to do with whether the correspondence is responsive or initiative. In fact, one of the writer's first tasks is to determine whether a particular e-mail or letter responds to a request from the reader or initiates a discussion.

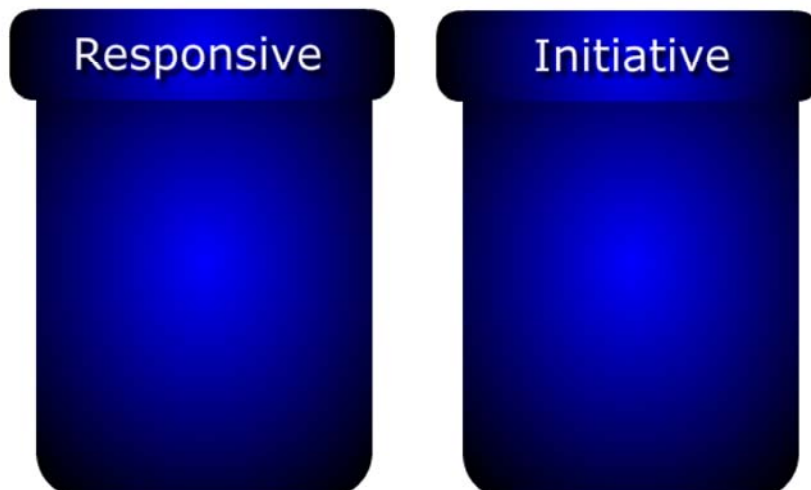
In **responsive** correspondence, you are writing in response to a previous request. An example of a responsive document is when you reply to an e-mail you received. You let the reader know right away that you are responding to the reader's previous request.

In **initiative** correspondence, you are raising a new topic or a new question — one that the reader and you have not previously communicated about. You are initiating the topic or question. The reader may or may not be expecting this document from you. Whether the document is expected or not, you must introduce it in a way that clearly indicates that it is an initiative document.

## Comparing Responsive and Initiative Correspondence

The activity below illustrates the difference between the two types of correspondence. For this activity, you will assemble a table that contains distinguishing features of both responsive and initiative documents. Use your mouse to drag the features into the proper category, either responsive or initiative.

Writer is initiating the dialogue.	May be written on behalf of someone else (supervisor or colleague)—if the reader has asked that person for something.	Writer may be reacting to a situation, but there has been no specific request from the reader.
Reader has started the dialogue; writer is responding.	May be written on behalf of someone else (typically a supervisor), but the reader is not expecting it.	Reader has asked writer to do something; reader is expecting the document as a response.
Document must begin with a reminder to the reader.	Document should usually begin with a bit of context.	Reader is not expecting the document.
Writer is writing in response to a specific request from the reader.		



## Opening Responsive Correspondence

Knowing whether you are writing a responsive or initiative document will determine how you begin. In particular, a responsive document should begin with a responsive reminder — a statement that acknowledges the original request.

This reminder helps you capture interest and prepare the reader for your message. Consider these typical responsive reminders:

- As you requested, I have [investigated the printers].
- I'm writing in reply to your memo of ...
- Thank you for your letter of February 15 ...

**Note:** In an e-mail reply message, it is not always necessary to add a responsive reminder. Because the subject line contains the abbreviation "Re:," it is clear that the document is a responsive e-mail.

## Identifying Responsive Reminders

In the activity below you will see a list of various openings for correspondence documents. Select the ones that belong to responsive documents.

As you asked, I am sending ...	Attached is the ABC I promised to send you.	I'm just writing to let you know that ...
There are some items of importance that I would like to take up with you ...	I am writing to request your assistance with ...	As I had anticipated, it seems that ...
I am writing in response to your request that ...	As you requested, I have ...	As I promised on the phone ...
Thank you for your suggestion that we ...	Please be informed that as of today ...	I have reviewed your concerns about ... in your e-mail of [date].
Enclosed are the XYZs you requested.	Ms. X asked me to respond to your question about ...	We appreciate your feedback on ABC and want to address some of your comments.
	As we discussed, ...	



## Opening Initiative Correspondence

As we have seen, you write an initiative document when the reader has not requested it from you. The reader is likely not even expecting to hear from you. This is what distinguishes the opening for initiative correspondence from the opening for responsive correspondence. While responsive correspondence must begin with a responsive reminder, initiative correspondence often begins with a brief statement of the context.

Like the responsive opening, an initiative document still must answer the reader's first question: "What is this document about?"

Whether the purpose is explicitly stated or not, the reader needs to understand it readily when reading the opening of the document.

Here are some examples of initiative openings:

- The fire department will be conducting tests in several of our buildings this week. This e-mail is to inform you of procedures to follow if you are affected by any of these tests. ...
- Given the department's requirements for data published on the web, I would like to recommend that our data publishing date be changed from the beginning to the end of every month. ...
- I am writing to request leave for the period July 1 to July 31 of this year. ...

## Identifying Responsive and Initiative Documents

Click to open each of the sample responsive and initiative documents below. Read each document and determine whether it is responsive or initiative. Using the marker tool provided, highlight the text that lets you know whether the document indicates a responsive or initiative purpose.

### SharePoint



*Sample: SharePoint*

From: Jamila Bouget  
Subject: **Using SharePoint for Contact Lists**  
Date: January 23, 2012  
To: IFC Business Improvement Unit Staff

As you may know, management of the IFC Business Improvement Unit (BIU) has agreed to use SharePoint as the new medium to organize its contact lists. The transition of BIU contact lists from Excel to SharePoint is currently under way and should be completed by the end of February 2012. The purpose of this document is to explain how our unit will benefit from SharePoint and to describe how to use it. SharePoint offers several benefits and requires three easy steps to use.

#### **What is SharePoint?**

SharePoint is a web-based collaboration tool. It combines the main functionalities of Access and Excel with the easy access of a webpage.

#### **How will BIU benefit from SharePoint?**

Using SharePoint will help to simplify our processes and improve our unit's effectiveness. SharePoint provides a number of unique advantages over Excel: it can organize information better, it is easier to use, and it is easier to maintain.

