

**Chapter 1**

Succeeding in Business Communication

Table of Contents

[Description of the Chapter 2](#_Toc516579214)

[Essentials to Cover 3](#_Toc516579215)

[Motivating Learners to Develop Business Communication Skills 5](#_Toc516579216)

[Stress Sections of Chapter 5](#_Toc516579217)

[Remind Them of the Variety of Writing Styles 5](#_Toc516579218)

[Share Actual Documents 5](#_Toc516579219)

[Connect 6](#_Toc516579220)

[Application Exercises 6](#_Toc516579221)

[Determining Costs of Poor Communication 6](#_Toc516579222)

[Stale Cookies 7](#_Toc516579223)

[Communicating Lab Results 8](#_Toc516579224)

[Chapter 1 Quiz 8](#_Toc516579225)

[Chapter 1 Test Bank 8](#_Toc516579226)

[LearnSmart Achieve® 8](#_Toc516579227)

[Grammar and Common Sentence Problems & Punctuation and Mechanics 9](#_Toc516579228)

[SmartBook® 9](#_Toc516579229)

[Answers and Analysis for End-of-Chapter Exercises and Cases 9](#_Toc516579230)

[1.1 Reviewing the Chapter 9](#_Toc516579231)

[1.2 Assessing Your Punctuation and Grammar Skills 11](#_Toc516579232)

[1.3 Messages for Discussion I—Asking for a Class 12](#_Toc516579233)

[1.4 Messages for Discussion II—Responding to Rumors 13](#_Toc516579234)

[1.5 Discussing Communication Barriers 14](#_Toc516579235)

[1.6 Identifying Poor Communicators 14](#_Toc516579236)

[1.7 Identifying Changing Conventions 14](#_Toc516579237)

[1.8 Understanding the Role of Communication in Your Organization 14](#_Toc516579238)

[1.9 Protecting Privacy Online 15](#_Toc516579239)

[1.10 Making Ethical Choices 15](#_Toc516579240)

[1.11 Analyzing Business Ethics 15](#_Toc516579241)

[1.12 Introducing Yourself to Your Collaborative Writing Group 16](#_Toc516579242)

[1.13 Describing Your Writing Experiences and Goals 16](#_Toc516579243)

[Exercise Planning Table 17](#_Toc516579244)

[PPT Lecture Outline 18](#_Toc516579245)

[Lesson Plan Ideas 19](#_Toc516579246)

[“Cocktail Party” 19](#_Toc516579247)

[Introduction Interview 19](#_Toc516579248)

[Identifying and Discussing Documents Used in Organizations 19](#_Toc516579249)

[Learning to Evaluate Documents 20](#_Toc516579250)

[Identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of Sample Messages 20](#_Toc516579251)

[Discussing Ways to Build Goodwill 21](#_Toc516579252)

[Discussing Conventions for Good Email Messages 21](#_Toc516579253)

[Demonstrating Communication Problem Solving 21](#_Toc516579254)

[Question of the Day 21](#_Toc516579255)

# Description of the Chapter

This chapter is the foundational chapter and should motivate learners to improve their communication skills. The chapter offers an overview of communication in organizations, discusses the costs of poor communication, stresses benefits of improving communication and using technology to communicate, outlines criteria for effective messages, introduces the importance of following conventions, explains why ethics is so important in business communication, explains how corporate culture affects the business environment, and demonstrates how to analyze and solve business communication problems.

The learning objectives include:

* LO 1-1 What the benefits of good communication are.
* LO 1-2 Why you need to be able to communicate well.
* LO 1-3 What the costs of communication are.
* LO 1-4 What the costs of poor communication are.
* LO 1-5 What the basic criteria for effective messages are.
* LO 1-6 What role conventions play in business communication.
* LO 1-7 Why ethics are so important in business communication.
* LO 1-8 How corporate culture affects the business environment.
* LO 1-9 How to solve business communication problems.

# Essentials to Cover

**LO 1-1 What the benefits of good communication are.**

Communication helps organizations and the people in them achieve their goals. People put things in writing to create a record, convey complex data, make things convenient for the reader, save money, convey their own message more effectively, and increase their own value in the workplace.

**LO 1-2 Why you need to be able to communicate well.**

The understanding that people need to communicate effectively. People need to communicate to internal and external audiences using a variety of methods and genres.

The three basic purposes of communication are to inform, to request or persuade, and to build goodwill. Most messages have multiple purposes.

