

Successful Business Writing Online Certificate Program

This online learning program was developed by the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training for CSEA-represented New York State employees. It was designed to develop the practical skills necessary to improve the writing skills of employees in any setting. Participants will be required to successfully complete all nine of the following courses and achieve a passing grade of 70% or higher in each course. It is recommended that the courses be completed in the order they are displayed below.

Audience and Purpose in Business Writing (.5 Hours)

To write effective and appropriate business messages, you need to know your audience and your purpose. In this course, you'll discover how to identify your readers and create messages that convey the appropriate tone for different reader roles. You'll also explore how to write effectively for the three most common purposes: to inform, respond, or persuade.

Using the Parts of Speech (.5 Hours)

The parts of speech 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.

Using Punctuation Marks (.5 Hours)

Punctuation is the collection of marks used to separate sentences and their parts. Appropriate punctuation will make your meaning clear and less likely to be misinterpreted. This course covers the standard rules and guidelines for using punctuation marks, including the correct use of periods, question marks, and exclamation points. It also covers how to correctly use commas, one of the most common punctuation marks. The course includes rules for using different connecting and separating marks, such as colons, semicolons, dashes, and hyphens. In addition, it shows how to properly use apostrophes, parentheses, brackets, and quotation marks.

Creating Well-Constructed Sentences (.6 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 and clear order. A misplaced modifier might get a chuckle out of the reader, but it doesn't help your reputation or that of your company. In this course, you'll review basic sentence construction, including how to develop sentences that are logical, clear, and powerful – the basis of any sound business document. The course examines the parts of a sentence – the subject and predicate, for example – and distinguishes between phrases and clauses. It shows the importance of subject-verb agreement, as well as agreement between pronouns and their antecedents. You'll also find out how to identify and fix some of the most common types of sentence errors.

Abbreviating, Capitalizing, and Using Numbers (.6 Hours)

No doubt you've had to use abbreviations, capital letters, and numbers in your business writing. But are you using them correctly? This course presents the basic rules related to capital letters, abbreviations, and numbers. It covers abbreviations of 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 will be introduced to the forms and uses of numbers with dates and time, money, fractions, and symbols.

Getting the Details Right: Spelling Basics (.5 Hours)

Spelling errors are all too common. A wrong letter here, an extra letter there, and your reader loses faith. Knowing the rules, as well as the exceptions, when it comes to details like spelling can help you write clearly without errors. This course explains how to spell words with prefixes and suffixes, and how to form the plural and possessive forms of words. It also covers general rules on how to spell correctly and presents tips to help you become a better speller.

Troublesome Words and Phrases: Common Usage Mistakes in Writing (.5 Hours)

The many nuances and conventions in the English language make it diverse and interesting but sometimes difficult too. It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with some of the most common errors of usage. This course describes how to use commonly confused words correctly, including word pairs that sound alike and those that have related meanings. It also covers verbs that are often misused – for example, affect and effect or apprise and appraise. In addition, the course reviews some idiomatic combinations of verbs and prepositions that can be confusing.

Editing and Proofreading Documents (.5 Hours)

Have you ever distributed a document or message only to find later that you forgot to include a key point or correct an embarrassing spelling error? Taking the time to edit and proofread your writing will help you produce more focused, polished, and effective business documents. This course describes 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.

Outlook Office 365 (Windows): Proofing Email (.6 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.

Clarity and Conciseness in Business Writing (.5 Hours)

Being clear and concise in business documents and messages isn't always easy. But it's essential in the workplace if you want what you write to be read. In this course, you'll explore techniques you can use to make your writing more clear. Specifically, you'll learn about the importance of using short and familiar words, appropriate connotations, concrete and specific language, and transitional words and phrases. You'll also explore tips for being more concise in your writing and best practices for organizing content.

Writing Effective E-mails and Instant Messages (.5 Hours)

E-mail is an indispensable part of the way organizations communicate, conduct business, and maintain their operations. Knowing e-mail etiquette is key to using this business tool effectively. It can help ensure you get messages across quickly, appropriately, and concisely. This course introduces tried-and-true guidelines for e-mailing effectively, fundamental elements every e-mail should contain, and the importance of keeping e-mails concise. The course also covers the etiquette associated with using instant messaging programs as an extension of e-mail.

Taking Effective and Professional Notes (.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 in order 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. This certificate assisted you in developing the following competencies:



Verbal and Written Communication