#### *Organizes information better than Excel*

SharePoint can organize information better than Excel in two ways. First, SharePoint allows users to group information in one location. Because contact lists are important information that the unit needs in order to operate, it is better to have these lists in one location. The lists contain crucial information on country partners, coordinating agencies, donors, the board of directors, etc. Currently, these lists are kept in different Excel sheets/files and saved on different locations on the shared drive (the N drive). This process is unnecessarily complicated and often leads to staff using an outdated version of a list — an error we cannot afford to make. Second, SharePoint eliminates duplicates of contacts between lists, something that is almost impossible to do in Excel.

#### *Easier to use*

SharePoint is easier to use than Excel because it combines the functionalities of Access and Excel. It allows users to use Access features for database functions and Excel features for spreadsheet functions.

#### *Easier to maintain*

SharePoint is easier than Excel to maintain because the information is stored in one central, web-based location. The person responsible for maintaining SharePoint only needs to go to this central location to make updates.

#### **How do we use SharePoint?**

To use SharePoint, follow these three simple steps:

1. Log on to the BIU SharePoint main page (see link here).
2. Click on the appropriate database link.
3. Select the view needed.

#### **What do I do if I have questions?**

If you have further questions, please contact Jamila Bouget at 3-abcd or xyz@worldbank.org.

- Initiative  
 Responsive

Check Answers

Reset

## Identifying Responsive and Initiative Documents

Click to open each of the sample responsive and initiative documents below. Read each document and determine whether it is responsive or initiative. Using the marker tool provided, highlight the text that lets you know whether the document indicates a responsive or initiative purpose.

### Printer



*Sample: Printer*

From: Siobhan Khan  
Subject: Evaluation of Printers; Recommendation for Purchase of Tektronix Phaser 780  
Date: December 14, 20xx 4:12 p.m.  
To: Jin Park

Hello Jin,

As you requested, I have investigated three Xerox printers for our division's high volume production of reports for both internal and external distribution: Tektronix Phaser 780, WorkCenter XD130df, and DocuPrint N2125. (Brochures on these printers and several others are attached.)

I recommend that we purchase the Tektronix Phaser 780 based on our present and future office requirements as measured by the four main criteria discussed at our recent meeting: type, speed, paper size, and cost.

Printer	Type	Speed	Paper Size	Cost
Tektronix Phaser 780	Tabloid color laser printer	16 ppm black 4 ppm color	Letter, legal, A3, A4, A5, B4, B5, tabloid (extra and plus)	\$5,000
WorkCenter XD130df	Digital color copier/ printer	13 ppm copy 8 ppm print First copy-out time, 9.4 seconds	Letter, legal, executive	\$4,000
DocuPrint N2125	Network black and-white laser printer	21 ppm	Letter, legal, folio, executive, statement, A4, A5, A6, B5, custom, envelopes	\$3,000

As you can see, the Tektronix Phaser 780 meets our requirements for three criteria (type, speed, and paper size), whereas the other two meet only two criteria, either type and speed (WorkCenter) or speed and paper size (DocuPrint). The Tektronix will allow us to print both in color as well as in black and white; the laser quality is standard for Bank printers; and the paper size gives us the variety necessary to produce materials to fit international metric standards. Although the initial cost is higher for the Tektronix, the options available ensure that we will not have to purchase a second printer in the near future.

I'd be happy to move forward with purchasing the Tektronix if you agree.

Best regards,  
Siobhan

- Initiative  
 Responsive

Check Answers

Reset

## Identifying Responsive and Initiative Documents

Click to open each of the sample responsive and initiative documents below. Read each document and determine whether it is responsive or initiative. Using the marker tool provided, highlight the text that lets you know whether the document indicates a responsive or initiative purpose.

### Dow Jones(revised)



*Sample: Dow Jones (revised)*

From: Margaret Mathibe  
Date: January 27, 20xx 2:56 p.m.  
Subject: Resolution of Dow Jones Account: Billing and Ad Placement Problems  
To: Joy Wilmot

Hi Joy,

As you know, for some time we have been having problems with the billing on our Dow Jones account; consequently, we have had trouble placing ads. This is to advise you of how these problems are being resolved, through suggestions I have made and through additional steps taken by Dow Jones.

I made two suggestions to the service representative, Rachelle Lovelady, and the account representative, Roberta Greene, when I met with them in mid-December:

- Dow Jones could assign a separate account number for each of the departments/divisions of the Bank.
- Each department or division from the Bank could be required to indicate its respective purchase order numbers, account numbers, and contact person each time it places an ad.

Dow Jones has accepted these suggestions and is taking additional steps, according to Debra de Sevo, the Supervisor for Credit and Collection. When I spoke with her last week, she informed me that Dow Jones has already assigned separate account numbers and has informed everyone concerned. She has gone even further by instructing her accounting staff to take two additional steps:

- They will put a flag on our division's account. This will entitle us to a \$10,000 revolving credit.
- They will indicate "General Services Department, Material Management Division, Room L4-500" on all of our division's billing statements. This will aid in sorting out the advertising bill for the Bank.

I will let you know if any problems arise from these new procedures. In the meantime, you might want to update Amsale Belaye on them.

Thanks,  
Margaret

- Initiative  
 Responsive

Check Answers

Reset

## Identifying Responsive and Initiative Documents

Click to open each of the sample responsive and initiative documents below. Read each document and determine whether it is responsive or initiative. Using the marker tool provided, highlight the text that lets you know whether the document indicates a responsive or initiative purpose.

### XYZ Letter

*Sample: XYZ Letter*

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Acting Director  
Division of Educational Policy and Planning  
UNESCO  
Place de Fontenoy  
75 Paris - 7e  
75007 France

Re: Mali, EC/MLI/EP/OO1: Project Architect

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your letter of February 4, 20xx with enclosures. As previously requested by you, I am returning you herewith the technical terms of reference of Messrs. X, Y, and Z, applicants for the post of project architect for the Mali education project.

Since there was no further information on Mr. X's availability, we understand that he cannot meet our requirements.

Mr. Z's experience in contract administration and procurement, detailed in the enclosure to your letter, appears satisfactory to us. Therefore, we can now accept him as an applicant for the post of project architect for the Mali education project. Also, as you were advised by A. Magnen and myself, we have not yet received a decision from the Malian authorities on their preselection of consultants for the staffing of the project unit.

