

# **WriteShop Resource Manual**

**CARE International**  
Ghana/Togo/Benin  
**Agriculture and Natural Resources Programme**

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Compiled for CARE by Moongate Associates

# Contents

Perspectives on Business Writing.....	3
Online Resources.....	4
Five Basic Principles of Business Writing	
1.0 Principle One: Define Purpose and Audience.....	6
1.1 Defining Your Audience.....	6
1.2 Four Keys to Effective Writing.....	8
1.3 Putting Your Story in a Black Box.....	9
1.4 Organizing and Getting Started.....	11
2.0 Principle Two: Who, What, When, Where, How.....	15
2.1 Inverted Pyramid Story Format.....	15
3.0 Principle Three: Less is More..	18
3.1 Franklin Roosevelt’s Example.....	18
3.2 Conciseness: Eliminating Wordiness.....	18
4.0 Principle Four: Use Active Voice and Strong Verbs.....	26
4.1 Active vs. Passive Voice Tips.....	26
4.2 Active and Passive Voice Diagrams.....	29
4.3 Shrink Your Verbs.....	34
5.0 Principle Five: Make It Convincing.....	35
5.1 Building a Convincing Position.....	35
Additional Resources	
6.1 Common Errors in Written Text.....	39
6.2 Guidelines for Nonsexist Usage.....	40
6.3 Writing for Success in Business.....	41
6.4 Publication Design Tips.....	48

## Perspectives on Business Writing



Writing is not an art – it’s a craft. You make sentences. You build paragraphs. You package information. And just like a carpenter or welder or electrician, the more you do it, the better you get.



The key to success is adhering to fundamentals without making you a slave to rules.



It is a paradox of writing that concise, clear writing often takes the most effort. As Pascal said, “I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it shorter.”



Good business writing starts with an overriding goal: Make something beneficial happen.

Effective writing is a healthy mixture of research, planning, experience, skill and common sense. By thinking through, designing, packaging and orchestrating the form and substance of your communications, you make it easier for your readers to take action on behalf of your company’s or organizations goals.

Without this kind of focused attention, your writing will be treated like so much of what already arrives in the daily mail as an imposition in the flow of the recipient’s workday rather than as an invitation for them to deepen their knowledge about something worthwhile or useful to them or their company.

In the end, good business writing shows you care about communicating with people who are important to your success and to your company’s success. Treat your writing accordingly and you will gain a competitive edge, both personally and professionally.



## Online Resources

### *Dictionary and Thesaurus*

Merriam-Webster Online\*

<http://www.m-w.com/>

Using this site is faster than reaching for your dictionary. It is also an online Thesaurus.

### *Clip Art*

Microsoft Office Clip Art and Media Home Page

<http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/default.aspx?lc=en-us>

A handy source of copywrite-free clip art to download for your publications.

### *Style Guides*

Writer's Style Guide, Carnegie Mellon University\*

<http://cmu.edu/styleguide/>

An excellent guide to maintaining consistency in the way you use abbreviation, capitalization, dates, numbers, places and punctuation.

*The Elements of Style*, William Strunk

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

A classic reference book for composition.

### *Writing Tools*

The Writers' Workshop, University of Illinois

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/>

Includes an excellent grammar handbook, as well as tips on defining your audience and using commas and quotations.

University of Minnesota Writing Support

<http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.htm>

A student writing support section includes tips on sentence transitions, subject/verb agreement and fixing choppy or run-on sentences. A helpful punctuation section addresses colons, semi-colons, commas, quotation marks and hyphens and dashes.

The OWL at Purdue University

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Resources on the writing process include developing an outline, proofreading your writing and how to address writer's block or writer's anxiety. A detailed grammar and mechanics section includes sections on adjectives, adverbs, hyphens, prepositions, pronouns, verb tenses and others.

Amherst College Writing Center\*

<http://www.amherst.edu/~writing/writingbetter/>

This concise handbook provides a guidance on planning and organizing your writing project, the mechanics of words and paragraphs, creating strong logic in writing and revising your work.

The University of Richmond Writing Center\*

<http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb.html>

Excellent sections on getting started, clarity and style, sentence structure, punctuation, analysis and making arguments. Links are arranged in a diagram of the writing process.

Grammar Slammer\*

<http://englishplus.com/grammar/contents.htm>

An in-depth grammar reference with a detailed table of contents for easy reference.

The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation

[http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt\\_gram.asp](http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt_gram.asp)

Well organized reference for grammar and punctuation.

\*These resources are particularly recommended

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**The pages above are an excerpt  
from the 56-page WriteShop Manual.  
For additional content please  
contact Moongate Associates**

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