



# **Certificate III Education Support**

**CHC30808**

## **Administrative Practices**



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# About This Workbook

This workbook is divided into sections that will cover the competencies and skills required in this unit.

This Unit of Competency has several resources:

- Administrative Practices Workbook (this workbook): This resource provides either a self paced learning program or may be used as a reference resource.
- On-line course: Ask your teacher/trainer to register you in this on-line resource.
- On-line or CDROM resources to support your skill development in basic software applications.

This course has been designed to appeal to differing learning styles, so the information and learning experiences are presented in different ways.

## Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes are shown at the beginning of each chapter. Learning outcomes match the competencies you must demonstrate to be successful in this unit.

## Learning Icons

Throughout each book icons are used to indicate the activity or purpose of the text. The icons used in this course are explained on the following pages.

## Prerequisites

1. Sound literacy skills.
2. Sound numeracy skills.
3. Basic computer skills, e.g. able to use a mouse and limited keyboard skills

As you work through this unit you will encounter different symbols that indicate a task for you to complete.



The introduction to the topic and overview of the units, and includes your instructions, assessment and objectives.



This symbol indicates there are Internet sites that will support your learning and provide further resources.



You are to complete the work indicated by this symbol in your notebook.



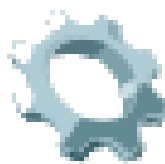
Work that is to be completed by you and returned to your teacher use this icon. You are return your work primarily through e-mail where possible otherwise by other methods.



You may be asked to listen to or prepare a piece of audio work. Read the instructions carefully.



In some instances, your work may be returned by fax. This is indicated by the icon on the left.



A practical exercise is indicated by this symbol.



Supporting resources may be provided in CD-ROM format. Locations where these resources are to be used display this icon.



This symbol indicates “self-check” questions. Once you have completed the question you need to check your answers from the self check pages at the back of the book.



# Unit Overview

## Unit Purpose

This workbook supports the Unit of Competency, CHCEDS316 *Comply with the school's administrative requirements*.

The unit provides competency-based training in basic and effective administrative practices required in educational organisations. The unit is suitable for participants who are entering an educational workplace and need to understand the range of oral and written forms of communication they will encounter.

The Unit of Competency, CHCEDS316 *Comply with the school's administrative requirements*, contains the following elements and performance criteria:

### Complete forms and documents as required

- 1.1 Access and select forms for appropriate purpose.
- 1.2 Complete forms and documents in accordance with the organisation policies and procedures
- 1.3 Complete templates using software provided

### Store and access information appropriately

- 2.1 Store information in accordance with organisation guidelines
- 2.2 Provide individuals with access to information in accordance with organisation guidelines
- 2.3 Maintain information of the organisation in a confidential and secure manner
- 2.4 Report breaches of information security to the relevant person

### Manage enquiries in accordance with school policy and procedures

- 3.1 Handle enquiries promptly according to organisation policy and procedures
- 3.2 Use effective listening and speaking skills in oral communication
- 3.3 Refer enquiries about student learning or progress to relevant person
- 3.4 Record and distribute verbal, written and recorded messages in order of priority, urgency and policy and procedures
- 3.5 Use communication equipment and information technology in accordance with school protocols

- 3.6 Use telephone techniques and emails according to organisation policy and protocols

### **Complete written communication**

- 4.1 Present written information and ideas in a clear and concise manner so that intended purpose is understood by the recipient
- 4.2 Complete and present documents within designated timeframes
- 4.3 Present written information to meet standards of style, format and accuracy

### **Use technology to support administrative and education support activities**

- 5.1 Use available technology to address administrative responsibilities in line with organisation requirements
- 5.2 Use word processing software, formatting and editing to produce documents
- 5.2 Develop simple spreadsheets as required
- 5.3 Use the internet to search and access information
- 5.4 Insert graphics into a word processed document and print the document
- 5.5 Use relevant software to prepare and/or deliver basic presentations as required by work role

### **Critical aspects of evidence**

Your evidence is critical to the judgement of competence in this unit. It must demonstrate your competency in the following areas:

- organisational policies and procedures for record-keeping are followed
- accurate completion of a range of documentation
- communication methods selected are appropriate to the audience
- oral and written communications are clear, concise, accurate and appropriate
- school policies and procedures for child safety, confidentiality, security and circulation of records are followed
- school policies for presentation of documents are followed
- ability to safely set up and use basic functions of a desk-top computer and printer is demonstrated
- accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation is demonstrated in documents produced





# Unit I

## Oral Communication

On completion of this section, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and use elements that assist in effective oral communication.
2. Identify and use elements that assist in effective use of telephone.