The ability to write and speak well becomes increasingly important as people rise in an organization.

**LO 1-3 What the costs of communication are.**

Common communication costs include writing time, document cycling, printing, mailing, and electronic storage of emails.

**LO 1-4 What the costs of poor communication are.**

Poor writing wastes time, wastes effort, and jeopardizes goodwill at multiple levels, all of which cost money. In addition, poor communication of all types can lead to legal troubles for individuals and organizations.

**LO 1-5 What the basic criteria for effective messages are.**

Good business and administrative writing meets five criteria: clear; complete; correct; saves the receiver’s time; and builds goodwill.

**LO 1-6 What role conventions play in business communication.**

Common business communications have conventions, as do organizations. Business communicators need to know how to understand and analyze business communication situations to be able to adjust conventions to best fit a particular audience, purpose, and context.

To evaluate a specific document, learners must know the interactions among writer, the reader(s), the purposes of the message, and the content. No single set of words will work for all readers in all situations.

To understand business communication situations, learners should ask the following questions:

* What’s at stake—to whom?
* Should you send a message?
* What channel should you use?
* What should you say?
* How should you say it?

The following process helps create effective messages:

* Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions.
* Answer the five questions for analysis in Figure 1.6.
* Organize the information to fit the audiences, the purposes, and the context.
* Make the document visually inviting.
* Revise the draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
* Use responses to plan future messages.

**LO 1-7 Why ethics are so important in business communication.**

Ethics concerns are a major part of the business environment. Ethics breaches can cost companies loss of goodwill and millions of dollars. Even smaller ethics breaches like misuse of company time, abusive behavior, company resource abuse, discrimination, and conflicts of interest cost goodwill and money. Positive ethical efforts, including ethical communication, help companies and their bottom lines in significant ways.

**LO 1-8 How corporate culture affects the business environment.**

Corporate cultures vary widely. They range from formal—with individual offices, jackets, and hierarchical lines of communication—to informal—with open office space, casual attire, and individually empowered workers. A strong influence on the business environment, effective communicators can readily navigate across corporate cultures.

**LO 1-9 How to solve business communication problems.**

Business communication problems require solutions that will both solve the organization problem and meet the needs of the people involved. The following process helps to solve business communication problems:

* Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions.
* Answer the five questions for analysis in Figure 1.6.
* Organize information to fit the audiences, the purposes, and the context.
* Make the document visually inviting.
* Revise the draft for standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar; double-check names and numbers.
* Revise the draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
* Edit the draft for standard English; double-check names and numbers.
* Use responses to plan future messages.

The **Lesson Plan Ideas** section offers several different ways to approach this material.

# Motivating Learners to Develop Business Communication Skills

The chapter is straightforward to teach. If you are teaching learners who are currently working in business or professional situations you will probably not need to convince them that business communication skills are important. Learners tend to have difficulty primarily when they resist taking the course, either because they do not believe writing and communication will be important to their careers or because they have already had other writing courses. There are several things that can to done to motivate learners to develop their communication skills.

## Stress Sections of Chapter

You can stress sections in Chapter 1 that discuss how important writing is to career advancement by illustrating ways that business and professional writing differs from other kinds of writing. Encourage learners to share their work experiences, share your own work examples, and pull examples of business communication from the news, whether that communication helped or adversely affected business.

## Remind Them of the Variety of Writing Styles

You can also make clear that learners will have to alter their writing style to do well in this course. For example, if you’re teaching at a university, the writing that learners have done in other courses will likely not be effective in business communications. Whether it’s first-year composition or a history or a biology course, the learners’ main purpose was to display knowledge to their instructor. The documents were also likely formatted in double-spaced APA, Chicago, or MLA style. In this course, you, the instructor, will not be the learners’ primary audience and the documents will be formatted to look like they would in the workplace. Learners will respond to communication situations that have larger implications for the business world.

## Share Actual Documents

We have found that learners benefit from seeing actual business documents early in the course and having immediate experiences writing. Bring in examples, or have your learners bring in examples of professional documents that you can analyze together with your learners. Ask them to identify purposes, audiences, and contexts of the documents. Moreover, to help them come to terms with the different demands of writing in a business setting, consider giving some short writing exercises for which you give feedback but not a letter grade. Starting in this way can give learners a solid foundation on which to build for the rest of the semester.

Note that examples of miscommunication having negative effects on business are sometimes more memorable than positive examples.