Sincerely yours,  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name & Title)

- Initiative  
 Responsive

Check Answers

Reset

## Closing Responsive and Initiative Documents

The purpose of a closing is to bring your document to an appropriate conclusion. You do not want your reader to wonder what to do next or end on a note of uncertainty. In a closing, you might suggest next steps, summarize agreements, restate the main message, thank the reader, offer further help, or suggest action.

Whether your document is responsive or initiative, how you close depends on your purpose. If there is an action that you are requesting the reader to take, you must say so. Similarly, if there is a deadline, you must include it in the closing.

Closings may also depend upon the tone of the document or the relationship you have with your readers. For example, if you are writing a very informal e-mail to someone you work with all the time, you may not need to write a closing.

Here are some examples of effective closings:

- I have additional information for anyone who is interested.
- Send your questions to [X] through [A].
- I'd be happy to move forward with purchasing the Tektronix if you agree.
- I will let you know if any problems arise from these new procedures. In the meantime, you might want to update Amsale Belaye on them.

## Identifying Closings

Read the list of statements below. Select the ones that are most likely to be used as closing statements of documents.

I hope you will not be surprised by my recommendations to extend the deadline ...

So that we may close our books on this matter, please let us hear from you by [X date].

If you concur, I would appreciate your expediting the purchase by ...

I will be away next week. If you have other questions, please contact ABC at ...

Again, thank you for your suggestions. I am looking forward to working with you on this project.

In addition to the issues already stated, you might also want to consider ...

Please update ABC on what we have discussed. OR I will update ABC on what we have discussed.

Enclosed you will find the statement of purchase that you requested.

If you could let me know what you think by [X date], I would be grateful.

I hope I have answered your questions. If not, please call me at ...

If I do not hear otherwise from you by [X date], I will proceed as outlined above.

We believe that these three clear benefits make XYZ the right choice. We hope you will agree.

I will let you know if any problems arise from these new procedures.

Send your questions to [X] through [A].

Thank you for your e-mail of August 10 in which you stated ...

I have additional information for anyone who is interested.

There are many issues of importance for you to consider.

## Closing Statements

0 of 12

## Openings and Closings: Reflective Activity

Review your own correspondence for examples of documents. Can you find any other examples of openings and closings? If so, take a moment to jot them down.

### REFLECTION



### Reflection 3: Openings and Closings



## Planning Responsive and Initiative Correspondence

Once you have determined whether you are going to write a responsive or an initiative document, the next step is to create a letter or e-mail that will fulfill your purpose and answer your reader's questions. How? You will begin by planning — imagining the components of your document as questions and answers in an imagined face-to-face dialogue with the reader.

Only after this planning process should you begin to draft and revise your document.

The next section of this module takes you through the planning process in detail. You will use a planning document — the Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet — where you fill in the details of your imagined dialogue. Filling in this planning worksheet helps you to formalize your thinking and ensures that all the pertinent details for your correspondence are captured before you start drafting. This makes the drafting process easier and more effective.

Open the blank Dialogue Worksheets below; you should refer to these as you work through the next few activities. The next section of the module outlines the content you will fill in for Section 1, at the top of the worksheets. Read through this section of the worksheets, and then review the information on the writer's purpose and the reader on the following pages. You will be returning to the same worksheets later in the module and using them with your assignment.

[Responsive Dialogue Worksheet](#)



[Initiative Dialogue Worksheet](#)



### The Writer's Purpose

The first step in planning an effective document is to identify your purpose for writing. Your purpose explains why you are writing the document. It also addresses the first questions readers will ask: "What is this document about? Do I need to read it? Must I read it now, or can it wait until later?"

In your document, you may state the purpose directly, or you may find that the purpose is already clearly conveyed in other parts of the document (for example, in the subject line of an e-mail or in the main message of a short document). Whether you state it or imply it, the purpose must be clear to the reader within the first few moments of reading.

In your Dialogue Worksheet, you should state your purpose as "to" plus a verb. Your purpose should explain what you want to accomplish by writing this piece of correspondence.

Here are some examples, which all use the "to + verb" format:

- **To request** leave in January
- **To inform** department members of recent changes to the procedure for processing travel reimbursements
- **To schedule** a meeting with all staff members next week
- **To update** the department on the status of the procurement department's budget situation

### The Reader

When planning your correspondence as a dialogue with the reader, you should try to anticipate your reader's needs or questions. By doing this, you are more likely to provide the information that your reader needs. You will also be more likely to organize that information into a sequence that makes sense to the reader.

You have already considered the reader's first question: "What is this document about?" This question usually results in an answer that tells the reader whether the document is responsive or initiative.

One way to discover your reader's needs is to conduct a **Reader Analysis** by considering factors such as your reader's background knowledge, available time, and likely reaction to the topic discussed in your document.

Conducting a reader analysis helps you to anticipate your reader's needs as you plan your correspondence. This is a key part of the planning process for all writing.

## Conduct a Reader Analysis

Consider the following examples, which illustrate the process of reader analysis. As you answer the questions below, you should notice how thinking about the reader can help you to plan a document.

When you are planning a document, you can answer these questions in the Reader Analysis to clarify what you know about your reader. You can then use the information from this process to fill in the relevant details about your reader in your Dialogue Worksheet.

Initiative example: Written communication ▼

<b>Scenario</b> <i>You have been involved in several projects in the past few months where some miscommunications and time line difficulties have occurred, causing much unneeded tension among colleagues. As a result of this experience, you have noticed quite a lot of wasted energy in establishing consistent styles for correspondence within the department. Also, a few weeks ago you had lunch with a colleague who complained about how she had been criticized for using British spelling in all her correspondence. At an all-staff meeting recently, everyone was encouraged to come up with bright ideas for increasing transparency and efficiency at the Bank. You realize that a set of guidelines for written communication in your department might alleviate some of these problems and increase efficiency.</i>	
Given what you know from the scenario, what will be your purpose in writing the document?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>To recommend that we create a set of guidelines for written communication in the department</b>
What type of correspondence will you be writing?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Initiative e-mail</b>
Who are your primary readers for this document?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Your manager</b>
Are there any other readers?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Not at this point</b>
How much information does your reader already have about this topic?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Your manager might be aware of some difficulties in the department, but has not necessarily recognized that this is related to the issue of communication guidelines.</b>
Are there reasons why your reader might disagree with your comments? What changes might persuade your reader to consider your message more favorably?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Staff members have been encouraged to come up with bright ideas. You are presenting one.</b>
How much time will your reader have to read the document?  <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="text" value=""/> <b>Not known</b>

## Conduct a Reader Analysis

Consider the following examples, which illustrate the process of reader analysis. As you answer the questions below, you should notice how thinking about the reader can help you to plan a document.