# Oral Communications

There will be many instances in the workplace where effective oral communications are essential. This may include dealings with co-workers or supervisors, dealing with students and their families and using the telephone.

Oral communication is a very fast and very effective form of communication, but, it is often not as straight forward as it seems. There are many barriers to effective oral communications that must be overcome in order to ensure that messages are received clearly.

Oral communications makes a number of significant assumptions. These include:

- That the person can hear you
- That they understand the language
- That they are listening
- That both parties share common knowledge about the subject

If any of these assumptions are wrong, the communication will not have been effective. Barriers to effective oral communication may include:

- Failure to gain the full attention of the other party before conveying information
- Hearing impairments
- Race or ethnicity (language barriers)
- Use of jargon not understood by other parties (computer terms such as RAM)
- Distractions during a conversation
- Unclear or incomprehensible speech (pace, accent etc)
- Both parties not sharing common knowledge of the subject (consider the meaning of RAM to a computer operator and a sheep farmer)

# Effective Oral Communication

Effective oral communication can be divided into a number of categories:

## Using Appropriate Language

Communication in the workplace is a complex matter. It is very important to carefully consider what you need to say in order for the other person to understand what you mean.

Consider the situation of speaking with a young child. It is assumed that they won't understand big words and therefore you will alter the way you speak to them. The same can be applied to the workplace and the person with whom you are speaking. It is important to think carefully about what you are going to say in order to ensure that they understand you.

## Avoid the Use of Jargon

Many enterprises have their own specific language or jargon. The computer industry is a prime example of this. It should never be assumed that students, co-workers and others understand the language relating to your particular area of work - they probably will not.

Jargon should be avoided in favour of simple explanation and common language. If jargon must be used, it may be necessary to provide an explanation of what these terms and phrases mean.

Consider the situation where someone working in the front office of a school requests a new computer from the school's computer technician. The technician tells him that the new computer is a Pentium V - 450 with 512 Kilobyte Pipeline Burst Cache, 1Gig of SDRAM and a 640 Gigabyte Quantum Hard Drive. The office worker understands none of this and leaves the conversation more confused than ever. It is highly likely that not only has the technician confused the office worker but it is likely that the trust/respect between the co-workers may be lessened. Had the technician explained this in simple terms, the office worker may have felt satisfied and involved in the conversation to replace their computer. The technician could have enquired as to the intended use, explained the various options and their functions and



encouraged the office worker to ask questions. It may also have been a good idea to provide any literature to the office worker for later consideration.

## **Active Listening**

Active listening is a skill that is very important in all oral communications. Active listening allows the speaker to know that you have understood their message and are paying attention. It refers to not only listening to what a person is saying but acknowledging understanding and if necessary, asking questions of them in order to clarify meaning or acknowledging that you have understood them.

Active listening can be as simple as a nod of the head or it may be a case of you summarising what the person has said with a phrase such as “...so what you’re saying is...”. It is both verbal and non-verbal. It can also include you questioning the speaker in order to clarify meaning and make sure all details are correct.

## **Non-verbal Communication**

Just as important in oral communications are the non-verbal communications often referred to as body language. Body language is often important to help convey meaning. This can include the position of your body including proximity, folding of arms, expression on your face, hand gestures and so on.

It is often possible to tell whether another person understands you by their body language. For instance, a puzzled look on a parent’s face may indicate that they do not understand. Folded arms in a meeting may indicate that people are closed to new ideas. A blank expression may indicate that the person is not paying attention. A person who does other things while talking to you may convey the message that they are not really interested and so on.

Effective communication is a skill that you can learn. With practice, generally comes the ability to communicate clearly and to understand what others are saying.