# Connect

Connect® Business Communication allows you to enhance the skills of students, and prepare them for the networked world using the latest proven-effective adaptive resources. It offers assignable, auto-graded activities proven to increase test scores, retention rates, and attendance.

Each chapter is available in SmartBook® format and includes LearnSmart Achieve®. In addition, there are numerous chapter-specific activities available in Connect. Activities include a chapter quiz, a Test Bank, and a variety of Application Exercises, containing matching, multiple-choice, and ranking questions; case analysis exercises; and video cases. Below are a list of available assets and suggestions for incorporating them into your course.

## Application Exercises

### ***Determining Costs of Poor Communication***

*LO: 1-3, 1-4*

*AACSB: Communication*

*Blooms: Understand*

*Difficulty Level: Medium*

This matching exercise helps learners recognize different ways that poor communication can cost them and their organization. The **Determining** **Costs of Poor Communication** activity is helpful if your learners are skeptical about the need to develop or hone their communication skills.

**Use as quiz** after the reading:

* Assign Chapter 1 for study.
* Assign **Determining** **Costs of Poor Communication** as a quiz on the reading.

**Use as review** after lecture and discussion:

* Give brief lecture on the benefits of effective communication and the costs of poor communication. (PPT slides 1.4–1.11).
  + Follow with small group discussion. Ask learner to share at least one experience interacting with a poor communicator and explain the effects of that communication. Gather together as a large group, ask each group to share at least one experience and effect, and write down the effects on the board as learners share. Make sure to include a discussion of what the effects of poor communication could be in the workplace (if it didn’t come up in the small group discussions).
* Assign **Determining** **Costs of Poor Communication** as homework.
* Transition to how to ensure communications are effective (PPT slide 1.12). Ask each group to choose one example and revise that example to follow the basic criteria for effective messages.

**Use as a precursor to a class discussion** about miscommunication causing companies to lose customers, respect, lawsuits, or all of the above:

* Assign **Determining** **Costs of Poor Communication** as a quiz on the reading or review of previous class period.
* Bring recent news example(s) of miscommunication causing companies to lose customers, respect, lawsuits, or other to class. Ask small groups to discuss what the miscommunication was, its effects, and how the communication could have been improved. *[The more recent the examples you can find, the more relevant learners will find the concepts and discussions.]*

### ***Stale Cookies***

*LO: 1-5, 1-9*

*AACSB: Communication*

*Blooms: Apply*

*Difficulty Level: Hard*

This case analysis exercise with multiple-choice questions demonstrates learners’ ability to apply the learning outcomes from Chapter 1 that focus on crafting effective business messages, using conventions appropriately, and considering the context in which they’re communicating.

**Use as quiz** at the end of all activities coming from Chapter 1.

**Use as review** after lecture and discussion:

* Provide lecture on crafting effective business messages, using conventions, and understanding situations (PPT slides 1.12–1.14).
  + Follow with small group discussion. Ask learners to complete exercise **1.3 Messages for Discussion I—Asking for a Class** or **1.4 Message for Discussion II—Responding to Rumors**. Gather together as a large group and ask each group to share their responses. As you review, make sure to connect points back to the basic criteria, the importance of following conventions, and understanding the communication context.
* Assign **Stale Cookies** as homework.

**Use as a precursor** to a workshop or drafting day:

* **Stale Cookies** would work well before a computer lab day where you’ll ask learners to start drafting their own message. The class could refer the criteria for effective messages and the process for solving business communication messages before beginning their own work.

### ***Communicating Lab Results***

*LO: 1-7*

*AACSB: Communication*

*Blooms: Understand; Apply*

*Difficulty Level: Easy–Medium*

This case analysis exercise with multiple-choice questions demonstrates learners’ ability to identify the thinking process needed for analyzing and addressing issues of potential ethics breaches. This assignment asks only about the thinking process and does not ask learners to discuss what is ethical or unethical, nor does the assignment ask learners what they would do in the scenario.

**Use as quiz** at the end of all activities coming from Chapter 1.

**Use as review** after lecture and discussion:

* Provide lecture on analyzing potential ethics breaches and responding to communication problems (PPT slides 1.15–1.17).
  + Follow with small group discussion. Ask them to complete an activity like exercises **1.9** **Protecting Privacy Online, 1.10 Making Ethical Choices**, or **1.11 Analyzing Business Ethics**. Gather together as a large group and ask each group to share their responses. As you review, make sure to connect points back to the content from the PPTs and be aware that answers will vary depending on learners’ perspectives.
* Assign **Communicating Lab Results** as homework.

