Successful Business Writing (P_SBW26)
Online Learning Certificate Program
2026 Course List

12 Courses – 4.75 Hours

This program was developed by the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training for CSEA-represented NYS employees. Participants are required to complete all the following courses and achieve a passing grade of 70% or higher in each course. **We recommend you complete the courses in the order they appear below.**

1. Writing with a Professional Mindset (0.5 Hours)

In an era where written communication is pervasive, a professional mindset can set you apart and make you a valued asset in your organization. Writing professionally, clearly, lucidly, and concisely will help you align your written communication with the goals of your organization and demonstrate your competence and commitment to clear and effective communication.

In this course, you'll learn the essential aspects of effective professional communication and strategies to craft effective and professional written communication. You'll also learn how various channels of communication can be optimized for impactful professional writing, and explore best practices for improving your professional writing skills.

2. Creating Well-Constructed Sentences (0.4 Hours)

Syntax is the grammatical term for arranging words to create logical phrases, clauses, and sentences. Well-constructed sentences express an idea by using the parts of speech in a logical order, and are essential for effective business writing. A misplaced modifier might get a chuckle out of the reader, but it reflects poorly on your communication skills.

In this course, you'll learn some of the fundamentals for better writing – the parts of a sentence, such as the subject and predicate, as well as phrases and clauses. You'll examine subject-verb agreement, as well as agreement between pronouns and their antecedents. You'll also discover some techniques for writing well, such as how to identify and fix common types of sentence errors.

3. Using the Parts of Speech (0.3 Hours)

Effective business writing is one of the most important communication skills in the

workplace today. By writing well, using clear sentences and correct grammar, you can ensure your message is communicated to and understood by your intended audience. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true – poorly structured sentences can not only cause confusion, but may also damage your reputation. In this course, you'll learn about the fundamental elements for better writing – the parts of speech. These are the building blocks of sentences, so learning about them can help you skillfully combine words into meaningful sentences. This course describes the eight parts of speech and shows how to use them effectively and correctly.

4. Using Punctuation Marks (0.3 Hours)

Punctuation is the collection of marks used to separate sentences and their parts. Although appropriate punctuation is an undervalued part of your communication skills, it can make your business writing clear and less likely to be misinterpreted. In this course, you'll learn the standard rules and guidelines for using punctuation marks, including the correct use of periods, question marks, and exclamation points. You'll learn a crucial aspect of better writing that often causes much confusion – how to correctly use commas. The course includes rules for better writing such how to use different connecting and separating marks, like colons, semicolons, dashes, and hyphens. In addition, it shows how to properly use apostrophes, parentheses, brackets, and quotation marks.

5. Abbreviating, Capitalizing, and Using Numbers (0.4 Hours)

Writing well is not just about constructing logical sentences. It also involves the correct use of abbreviations, capital letters, and numbers in your business writing. Knowing how to use them consistently is a strong asset to have as part of your communication skills. In this course, you'll learn the basic rules of capital letters, abbreviations, and numbers. You'll learn how to correctly abbreviate titles, names, locations, and countries, as well as how to capitalize direct quotes, titles, names of organizations, and product names, among other elements. In addition, you'll explore other key elements for better writing – the forms and uses of numbers with dates and time, money, fractions, and symbols.

6. Getting the Details Right: Spelling Basics (0.3 Hours)

Spelling errors are all too common and are one of the main culprits behind poor business writing. A wrong letter here, an extra letter there, and your reader may lose confidence in your communication skills and overall competence as a professional. That's why writing well doesn't just mean writing persuasively – it also means knowing the rules, as well as the exceptions, of spelling. In this course, you'll learn how to spell words with prefixes and suffixes, and how to form the plural and possessive forms of words. You'll also learn general rules on how to spell correctly, as well as some handy tips for better writing in general.

7. Troublesome Words and Phrases: Common Usage Mistakes in Writing (0.3 Hours)

The many nuances and conventions in the English language make it diverse and interesting; however, when it comes to writing well, they can also cause some difficulties. For better writing skills, you must familiarize yourself with some of the

most common errors of usage. In this course, you'll learn how to use commonly confused words correctly, including word pairs that sound alike and those that have related meanings. You'll explore often misused verbs – for example, affect and effect or apprise and appraise – that can impede professional business writing. You'll also learn some idiomatic combinations of verbs and prepositions that can be confusing and will put your communication skills to the test.

8. Editing and Proofreading (Business) Documents (0.4 Hours)

All of us can think of a piece of business writing that's lacking a key point or contains an embarrassing typo or spelling error. From that point on, it becomes difficult to take it seriously, whatever it's topic or content. In business, solid, professional written communication is essential to the clarity and credibility of your message. In this course, you'll learn how improving your communication skills through better writing will help you produce more focused, polished, and effective business documents. It offers guidance on how to edit and proofread effectively, covering key areas, such as tone, structure, clarity, and accuracy, as well as common grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes to watch out for.

9. Proofing email in Outlook 365 (0.5 Hours)

With Outlook's suite of proofing and review tools, you can be sure that the emails you send will be clear, accessible, and error-free. Learn how to check your spelling and grammar, use the lookup, translation, and thesaurus tools, and make your message accessible to all recipients.

10. Clarity and Conciseness in Business Writing (0.3 Hours)

Being clear and concise in business writing isn't always easy. But writing well is essential in the workplace if you want what you write to be read, understood, and acted upon. In this course, you'll learn how improving your communication skills through better writing techniques can make your message clear and comprehensible. You'll learn how your written communication is more effective when you understand the importance of using familiar, concrete, and specific language. You'll also explore tips for being more concise in your writing and best practices for organizing content.

11. Writing Effective E-mails and Instant Messages (0.3 Hours)

Email has become an indispensable communication tool for organizations, and plays a vital role in how they conduct business and maintain their operations. As a result, one of the most important communication skills to have in the workplace today is email etiquette. It can help ensure you get messages across quickly, appropriately, and concisely. In this course, you'll learn some tried and tested guidelines for writing emails. You'll explore the fundamental elements of written communication that every email should contain, and the importance of keeping emails concise. The course also covers the etiquette associated with using instant messaging programs as an extension of email.

12. Taking Effective and Professional Notes (0.3 Hours)

Skilled note taking can make you more productive in business situations. Writing notes and engaging in written communication also provide an effective record to

review when necessary. In this course, you'll learn tools, techniques, and grammar strategies for effective note taking in interviews and meetings. You'll also learn ways to write notes that help you learn and recall information, to make it easier to communicate to others.

Foundational Competencies

Workplace development competencies are job-based skills employees need to succeed across a wide variety of occupations. Having completed this certificate, you have enhanced your skills in one or more competency areas. You can learn more about these competencies by visiting the Workforce Development Competencies page at: https://nyscseapartnership.org/workforce-development-competencies.

This certificate program assists you in developing competency in *Verbal and Written Communication.*