## **Etiquette**

Consider the audience to whom you are speaking. The formality with which you deal with others will vary depending on the position that they hold and your relationship with the individual. For example you would speak to the Prime Minister very differently to how you would speak to a co-worker with whom you work closely.

A general guide for a business situation is to deal with others in a business-like manner. Consider the principles of courtesy in each situation when determining the level of formality required.

## Clarify

If another person with whom you are speaking appears confused or does not understand, you must be sure to clarify what you are saying. Explain things as simply and fully as possible. Use simple, uncomplicated language. An effective listener should ask questions in order to clarify what you are saying. **DO NOT** assume that a person will understand you - they may simply be afraid to admit that they do not.



In the case of enquiries, complaints and so forth, it is important that you ask questions to help you clarify what is being said and to gain all relevant information that you require.

**NOTE:** Do not be afraid to ask questions.

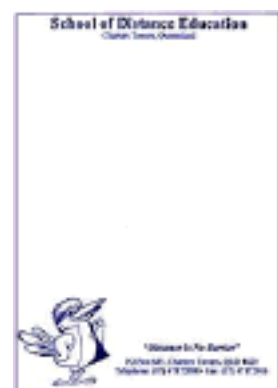
## Receiving Messages

When you are given a message in the workplace, sound listening and understanding skills are essential. These can be developed with practice. It is important to get into the habit of questioning the message bearer in order to clarify meaning. It is sound practice to repeat back to them what they have just told you to verify that you have understood correctly. For example, you might ask “*So what you need me to do is...*” or “*Do you mean that...*”.

When receiving oral messages, it is sound practice to ensure that:

- The message is understood the way the other person meant it
- You write down the message
- The message is passed on as soon as possible

Once understanding has been acknowledged, it is then a good idea to write down the message so that you do not have to rely upon memory. A notepad or message pad nearby is essential in any business or office situation. Preprinted message pads can be purchased at your local newsagent or stationery supplier or your school may have its own stationery prepared.



## Relaying Messages

When you have received messages, it will often be necessary to pass these on to another person/persons.

When messages are passed on to others, it is important that the message is relayed accurately and clearly and is understood by other parties. A poorly relayed message could lead to misunderstandings and possibly embarrassment to yourself and others.

For example, you take a telephone call from John Brown of Hi-Tech Sales regarding your supervisor's request for a quote on a new photocopier. Your supervisor, Karen Smith is unavailable and you are asked to relay a message to her when she is available. You do not write down the details, choosing instead to rely on memory. You see your supervisor one hour later and tell her "*Please call John Smith of Hi-Tech Sales*". Not only have you got the caller's name wrong, but, you have not told them the reason for the call. Your supervisor calls Hi-Tech Sales and asks for John Smith and is informed that no such person works there. This is extremely embarrassing for your supervisor and confusing for both parties. Since the reason for the call was not provided to your supervisor, there is also a chance that the receptionist will not be able to refer you to a person who can help.

In a case such as that above, it is likely that your supervisor may be justifiably upset with you. It is also likely that this will have reflected poorly on your business organisation and brought your professionalism into question. Whenever a person is not immediately available, it is essential that you record all relevant details. You must include the callers name and business organisation if applicable, the subject of the call and a return number as a minimum. This is true of telephone and face-to-face enquiries.

Even in cases where you are delayed only momentarily from contacting the required person, it is sound practice to briefly note the details.

### Example A

Joe answers a call on line 2. It is Gordon Wotherspoon from Armadillo Design: He asks to speak to James Klaps, the Sales Manager. As Gordon is speaking, Joe writes down;

Gordon Wotherspoon  
from Armadillo Design  
for James

James' phone is busy so Joe asks Gordon to hold. He takes another call and then transfers the call to James.

'Good morning James, Gordon Wotherspoon from Armadillo Design is on line 2 for you'

If necessary, be sure to question the caller/visitor to gain all relevant information as demonstrated in the example below.