## Chapter 1 Quiz

The multiple-choice quiz tests learners’ understanding of the chapter’s content.

## Chapter 1 Test Bank

The question bank utilizes true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions to thoroughly test the learners’ understanding of the chapter’s content.

## LearnSmart Achieve®

LearnSmart Achieve® develops and improves editing and business writing skills. This adaptive learning system helps students learn faster, study more efficiently, and retain more knowledge for greater success.

### ***Grammar and Common Sentence Problems & Punctuation and Mechanics***

Grammar and punctuation rules are sets of accepted rules for how words are assembled to create meaning, and our learners need to know those rules to be successful communicators. Whether it’s right or wrong, fair or unfair, the quality of our learner’s grammar and punctuation knowledge can affect how they and their messages are perceived.

## SmartBook®

SmartBook® is the first and only adaptive reading experience designed to change the way students read and learn.

# Answers and Analysis for End-of-Chapter Exercises and Cases

Answers for the end-of-chapter exercises and cases in Chapter 1 are given below.

## 1.1 Reviewing the Chapter

LO: 1-1–1-7

Difficulty Level: Easy

General answers are provided below. Ideally, we want learners to be able to relate these ideas to specific instances to show that they understand and can apply the concepts.

1. Why do businesses need to be able to communicate well? (LO 1-1)

Communication helps organizations and the people in them achieve their goals. People put things in writing to create a record, convey complex data, make things convenient for the reader, save money, and convey their own messages more effectively. In addition, employees with effective communication skills are highly valued.

1. Why do you need to be able to communicate well? (LO 1-1)

Employers rely on their employees to communicate with internal and external audiences to get work done. Employees spend a great deal of time, if not most, writing and speaking in the workplace. Being a good communicator will increase your chances for raises and promotions.

1. What are some flawed assumptions about workplace communication? What is the reality for each myth? (LO 1-2)

**Myth:** “An administrative assistant will do all of my writing.”

**Reality:** Because of automation and restructuring, job responsibilities in offices have changed. Today, many offices do not have typing pools. Most secretaries have become administrative assistants with their own complex tasks such as training, research, and database management for several managers. Managers are likely to take care of their own writing, data entry, and phone calls.

**Myth:** “I’ll use form letters or templates when I need to write.”

**Reality:** Form letters only cover routine situations, many of which are computerized or outsourced. The higher learners rise, the more frequently they’ll face situations that aren’t routine and demand creative solutions.

**Myth:** “I’m being hired as an accountant, not a writer.”

**Reality:** Almost every entry-level professional or managerial job requires you to write email messages, speak to small teams, write documents, and present your work for annual reviews. Workers who do these things well are likely to be promoted beyond the entry level.

**Myth:** “I’ll just pick up the phone.”

**Reality:** Important phone calls require follow-up letters, memos, or email messages. People in organizations put information in writing to make themselves visible, create a record, convey complex data, make things convenient for the reader, save money, and convey their own messages more effectively.

1. What are the costs of communication? (LO 1-3)

Some costs can include writing time, document cycling, printing, mailing, and electronic storage/servers (as well as administering and maintaining them).

1. What are the costs of poor communication? (LO 1-4)

Some costs can include wasted time, wasted effort, jeopardizing goodwill, and legal problems

1. What are the basic criteria for effective messages? (LO 1-5)

Good business and administrative writing meets five basic criteria: it’s clear, complete, correct, builds goodwill, and saves the reader’s time.

1. What role do conventions play in business communication? (LO 1-6)

Conventions help people recognize, produce, and interpret different kinds of communication. All business documents follow some conventions. However, the key to conventions is that they always need to be adjusted to fit the rhetorical situation—audience, context, and purpose.

1. What are some positive ethical efforts that are getting attention? (LO 1-7)

Responses to this question will be varied and depend on individuals’ worldview. The responses could be also contentious—consider Dick’s Sporting Goods’ recent decision to stop selling AR-15 assault weapons or Delta’s decision to cut ties with the NRA—but result in rich conversations about ethics, goodwill, and multiple audiences.

1. What are some ethical components of communication? (LO 1-7)

There are several ethical components of communication:

* Include all the information an audience needs. If the communicator needs the audience to make a decision, then the message needs to have all the information that the audience needs to make that decision.
* Use expressions that the audience will understand. An example of professional communication from medicine would be a physician explaining a complicated medical diagnosis at the knowledge-level of the audience.
* Use a format that helps the audience understand a message quickly. Documents need overall design and fonts that aid reader comprehension.
* Include information for all levels of audience.
* Accurately paraphrase and summarize material from other sources.
* Accurately document material from other sources.