When you are planning a document, you can answer these questions in the Reader Analysis to clarify what you know about your reader. You can then use the information from this process to fill in the relevant details about your reader in your Dialogue Worksheet.

Responsive example: Security issues ▼

<b>Scenario</b>	
<p><i>Your supervisor, Marie-Noelle, held a meeting last week with her staff to confront the issue of materials and equipment disappearing from the office over the past six months. She would like to take action on this problem immediately, and in the meeting she asked you to talk to someone from Security to find out what can be done. Marie-Noelle has been careful not to attribute blame to anyone, but she is concerned that many of the missing items were in locked cabinets. She has asked for some information by next week. Although she will be away from her office then, she will be checking her e-mail daily.</i></p>	
<p>Given what you know from the scenario, what will be your purpose in writing the document?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>To respond to Marie-Noelle's request for information on security measures</b></p>
<p>What type of document will you be writing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>Responsive e-mail. E-mail is the most convenient given Marie-Noelle's travel situation.</b></p>
<p>Who are your primary readers for this document?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>Marie-Noelle, your supervisor</b></p>
<p>Are there any other readers?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>Your contact from the Security office may possibly receive a copy. There may be future correspondence to all staff about security measures, but for now this e-mail message is primarily for Marie-Noelle only.</b></p>
<p>How much background does your primary reader have?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>M-N is aware of the situation as she has directed the action. The Security contact will have spoken with you before receiving the e-mail, as you will be describing to M-N the outcomes of that meeting.</b></p>
<p>Will your primary reader's likely reaction to the topic influence his or her response to the message?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>M-N is anxious to resolve this issue quickly and efficiently.</b></p>
<p>How much time will your reader have to read the document?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Submit"/></p>	<p><input type="text" value=""/></p> <p><b>M-N may not be able to read the message thoroughly as she will be away from the office.</b></p>

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## The Reader's Main Question

Up to this point, you have considered your purpose in writing a document and you have analyzed your reader. Now it is time to think about expanding your dialogue with the reader in order to determine your main message and the content of your correspondence.

As you have already learned, for both responsive and initiative documents, your reader's first question will be "What is this about?" In other words, "What are you recommending, requesting, or informing me of?" In initiative documents, this is the reader's main question.

In responsive documents, you will answer this first question ("What is this about?") with a responsive reminder, which refers to the reader's original request and makes clear the purpose of your document. But then the reader has another question: "What is your response to my original request?" This is the reader's main question for a responsive document.

Anticipating the reader's main question is crucial to setting the right direction for your document. You must anticipate this question and answer it appropriately, so that the reader can easily understand what you want.

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## The Main Message

Once you are clear about your purpose and have anticipated the reader's main question, the next step in the dialogue is to formulate a clear answer to that main question. This answer is known as **the main message**, and it is crucial to the meaning of any document.

Your main message must be clearly stated near the beginning of the document. In e-mails, letters, and short documents, this usually means within the first paragraph or at least at the beginning of the second.

- **In responsive documents**, your main message quickly follows your responsive reminder. In effect, you are telling your reader that you have responded to their request (purpose) and now you are providing an answer (main message).
- **In initiative documents**, your main message is presented first or after a brief statement of context.

By providing the main message up front, you provide a service for busy readers by providing an overview at the beginning of the document that tells them what they need to know. After stating the main message, the dialogue then goes on to anticipate and answer all of the reader's likely next questions. You will have a chance to practice anticipating and answering your reader's questions later on in the module.

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## Recognizing the Main Message

When planning a document, you must establish a clear relationship between your purpose, the reader’s main question, and the main message. These three elements are distinct from each other, but they must be linked together to provide coherence.

### The Main Message in the Dialogue with the Reader

1. Focus My Thoughts		
<b>Purpose</b> (Why am I writing?)	To [recommend, request, inform, or other verb]...	
	<b>Example 1</b> To recommend changes to two measures for assessing project effectiveness...	<b>Example 2</b> To inform you of ACS staffing requirements in the unit for the coming year...
2. Plan the Document		
<b>Reader’s Main Question</b> What is this about?	<b>Your Answer</b> (This sentence summarizes what you are recommending, requesting, or informing the reader of; it should reflect the purpose, but not necessarily in the same words. In a responsive document, it responds to the reader’s original request.)	
( <b>Example 1:</b> What changes are you recommending?)	<b>Example 1 Main Message:</b> I recommend that we change the first two measures so that they reflect work completed instead of work that is still in progress.	
( <b>Example 2:</b> What staffing requirements are you informing me of?)		<b>Example 2 Main Message:</b> The overall number of ACS staff will remain the same; however, since I am retiring in December, the unit will need to find a new office manager.

## Identifying the Main Message

In this activity, you will see how a main message makes its way from a dialogue with the reader to a finished document. When you apply this practice to your own writing, keep the following principles about the main message in mind:

- It must reflect the writer's purpose.
- It must answer the reader's main question.
- It should provoke further questions from the reader.
- It must be a complete sentence — or perhaps two sentences.

Read each of the following extracts. Only the first part of the document appears, but it should be enough for you to identify the main message from a list of choices.

### Sample 1: Status of Possible Employment

#### Sample 1: Status of Possible Employment

**Mr. Giles Dupont**  
**6673 Duke St. Apt. 203**  
**Falls Church, Virginia 22034**

Dear Mr. Dupont,

I am writing to update you on the status of your employment.

Main message goes here.

This is a most regrettable situation. However, the department has a senior research officer position that is still open, and you appear to qualify for this position ...

Choose a main message from the choices below (click on a choice):

There have been many changes over the past several months, and the department's budget has been severely cut back recently.