**NOTE:** When receiving messages, relay the message as soon as possible. Preferably, this should be in writing.

### Example B

Kay's supervisor, Clarissa, asks her to pass on a message to someone in her workteam:

'Kay, I will be out for the rest of the day. Can you check with Bob what time he is meeting with the Advisory Group on Tuesday? Tell him I have made an appointment for us to see Raymond Chan at 2:00 pm. If he

is not available, can he phone Raymond and make another time. I'm available all day Tuesday and Wednesday.

As Kay writes down the message, she checks to make sure she has understood it correctly:

'Did you mean you made the appointment for both you and Bob to see Raymond Chan?'

'Yes. That's right.'

'And is this appointment for Tuesday as well.'

'Yes – it's the same day as the Advisory Group meeting.'

Kays message:

**BOB**

Clarissa would like to know the time of the Advisory Group meeting on Tuesday.

She has made an appointment for you and her to meet Raymond Chan at 2.00pm. if not suitable you are to make an alternative time to meet with Raymond. Clarissa is available Tuesday and Wednesday.

# Telephone Communications

Using the telephone involves the same skills as dealing with clients face-to-face. In fact, it is often more difficult to deal with telephone calls because, you do not have the benefit of being able to interpret the other's body language.



## Telephone Calls

A part of your job in any business organisation will involve receiving telephone calls and relaying messages to others within the organisation.

When answering the telephone, you are often the callers first point of contact with your enterprise. First impressions are important, so it is necessary to make a good first impression on a caller.

When you answer the telephone, it is sound practice to:

- Smile - a smile adds a friendly quality to your voice
- Greet - Greet the caller with “*Good morning*” or “*Good afternoon*”
- Identify - both yourself and your organisation
- Identify caller - find out who the caller is
- Reason - establish the reason for their call
- Deal with call - respond to the enquiry yourself or transfer the call to someone who can assist the caller

## Tone

Tone is the most important part of the communication over the telephone. Your voice conveys to the caller an attitude and emotion and this will make an impression on the caller. Emotions such as boredom, anger and frustration are reflected in your voice.

It is important to be aware of your moods and how this affects voice tone. It is important to develop a pleasant telephone technique regardless of the mood that you are in.

## Enunciation

It is very important to speak clearly and pronounce all words carefully when using the telephone. Phrases such “Going to” are often pronounced “Gonna”. This is not sound practice given that it is likely that you will encounter callers from a variety of backgrounds. It certainly does not give a professional appearance.

For example, you are speaking with a foreign caller and are using



slang and poorly enunciated phrases not known to them. They finish the telephone call not understanding what you have just said. This costs your organisation business and reflects badly on the enterprise.

In some cases, it may be necessary to spell out words for callers or use the phonetic alphabet to spell them out. The phonetic alphabet recommended by the International Telecommunications Union for English speaking countries is shown below.

(A) Alfred	(J) Jack	(S) Samuel
(B) Benjamin	(K) King	(T) Tommy
(C) Charles	(L) London	(U) Uncle
(D) David	(M) Mary	(V) Victor
(E) Edward	(N) Nellie	(W) William
(F) Fredrick	(O) Oliver	(X) X-Ray
(G) George	(P) Peter	(Y) Yellow
(H) Harry	(Q) Queen	(Z) Zebra
(I) Isaac	(R) Robert	

### **Pace**

It is very important to speak at a steady pace on the telephone. A rate of speech that is too fast will be difficult for the other party to understand. A rate of speech that is too slow may cause the other party to lose interest in what you are saying.

If people with whom you are speaking on the telephone are asking you to repeat yourself, it is possible that you need to examine your telephone technique.

## **Answering the Telephone**

When answering the telephone, it is important to always:

### **Answer quickly**

It is sound practice to answer the telephone as quickly as possible. This gives the impression that your organisation is prompt, willing to help and efficient. As a general guide, it is sound practice to answer the telephone before the third ring.



Some enterprises will allocate an order of priority to telephone calls when there are many lines of enquiry that you may have to deal with at once. For example, you may have a caller arrive at the front counter, the telephone rings and an email arrives simultaneously. It is important to establish the order of priority within your organisation in these circumstances.

### **Establish the details of the call**

It is often difficult to understand the details of a telephone enquiry. This is particularly true when dealing with callers who are confused, angry, very talkative or who are from a non-English speaking background.