1. What are some elements of corporate culture? How do they affect business? (LO 1-8)

Some elements of corporate culture are office space, dress codes, hierarchy, work arrangements, profit sharing, information sharing, training, health insurance, and wellness programs. Individuals might have some additional options.

Responses about how they affect business will vary greatly, but make sure the responses can explain how exactly something like health insurance would affect a company.

1. What are the components of a good problem-solving method for business communication opportunities? (LO 1-9)

* Gather knowledge and brainstorm solution
* Use the analysis questions in Figure 1.6 to analyze the audience, purpose, and situation.
* Organize the information to fit the audiences, contexts, and purposes.
* Make the document visually inviting.
* Revise the draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
* Edit the draft for standard English; double-check names and numbers.
* Uses responses to plan future messages.

## 1.2 Assessing Your Punctuation and Grammar Skills

LO: 1-2, 1-6

Difficulty Level: Easy to Hard (depending on learners’ knowledge)

The answers to the Diagnostic Test, B.1, from Appendix B can be found in the Appendix B Instructor’s Manual file.

## 1.3 Messages for Discussion I—Asking for a Class

LO: 1-1, 1-5, 1-6

Difficulty Level: Medium

Message 1

* Salutation is too informal. The message is to a professional that the writer does not know personally.
* Message lacks you-attitude.
* Message lacks goodwill by stating the learner didn’t take it last year “cuz I really didn’t want to.”
* There is no incentive for the audience to act on the message.
* Grammar and spelling need to be improved.

Message 2

* The salutation is better than the first message, but still not effective enough.
* The writer blames other people instead of the learner taking responsibility.
* The tone is too informal overall.
* The writer dismisses their program and the audience’s expertise (“I shouldn’t have to take this class anyway, but whatever”).
* The writer is too demanding.
* There is no incentive for the audience to act on the message.
* The message lacks you-attitude. The emphasis is on the writer not the reader.

Message 3

* The salutation is good.
* The tone is much better than the previous two.
* The learner takes responsibility and politely asks to be put on a waiting list in case a seat opens, something that the instructor can do without adding to their workload (reflects understanding of audience needs, values, and attitudes).
* The learner builds goodwill by stating their interest in the course.
* The closing is professional by thanking the reader for her time.

Message 4

* The salutation is good.
* The spelling and grammar need attention and lose goodwill for the writer in the current state.
* The tone is too informal.
* The writer seems to be uninformed and offers little reason for the reader to act.
* The writer doesn’t explain his need for taking this course.
* The closing is insincere and not appropriate.

## 1.4 Messages for Discussion II—Responding to Rumors

LO: 1-1

Difficulty Level: Medium

Message 1

* The subject line is vague and overly positive (could be perceived as insincere).
* The first paragraph emphasizes the writer’s role, rather than stating what readers need and want to know: how they will be affected by the merger.
* The second paragraph contains negative references and blames readers for the rumors that are circulating.
* Even the last paragraph sheds no new light on the effects of the merger on employees. As a result, rumors are likely to increase rather than decrease.

Message 2

* This memo gives too little information.
* The subject line is not specific.
* The body of the memo offers no details to make “no layoffs” seem credible. For the rumors to stop employees must be reassured—by hard information from someone they trust—that their jobs are not in jeopardy.
* The writer dismisses rumors and implies blame on anyone not in HR.

Message 3

* The subject line does not inform readers.
* The first paragraph gives too many details too soon, de-emphasizing the main point: no layoffs. It’s unfriendly. Placing the supporting details in a second paragraph and omitting the sarcastic “if you do the math” would improve the message considerably.
* The second paragraph gives readers two reading assignments without explaining why or what employees are to derive from the assignments. The writer might have cited passages of Acme’s mission statement and goals to reinforce his no-layoffs message.

Message 4

* The subject line sets a negative tone for the message.
* The first paragraph has a harsh tone. It lacks information designed to reassure employees and quell rumors about layoffs.
* The second paragraph lacks you-attitude. It, belatedly, contains the main message: “. . . we won’t be laying off employees after the merger.” But the extremely negative, disrespectful tone makes the statement seem insincere. The paragraph shows ill will toward employees, rather than goodwill.
* The third paragraph continues to scold employees and undercut any trust between them and the writer.