Management announced significant budget cuts last week; therefore, unfortunately the finance department is not in a position to employ you as an economist after your graduation as originally planned.

I have determined a variety of alternatives for employment seeking strategies that I intend to distribute to all interns and temporary staff within the coming weeks.

Submit

Reset

## Identifying the Main Message

In this activity, you will see how a main message makes its way from a dialogue with the reader to a finished document. When you apply this practice to your own writing, keep the following principles about the main message in mind:

- It must reflect the writer's purpose.
- It must answer the reader's main question.
- It should provoke further questions from the reader.
- It must be a complete sentence — or perhaps two sentences.

Read each of the following extracts. Only the first part of the document appears, but it should be enough for you to identify the main message from a list of choices.

### Sample 2: Request for Date Change

#### Sample 2: Request for date change

**To:** shartwell@worldbank.org  
**Cc:** samadou@worldbank.org  
**From:** Fiona Burdek on behalf of Segolene Charpantier

**Subject:** Request to change date of travel to Angola

Dear Dr. Hartwell,

I'm writing in response to your e-mail this morning requesting that the date of your mission to Angola scheduled for November 21-23 be changed to the end of November or early December.

Main message goes here.

This change has a number of repercussions that you must address immediately in order for your new travel arrangements to go through successfully. They include ...

Choose a main message from the choices below (click on a choice):

The project organizers determined this date based on the needs of all participants, but they have had complaints about it from other parties as well.

You have adequately explained your situation as regards your scheduling conflict, and I have forwarded your message to my manager for review.

We are able to revise the date of your travel period to December 1-3.

Submit

Reset

## Identifying the Main Message

In this activity, you will see how a main message makes its way from a dialogue with the reader to a finished document. When you apply this practice to your own writing, keep the following principles about the main message in mind:

- It must reflect the writer's purpose.
- It must answer the reader's main question.
- It should provoke further questions from the reader.
- It must be a complete sentence — or perhaps two sentences.

Read each of the following extracts. Only the first part of the document appears, but it should be enough for you to identify the main message from a list of choices.

### Sample 3: Farewell Party

#### Sample 3: Farewell party

**From: Terry Turner**

**Subject: Farewell party for Marianne, Thursday August 10 at 5:30 – need help!**

**Dear all,**

**As you may know, our friend and colleague Marianne is leaving the Bank after three years of excellent work in our unit. I think it would be nice of us to throw her a farewell party to let her know how much we appreciate her and to wish her all the best.**

**Main message goes here.**

**Here is what I'm planning ...**

**Choose a main message from the choices below (click on a choice):**

Marianne is not only leaving the Bank but she is also leaving the country, so this will be our last chance to see her before she leaves.

This gave me an idea that we should institute regularly scheduled special events, maybe up to one per month, for those in the unit who are leaving, having birthdays, having babies, or having any cause for a celebration.

I'm willing to do the organizing (some ideas are below), but I'm also asking for your help in getting everything prepared in time.

**Submit**

**Reset**



## Effective Writing and Correspondence

Now, let's combine what you know about responsive and initiative documents with what you know about good writing in general. Do you remember those [core assumptions about effective writing from Module 1](#)? Both responsive and initiative documents should exhibit the general characteristics of a good e-mail or letter:

### Good organization

- The purpose must be clear.
- The main message must be stated explicitly.
- Information must be arranged logically.

### Reader focus




- The subject line (if any) should be informative.
- Responsive documents must have a responsive reminder.

### Good mechanics

- Mechanics (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) must be correct.
- Visual elements (such as bullets and headings) must emphasize or make obvious the logical structure of a document.

## Analyzing Responsive and Initiative Documents

You have already seen the documents that you are going to review for this activity. However, this time you are going to analyze them more critically. For each document, use the checklist provided below to help with your analysis.

	<u>SharePoint</u> 	<u>Printer</u> 	<u>Dow Jones (revised)</u> 
<b>Question</b>			
<b>Reader focus</b>			
Does the document have an informative subject line (if used)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the subject line indicates that the document includes information on using SharePoint and that this will cover a specific use.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the subject line includes the key elements of evaluating printers and making a recommendation.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes. However, the first paragraph is not parallel with the subject line. The two main ideas in the text (problems and resolution) are presented in reverse order from the subject line.</i>
If responsive, does it have a responsive reminder?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Not a responsive document</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes: "As you requested ..."</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Not a responsive document</i>
<b>Good organization</b>			
Is the purpose clear?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the purpose is stated in the first paragraph: "The purpose of this document is to explain ..."</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Although the purpose is not explicitly stated in this e-mail, it is implied by the subject line.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the writer states the purpose: "This is to advise you ..."</i>
Is the main message explicitly stated?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the main message is stated right after the purpose statement: "SharePoint offers several benefits and requires three easy steps to use."</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the main message is stated in the first sentence of the second paragraph: "I recommend that we purchase the Tektronix Phaser 780..."</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes. <b>Note:</b> In this case, the purpose statement is embedded in the main message: "This is to advise you of how these problems are being resolved..."</i>
Is the information logically arranged?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, sections and paragraphs answer specific questions readers may have in a logical sequence, and are clearly marked by headings and topic sentences.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, paragraphs are clearly marked and follow a logical sequence.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, apart from the reversal of information from the subject line to the first paragraph, the information does flow logically from the main message.</i>
<b>Good mechanics</b>			
Is the document visually appealing and appropriate?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the document uses two levels of headings to clearly show readers where to find the answers to their questions.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the writer uses a table to make the comparison of printers more visually apparent.</i>	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <i>Yes, the writer uses short paragraphs and bulleted lists to make information visually distinctive.</i>
Are the mechanics correct (spelling,	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

grammar, and punctuation)?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
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## Extending the Dialogue

The dialogue with the reader does not work to identify the main message only; you can also use it to plan your entire document. You will find that a good main message directs the next questions in the dialogue. For example, suppose you are writing an e-mail message in response to a request about your training needs for the next year. If your main message is "I need training in French and Excel over the next year," you can expect your reader to want to know more about why you have chosen these two subjects. Your answers to these next questions, in turn, will form the body of your message. Have a look at how these questions would appear in a dialogue with the reader.

### The Dialogue with Further Questions

1. Focus My Thoughts		
<b>Purpose</b> (Why am I writing?)	To [recommend, request, inform, or other verb]...	
	<b>Training Needs (responsive)</b>  To respond to the reader's original request (i.e., to <u>outline what training you need over the next year</u> )	<b>E-mail Overload Problems (initiative)</b>  To advise staff to archive e-mail messages to avoid e-mail overload problems
2. Plan the Document		
<b>Reader's Main Question</b> What is this about?	<b>Your Answer</b> (This sentence summarizes what you are recommending, requesting, or informing the reader of; it should reflect the purpose, but not necessarily in the same words. In a responsive document, it responds to the reader's original request.)	
<b>Training Needs:</b> What is your response to my original request? (What training do you need over the next year?) (responsive)	<b>Training Needs Main Message:</b> I need training in French and Excel over the next year.	
<b>Email Overload:</b> What is this about? (What are you recommending, requesting, or informing me of?) (initiative)		<b>Email Overload Main Message:</b> E-mail overload is creating server problems in the Bank, so we are asking staff to archive older messages.
<b>Reader's Next Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>Training Needs</b>  1. Why do you need training in French? 2. Why do you need training in Excel?  (The reader will likely have other questions as well. But these are the two that arise directly from the main message.)	(Answers here respond to the next questions and develop the next level of detail in your document.)	
<b>E-mail Overload</b>  1. What is the nature of the server problems? 2. How do I archive older messages?		

## Alignment in a Dialogue

Your main message and the next questions that you anticipate of your reader should generally follow the same pattern. This creates a logic that makes your message easier to follow. Such a pattern is known as alignment.

As in the examples you encountered on the previous screen, a strong main message should prompt obvious subsequent questions. These questions should be aligned with the main message. For example, if the main message is "I need training in French and Excel," then your subsequent questions should come in the order of French first and Excel second. The paragraphs of your e-mail would likewise follow this same order.

Using alignment in this way meets your readers' expectations and is an excellent organizing strategy.

## Analyze a Dialogue with the Reader

Consider the scenarios about the security issue and the recommendation for written communication guidelines that you looked at earlier. Suppose that it was your responsibility to draft some correspondence related to both scenarios. (One document is a response to a request; the other is written on your own initiative.) How do you think a completed dialogue worksheet would look in each case?

Click on the links below to compare how the dialogue relates to the final document.

[Responsive example](#)

### Responsive document

	Reader dialogue	Final document
<b>1. Focus My Thoughts</b>		
<b>Purpose</b>	To respond to the reader's original request	DATE: February X, 20XX TO: Marie-Noelle Leclerc FROM: Sunil Chandry <b>SUBJECT: Suggested New Security Measures for Our Office</b>
<b>Reader</b>	Marie-Noelle, Supervisor	Hello Ms Leclerc,
<b>Reader's Original Request</b>	Would you speak with Security and find out what we can do about the materials that have been disappearing?	As you requested, I have spoken with the Security office to find out what can be done about the materials that have been disappearing recently. Mr. M_____ suggested some things for us to do, and he promised more support from Security as well.
<b>2. Plan the Document</b>		
<b>1 Reader's Questions</b>	<b>My Answers</b>	Because all of the materials have disappeared from file cabinets and storage areas that have locks, Mr. M_____ suggested three things we should do regarding the locks:
<b>2 What is this about?</b>	<i>(Responsive reminder statement: This sentence reminds the reader of the original request.)</i> You asked me to speak with Security and find out what can be done about materials disappearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We should have the locks changed. I have information on how to get that done.</li> <li>We will need to keep a log of everyone who receives keys, and we will need to get the keys back whenever someone stops working in this unit. Perhaps Kim L_____ could take charge of that log.</li> <li>Of course, we will need to make sure that we actually lock things up at the end of the day or whenever we will not be here.</li> </ul>
<b>3 What is your response [to my original request]?</b>	<i>(Main message: This sentence responds to the reader's original request.)</i> Mr. M. says there are things we should do and things Security will do.	The Security office will help, too. Specifically, Mr. M_____ promised that Security will check during evening patrols to make sure that the file cabinets and storage area are locked. As a result of this conversation, Security will now start evening patrols in this area at 5:00 p.m. instead of at 6:00 p.m.
<b>Reader's next questions:</b> <i>(Fill in questions arising from main message)</i>		I think that these steps should take care of the problems we have been having. Once I have your approval, I will take care of getting the locks changed.
<b>4 1. What should we do?</b>	1. Three things: change locks; keep log (Kim); lock up daily.	Thanks, Sunil
<b>5 2. What will they do?</b>	2. Two things: check files and storage on rounds; start patrol at 5:00 p.m.	
<b>Closing</b>		
<b>6 Follow-up action required? Need any other closing?</b>	I need your approval, and then I'll get the locks changed.	

## Analyze a Dialogue with the Reader

Consider the scenarios about the security issue and the recommendation for written communication guidelines that you looked at earlier. Suppose that it was your responsibility to draft some correspondence related to both scenarios. (One document is a response to a request; the other is written on your own initiative.) How do you think a completed dialogue worksheet would look in each case?

Click on the links below to compare how the dialogue relates to the final document.

[Initiative example](#)