Message 5

* The subject line is acceptable, though “Layoffs—the True Story” would be better in case the readers’ screen displays fewer than the 28 characters in this line.
* The first paragraph has an understanding, neutral tone, but since the main message (no plans to lay off any of our valued people) is positive, it should appear here instead of in the second paragraph.
* In the second paragraph, although the writer wants to reassure employees, “Have no fear!” is inappropriate. Much of this paragraph belongs in Paragraph 1. The writer could have increased you-attitude by writing himself out of the picture and by stressing that updates will appear in the newsletter and on the intranet at regular, predictable intervals.
* The third paragraph could be more positive and forward-looking. “Our people” is patronizing. And, the writer issued an open invitation to bombard him with all sorts of questions.

## 1.5 Discussing Communication Barriers

LO: 1-3

Difficulty Level: Easy

Discussions will vary by learner teams. However, the main objective is to get learners to begin considering the importance of communication in the workplace and how to overcome and deal with potential barriers.

## 1.6 Identifying Poor Communicators

LO: 1-4

Difficulty Level: Easy

Discussions will vary by the learners in each group and their unique experiences. The main objective is to get learners to learn from communication mistakes they’ve encountered in the past.

## 1.7 Identifying Changing Conventions

LO: 1-6

Difficulty Level: Medium

Discussions will vary by learner teams and their individual experiences. Nonetheless, try to have learners think about the ways technology has changed the conventions of the classroom or their workplace.

## 1.8 Understanding the Role of Communication in Your Organization

LO: 1-1

Difficulty Level: Medium

This exercise works well for learners with either part-time or full-time jobs. If your learners are not currently working, ask them to interview one of their professors or someone in their chosen career field.

Discuss the questions at some length before directing learners to begin. Most learners will need guidance on conducting an interview. Specifically, discuss what to do before, during, and after an interview (e.g., knowing purpose, setting up interview, organizing questions, bringing proper materials, writing a thank-you). If you discuss these steps ahead of time with learners, their interview experiences will be more fulfilling, and they won’t lose goodwill with their interviewees.

## 1.9 Protecting Privacy Online

LO: 1-7

Difficulty Level: Medium

Discussions will vary by learner teams and their individual perspectives and experiences. Nonetheless, try to have learners think about the ways technology has affected issues of privacy in the workplace.

The discussion may get contentious as learners discuss freedom of speech in the workplace and whether or not an employer has a right to curb freedom speech or how much authority an employer has to monitor employees’ time and efforts.

## 1.10 Making Ethical Choices

LO: 1-7

Difficulty Level: Medium

Discussions will vary by learner teams and their individual perspectives and experiences. Try to get learners to think about specific scenarios. For example:

* + Is it OK to take home office supplies for personal use if you work at a large company? A family-run business? Is there a difference? Why or why not?
  + Is it OK to update your personal LinkedIn site at work? What if you’re a salaried worker? Hired by the hour? Is there a difference? Why or why not?

Whenever possible, refer to recent examples from the news.

## 1.11 Analyzing Business Ethics

LO: 1-7

Difficulty Level: Medium

There will be some variety in learner responses depending on their perspectives.

Some responses will be Machiavellian in that “the end justifies the means” and they’ll perceive New Oriental as ethical. Others will see helping unprepared learners to get entrance into college as unethical. In addition, they see downloading test questions as plagiarism—if your institution has a formal plagiarism policy, check to see if downloading and sharing test questions falls under that policy. Not following rules (not flipping) is certainly cheating, but teaching tricks is more nebulous.

Hopefully the responses will consider the financial and time cost of unprepared learners taking courses for which they are not prepared. The discussion might venture into the purpose of a higher education, is it to learn and prepare or to get a degree?

The discussion of why American schools accept these learners may depend on the type of institution learners are familiar with and how institutions get funding. For example, state funded schools might be getting less funding from the state and need to rely more on tuition, and out-of-state and international learners typically pay more tuition.

The question of what could be done to make the situation more ethical will vary greatly.

## 1.12 Introducing Yourself to Your Collaborative Writing Group

LO: 1-2

Difficulty Level: Medium

This assignment can help you decide which learners to put together in teams; it can help learners in teams get to know each other more quickly and to identify similarities and differences in work styles before these cause conflicts.

On many campuses, most learners have worked in teams (in classes, on the job, in extracurricular activities), but they may not have a vocabulary for describing teams. You will get better memos if you allow some time for discussion. (Note: In discussion, you might refer to the common tasks and behaviors within teams without emphasizing or expecting learners to learn them. Tasks: starts discussion, seeks information and opinions, gives information and opinions, synthesizes, coordinates, evaluates, and summarizes. Positive behaviors: encourages participation, relieves tensions, checks feelings, solves interpersonal problems, and listens actively. Negative behaviors: blocking, dominating, clowning, overspeaking, and withdrawing.) Remind learners to be specific, perhaps giving examples to back up the adjectives they use. You may also consider combining this activity at the same time you have your learners read the chapter on teamwork.

## 1.13 Describing Your Writing Experiences and Goals

LO: 1-2

Difficulty Level: Medium

This assignment informs you about what your learners already know about writing and can help you plan the course.

Good writers tend to do well on this assignment, whereas mediocre writers have problems. They aren’t conscious of what they’ve been taught or of how their writing has been evaluated—they remember only the grade, not comments. They may not have enough awareness of labels or of the kinds of areas in which writing is evaluated to know what they see as strengths and weaknesses. However, even if their view of strengths and weaknesses is off, you may still want to know what they think and feel about themselves as writers.

# Exercise Planning Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Objective** | **Difficulty: Easy** | **Difficulty: Medium** | **Difficulty: Hard** |
| 1-1  What the benefits of good communication are. | 1.1.1, 1.3, 1.13 | 1.8 |  |
| 1-2  Why you need to be able to communicate well. | 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2 | 1.12, 1.13 |  |
| 1-3  What the costs of communication are. | 1.1.4, 1.5 |  |  |
| 1-4  What the costs of poor communication are. | 1.1.5, 1.6 |  |  |
| 1-5  What the basic criteria for effective messages are. | 1.1.6 | 1.3 |  |
| 1-6  What role conventions play in business communication. | 1.1.7 | 1.7 |  |
| 1-7  Why ethics are so important in business communication. | 1.1.8, 1.1.9 | 1.9, 1.10. 1.11 |  |
| 1-8  How corporate culture affects the business environment. | 1.1.10 |  |  |
| 1-9  How to solve business communication problems. | 1.1.11 |  |  |
| Exercises with multiple learning objectives | 1.1, 1.2 | 1.3 |  |

**In-class exercises:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7

**Out-of-class exercises:** 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13

**Best if you teach in a computer classroom:** 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13

# PPT Lecture Outline

PPT 1.1–1.3 The title slide and a list of the chapter’s learning objectives

PPT 1.4–1.5 The different forms of business communication and why it is important for their careers

PPT 1.6–1.11 The benefits of communication, internal and external audiences, and the costs of poor communication

PPT 1.12 The basic criteria for effective messages

PPT 1.13 Communication conventions

PPT 1.14 Questions to ask to analyze and understand business communication situations

PPT 1.15–1.18 Ethics and corporate culture

PPT 1.19–1.29 Strategies for how to solve business communication problems, including gathering knowledge, answers analysis questions, organizing information, making document visuals inviting, revising, editing, and using responses to plan future messages

PPT 1.30 Summary and question slide

# Lesson Plan Ideas

Most courses spend one to two hours on this material. Many of the issues and ideas raised in this chapter provide your learners with a context for the messages they will create throughout the course and motivation for spending time with the course material.

## **“Cocktail Party”**

*40–50 minutes for a class of 30 learners*

This activity works well anytime during the first week of class.

Because success in business requires the ability to relate to other people, you may want your learners to practice the social skills they will need in the business world and at the same time to build a sense of community in the classroom. Ask your learners to spend about 20 minutes meeting as many of their classmates as possible and learning at least one interesting characteristic about them. You may want to stay in the room and participate, or you may decide to leave the room so learners will become self-reliant as “host” or “hostess.” After 20 minutes, call on one learner and ask him or her to introduce someone to the rest of the class. Then that person introduces someone else, and so on until the entire class has been introduced. This exercise is particularly valuable if your learners will be working in collaborative teams.

## **Introduction Interview**

*20–30 minutes*

This activity works well anytime during the first week of class.

Ask your learners to interview a partner to learn biographical information. Ask them to learn at least one really interesting or unique thing about their partner. After 15*–*20 minutes, call everyone back together. Then, go around the room and have each learner report on what they learned about their partner until the entire class has been introduced. (Don’t forget to introduce yourself!) This exercise is particularly valuable if your learners will be working in collaborative teams. As an added bonus, the exercise helps you become familiar with individual learners and can be useful if you teach the job unit early in the semester.