### Initiative document

Reader dialogue		Final document
<p><b>1. Focus My Thoughts</b></p> <p><b>1 Purpose</b> (Why am I writing?)</p> <p><b>Reader</b></p>		<p><b>7</b></p> <p>FROM: Soledad Gomez, Program Assistant SUBJECT: <b>Recommendation to Design Written Communication Guidelines</b> DATE: February 2, 20xx 9:47 a.m. TO: Angela Iqbal, Manager</p> <p>Hello Angela,</p> <p>Given the Bank's increasing emphasis on transparency and productivity, some members of our departmental staff seem to need help with their writing. To address this need, I am writing to recommend we design written communication guidelines for the department. We would benefit in many ways, at minimal cost; I have outlined below a process we could follow.</p> <p><b>Benefits of Written Communication Guidelines</b> The benefits of producing these guidelines would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of staff time in writing and, thus, higher productivity</li> <li>• Consistency of standards and style in letters and memos</li> <li>• Improved transparency and readability of correspondence</li> <li>• Better communication and less misunderstanding among staff</li> <li>• Appreciation throughout the organization for providing a workable model</li> </ul> <p><b>Production Costs</b> The cost of producing a set of guidelines would be about \$5,000. This would cover two phases: (1) hiring a consultant to develop reference guidelines based on current international standards for business correspondence and (2) putting the guidelines on our intranet website.</p> <p><b>Steps in Process</b> Here are the steps I believe we would need to take, in this order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Select a consultant.</li> <li>2. Provide reference materials and list of staff members who have agreed to provide information through interviews.</li> <li>3. Select team to review guidelines and give feedback.</li> <li>4. Train staff to use guidelines in daily correspondence.</li> </ol> <p><b>Next Steps</b> Please consider this recommendation and call me if you have any questions or need more information. If you agree, I hope you will authorize me to initiate and oversee the process.</p> <p>Best regards, Soledad</p>
<p>To recommend designing written communication guidelines.</p> <p>My manager</p>		
<p><b>2. Plan the Document</b></p> <p><b>Reader's Main Question</b></p>		
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>What is this about? (What are you recommending, requesting, or informing me of?)</b></p> <p><b>Reader's next questions:</b> (Fill in questions arising from main message.)</p>		
<p><b>My Answers</b></p> <p>(Note: You may need to include some brief context before the main message.)</p> <p>(Main message: This sentence summarizes what you are recommending, requesting, or informing the reader of; it should reflect the purpose, but not necessarily in the same words.)</p>		
<p>I recommend we design written communication guidelines for the department. We would benefit in many ways, at minimal cost.</p>		
<p>1. What are the benefits?</p> <p>2. What will it cost?</p> <p>3. What steps would we need to take?</p>		
<p>1. Five benefits: reduction of staff time, consistency of standards, improved readability, less misunderstanding, appreciation for workable model</p> <p>2. About \$5,000 for the two phases: hiring a consultant to develop; putting standards on website</p> <p>3. [Detail the steps.]</p>		
<p><b>6 Closing</b></p> <p><b>Follow-up action required? Need any other closing?</b></p>		
<p>Consider; call me for information; authorize me to initiate and oversee.</p>		

## Critique Reader Dialogues

Click to open the sample dialogue worksheets below. For each one, read through the worksheet and assess its effectiveness. Look for a clear purpose, an explicit main message, logical next questions, and an appropriate closing.

**Sample 1:**  
**Employment Inquiry**

### Responsive Dialogue Worksheet: Sample 1

#### 1. Focus My Thoughts

**Purpose**  
(Why am I writing?) To respond to the reader's original request

**Reader** Graduate student inquiring about employment possibilities

**Relevant facts about reader related to content** [Examples: very busy; appreciates brevity; familiar with technical terms and acronyms]

**Reader's original request** How can I get a job at the World Bank?

#### 2. Plan the Document

##### Reader's Questions

##### My Answers

**What is this about?** *(Responsive reminder statement: This sentence reminds the reader of the original request.)*  
I'm responding to your inquiry about employment prospects at the World Bank.

**Reader's Main Question: What is your response [to my original request]?** *(Main message: This sentence responds to the reader's original request.)*  
There are a number of resources that you can consult to help with your job search for positions at the Bank, provided you meet eligibility requirements.

##### Reader's Next Questions: (Fill in questions arising from main message)

1. What are the resources?

1. Website postings, internships, consultant database.

2. What are the eligibility requirements?

2. Usually a graduate degree and several years of experience in the field, international experience is highly desired.

3. How can I strengthen my eligibility?

3. Get international experience elsewhere.

**(Follow-up action required? Need any other closing?)** *[Follow-up action or other closing]*  
Thank you for your interest.

Your notes on this document:

**Show comments**

## Critique Reader Dialogues

Click to open the sample dialogue worksheets below. For each one, read through the worksheet and assess its effectiveness. Look for a clear purpose, an explicit main message, logical next questions, and an appropriate closing.

[Sample 2:  
Printer Evaluation](#)

### Responsive Dialogue Worksheet: Sample 2

#### 1. Focus My Thoughts

<b>Purpose</b> (Why am I writing?)	<u>To respond to the reader's original request</u>
<b>Reader</b>	<u>Division Manager</u>
<b>Relevant facts about the reader related to content</b>	<u>[Examples: very busy; appreciates brevity; familiar with technical terms and acronyms]</u>
<b>Reader's Original Request</b>	<u>Would you evaluate printers and make a recommendation for our division?</u>

#### 2. Plan the Document

Reader's Questions	My Answers
<b>What is this about?</b>	<i>(Responsive reminder statement: This sentence reminds the reader of the original request.)</i> <u>[Examples: You asked me to... or As we discussed ...]</u>  <u>As you requested, I have investigated three Xerox printers: Tektronix, Work Center, and DocuPrint.</u>

<b>Reader's Main Question:</b> <b>What is your response [to my original request]?</b>	<i>(Main message: This sentence responds to the reader's original request.)</i> <u>I found many positive things about these printers.</u>
--	--

Reader's next questions: (Fill in questions arising from main message.)	My Answers
1. <u>What criteria did you analyze?</u>	1. <u>Type, paper size, and cost.</u>
2. <u>How does each printer measure up?</u>	2. <u>[Box with details, comparing the printers]</u>
3. <u>Why the Tektronix?</u>	3. <u>It has the best options, even though it's more expensive. We won't have to buy a second one anytime soon.</u>

<b>Closing</b>	<u>[Follow-up action or other closing]</u>
----------------	--

<b>Follow-up action required?</b> <b>Need other closing?</b>	<u>Have a good weekend!</u>
---	-----------------------------

Your notes on this document:

**Show comments**

## Practice with the Process

Now it's time for you to practice the planning process, from the first rough idea, through the dialogue with the reader, and finally to drafting an e-mail message.

**Scenario:** The administrative officer has asked you to send her an e-mail outlining the training you think you need in the next fiscal year. As you walk to work, you find yourself imagining a conversation with the administrative officer about your training needs — perhaps when you meet her in the elevator.

Before thinking about the writing process, imagine the spoken conversation you might have. Your side of the conversation is provided: predict the questions the administrative officer will ask.