## **Identifying and Discussing Documents Used in Organizations**

*25 minutes*

This topic could be discussed on the first day of class after you distribute course materials or it could be used to start day two.

Ask learners to brainstorm as a class about different kinds of business documents. If you prompt them to think about their own part-time or summer jobs, internships, or campus organizations, a class can usually fill a chalkboard in 15 minutes. Ask learners to classify the documents they have brainstormed according to audience—internal or external. Next, discuss the wide variety of communication types and identify the three basic purposes of business communication. Discuss purposes of several listed messages on the chalkboard to show that most messages have more than one purpose.

## **Learning to Evaluate Documents**

*30–40 minutes*

After learners become aware of the different business documents, they need to develop skills in evaluating them. Instead of starting with an introductory lecture that focuses on criteria, you might want to begin with a letter, memo, email, or other business document that contains obvious problems. At the first lull in the discussion, suggest better ways learners will learn in your course.

Discussing messages allows you to address the dissonance learners often see between your writing standards and the business writing they have seen from the workplace—people they respect who may be in positions to which they aspire. You can diffuse any tension by first acknowledging the realities of the situation before shifting your focus to teaching them how to bridge the gap between what they learn in class and what many existing corporate cultures assume is effective writing. Some points that may arise out of this discussion include:

* Lots of bad communication does exist in organizations.
* Because different kinds or genres of business communication exist, definitions of “good” and “bad” business communication differ from one document to another. It may be helpful to talk about communication as more or less effective.
* Different organizations with unique cultures may prefer different styles.
* Audiences should always influence the way messages are constructed.
* Until you are aware of the entire context in which a document is created and received, you cannot truly judge whether a message is successful.

## **Identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of Sample Messages**

*30–50 minutes*

Outline the evaluation criteria for effective messages from the textbook.

Then ask learners to summarize the situations in exercise 1.3 **Messages for Discussion I** and 1.4 **Messages for Discussion II**, to read each message aloud, and to identify what works or doesn’t work about each message. Reading the messages aloud refreshes people’s memories and produces better discussion, though it also means that the discussion takes longer. You can use this discussion to help learners become comfortable with the terminology of business communication. Throughout the discussion, stress terms like you-attitude, positive emphasis, tone, goodwill, etc.

## **Discussing Ways to Build Goodwill**

*10–15 minutes*

Brainstorm with learners how they could create and/or lose goodwill. Also, ask how they can maintain goodwill once they develop it. Once learners start to understand goodwill during the first few days of class, come back to the topic again before each major assignment throughout the rest of the semester. Tell them to always check to see if their communications build goodwill effectively.

## **Discussing Conventions for Good Email Messages**

*20–40 minutes*

Most learners are already familiar with email and will probably need little or no help in actually sending messages. Their familiarity with email can be a mixed blessing if learners use email only to communicate with friends. Such learners need to see early in the course that writing email in business is serious. All the principles that apply to paper business documents also apply to email. Writers of email messages need to pay special attention to conciseness and clarity.

If you teach in a computer environment or can take learners to a computer lab even once at the beginning of the semester, you can have them do a practical exercise that illustrates the common problems that occur when writing email in the workplace.

## **Demonstrating Communication Problem Solving**

*30–50 minutes*

When faced with a communication problem, learners naturally tend to begin drafting a message (merely reorganizing words in the textbook case), rather than analyzing the situation carefully first. Point out that in your course, situations will be analyzed first (often collaboratively). In fact, sometimes analysis may lead learners to conclude that a spoken or written message is unnecessary. Illustrate the analysis procedures from the textbook to be used; then choose and analyze a situation, such as the ones described in exercises 1.3 **Messages for Discussion I** or 1.4 **Messages for Discussion II**, and help learners generate ideas—a list of do’s and don’ts—for the message to address the situation.

# Question of the Day

To encourage learners to read assignments, you may want to begin the class period with a quick quiz question. Having a quiz question at the beginning of class also encourages learners to be on time and eliminates separate time needed to call roll. To save grading time, you can have learners switch papers and grade each other’s; this doubles the class time needed but saves your time later.

An appropriate question for Chapter 1:

**Question:** What five criteria should all business and administrative communication meet?

**Answer:** Good business and administrative writing is (1) clear, (2) complete, (3) correct, (4) saves the receiver’s time, and (5) builds goodwill.