<b>You say:</b>	<i>I wanted to talk to you about something.</i>
<b>Administrator's first question:</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 300px; margin: 0 auto;"> <input type="text"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> </div> <p>What did you want to talk to me about?</p>
<b>Your response:</b>	<i>It's about the memo you sent, concerning training needs for the upcoming year.</i>
<b>Administrator's main question:</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 300px; margin: 0 auto;"> <input type="text"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> </div> <p>What are your training needs for the coming year?</p>
<b>Your response: (Main Message)</b>	<i>I need training in French and in Excel.</i>
<b>Administrator's next question:</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 300px; margin: 0 auto;"> <input type="text"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> </div> <p>Why French?</p>
<b>Your response:</b>	<i>It has become more important in our unit. I speak it, but I don't write very well. We are working more and more with counterparts who speak only French. Even more important, some of our meetings are being conducted in French, and my supervisor would like me to be able to take minutes.</i>
<b>Administrator's next question:</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; width: 300px; margin: 0 auto;"> <input type="text"/> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> </div> <p>And Excel?</p>
<b>Your response:</b>	<i>We're using Excel to keep track of the details of Project Y. There are many tricks in Excel that I don't know, so I am not as efficient at keeping my part up-to-date as I could be. We have agreed that Excel is the best program for the task.</i>
<b>Administrator's response:</b>	Thanks for telling me all this! I'll get back to you later with more questions about costs and so on.



## Dialogue with the Reader: A Planning Document

With the imagined conversation from the previous screen fresh in your mind, complete a Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet to plan an e-mail that would be appropriate in this situation. Remember, it will be a responsive e-mail, since the administrative officer began the conversation by asking you to submit your training needs.

Complete the Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet now.

### Dialogue with the Reader


1. Focus my thoughts	
<b>Purpose</b> (Why am I writing?)	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> To respond to the reader's original request
<b>Reader</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> Administrative officer
<b>Reader's Original Request</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> What are your training needs for the upcoming fiscal year?
2. Plan the Document	
<i>Reader's Questions</i>	<i>My Answers</i>
<b>What is this about?</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> (Responsive reminder statement: This sentence reminds the reader of the original request.) [Examples: You asked me to ... or As we discussed ...] You asked me to outline my training needs for the upcoming fiscal year.
<b>What is your response [to my original request]?</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/> ( <b>Main message:</b> This sentence responds to the reader's original request.) I need training in French language and Excel.
<b>Reader's next questions:</b> (Fill in questions arising from main message.)	
<b>1. Why do you need French language training?</b>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the amount of work in the unit with people who speak only French.</li> <li>• I need to take minutes at some of our meetings, which are held only in French (supervisor's request).</li> <li>• I want to improve written skills (spoken French is better).</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Why do you need Excel training?</b></p>	<div data-bbox="781 352 1284 495" style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 68px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div data-bbox="987 499 1078 527" style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;">Submit</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For record-keeping in Project Y.</li> <li>• I need to learn the tricks to using the program so I can update my records more efficiently</li> <li>• Team agrees it is the best program for the task.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Closing</b> <b>Follow-up action required? Need any other closing?</b></p>	<div data-bbox="781 716 1284 789" style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 35px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div data-bbox="987 793 1078 821" style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;">Submit</div> <p>Let me know if you have questions.</p>

## From Planning to Drafting: Write the E-mail Message

Now review the completed dialogue worksheet and write a draft based on it. Click the link below to begin.

[Planning for E-mail:  
Dialogue Worksheet](#)



Compare your draft with the suggested response. Your e-mail will not be identical, of course, but it should cover the same main points.

[Planning for E-mail:  
Suggested Response](#)



## Assignment 2: Planned and Drafted Documents

Your assignment will consist of **two** planned and drafted documents. You will submit four files in total to your tutor for review: both planning documents and both final correspondence documents.

Choose two documents from your job that you are planning to write. At least one of the two documents should be an e-mail message; the other can be an e-mail message or a short document. You will need to follow the conventions for each of these types of documents in your assignment.

One of the documents that you plan and draft will be a *responsive* e-mail message; the other will be an *initiative* document. (Decide for yourself whether this will be a short document or an e-mail.) For each document, you should do the following:

- Complete a [Reader Analysis Form](#). This will help you to reflect on your reader's needs and to prepare the Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet. Do not submit the reader analysis to your tutor; it is just a tool for you to use in planning.
- Complete a Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet. Each worksheet should include at least two additional reader questions (shown on the worksheet as "Reader's Next Questions") after the main message.
  - [Responsive Worksheet](#)
  - [Initiative Worksheet](#)
- Write the document based on your plan in the dialogue worksheet.
- Note: Your e-mail or short document should be at least three paragraphs long.

When you have completed your planning and drafting for both documents, upload the following four Word files to the Assignment 2 section in [Moodle](#):

- Responsive Worksheet
- Responsive E-mail
- Initiative Worksheet
- Initiative Document (either an e-mail or a short document)

Your tutor will provide feedback on the overall effectiveness of your planning worksheets and your documents. You may be asked to revise and resubmit any part of the assignment based on this feedback.

## Resources and Documents

### Working Documents

- [Reflection 3: Openings and Closings](#)
- [Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet: Initiative](#)
- [Dialogue with the Reader Worksheet: Responsive](#)
- [Reader Analysis Form](#)

## Summary

Keeping in mind our core assumptions about effective writing — good organization, reader focus, good mechanics — you should be able to plan and draft a well-written letter, e-mail, or short document based on a dialogue with your reader.

The first step of planning is to determine whether you are writing a responsive or an initiative document. That is, did the reader ask for something (responsive), or are you starting the dialogue (initiative)?

From there, you can continue planning with a reader analysis and then a dialogue with your reader. Using the appropriate Dialogue Worksheet, you will do the following:

- Determine your purpose.
- Consider the reader's main question.
- Answer the main question in your main message.
- Anticipate the next questions that your reader will have after reading the main message, and sketch out your answers to those questions.
- Plan how to close your e-mail, letter, or short document.

As you draft your document, work from the plan you created in your Dialogue Worksheet. Pay attention to the particular standards for e-mails or letters, especially the format and the opening and closing of your document. Be sure to position your main message near the beginning of your document — in the first paragraph or at the beginning of the second.