In these circumstances, it will be necessary for you to question the caller to enable you to establish the details of the call or clarify what has already been said. There are two types of questions that are very useful when dealing with clients on the telephone.

#### **Open questions**

Open questions are used to encourage the caller to provide further information. These questions generally begin with the words - who, what, when, where or how. Examples would include - *“Where would you like that delivered?”* or *“How did that happen?”*

#### **Closed questions**

Closed questions are very useful for confirming what has been said or for cutting off talkative or angry callers in order to cut to the point of the conversation. Generally closed questions require a yes or no answer. Examples might include - *“Were you told that it would be done today?”* or *“So the product was damaged. Is that correct?”*

### **Listen carefully**

It is important that the caller receives your full attention. If distracted, it is often difficult to follow the conversation. Once you have greeted the caller, it is important that you stop talking and allow the caller time to convey the message. Concentrate on only one task at a time.

It is important to paraphrase what they are saying to check for intended meaning. If further clarification of details is required, continue to use open and closed questioning techniques to gain more information.

### Example C

(Receptionist is busy typing a letter for her boss. The telephone rings. Receptionist immediately stops typing, turns away from the computer screen, picks up her pen in readiness for the conversation)

**Receptionist:** *“Good morning, Towers Real Estate, Lisa Jones”*

**Caller:** *“Good morning Lisa, my name is John Brown and I have a problem with my roof”*

**Receptionist:** *“And what seems to be the problem?”*

**Caller:** *“The roof is leaking”*

**Receptionist:** *“So the roof is leaking. Would you say that it needs to be fixed urgently”*

**Caller:** *“Yes. It’s leaking quite badly”*

**Receptionist:** *“I’ll just transfer you to our urgent maintenance department. Please hold for a moment.”*

In this case, the receptionist quickly established the problem, determined that the matter was urgent and was able to quickly and efficiently deal with the enquiry.

### Be Attentive

The caller cannot see you, so it is important that you indicate to the caller that you are paying attention. In the case of a face-to-face enquiry, you can indicate to the other person that you are paying attention by maintaining eye contact or with a nod of the head. This must be conveyed over the telephone in your voice. This can be done with the use of attentive noises such as *“uh-ha”* or words such as *“yes”*, *“right”* and so forth.



## Section 2

# Written Communication

On completion of this section, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and use elements that assist in effective written communication.
2. Identify and use a range of simple business documents.



# Types of Business Documents

In any school environment, a significant and important role is to receive, draft and distribute written messages. Effective written communication is essential for the efficient operation of any business especially schools. It is often the office and support staff that are required to collect, write and distribute written communications both internally and externally. Written messages that you may be required to handle in an office environment might include:

## **Submissions**

A document written as a request, usually for funding. The writer attempts to show that the organisation needs funds for a specific purpose, such as purchasing new equipment, recruiting new staff or implementing a new program.

## **Proposal**

A document recommending a certain course of action. The writer has seen a need and offers a strategy or solution to overcome it.

## **Briefing Notes**

A document that provides background information relating to a situation. The writers provides an analysis of the situation, and suggest alternative outcomes. Briefing notes are written by expert staff to inform managers and others who are going to encounter the situation for the first time.

## **Reports and Articles**

An article is often mistaken for a report - and vice-versa. The main difference is that a report always provides information needed for a decision, and commonly includes recommendations. An article is a general discussion of a particular point of view.

## **Business Letters**

A number of differing business letters are in this workbook. Make yourself familiar with these business letters.

## **Memorandums**

Memorandums are generally documents used within a business. These are more informal than a letter but this does not mean that this form is not important.

## Emails and Faxes

You will need to understand and use these forms of written communication. Information and activities will be provided in later chapters.



## Practical Exercise

Name four types of documents. Email your answers to your teacher/assessor.

# Business Correspondence

Letters, memoranda, faxes and E-mail are the fundamental means of communication in every educational organisation.

Surveys have shown that managerial and professional workers spend much more time writing letters and memoranda than they do on any other writing task.

From the point of view of written communication as public relations, letters are the most important of all documents. Letters provide the most personal contact that much of the public has with a business organisation. Frequently letters are an organisation's sole contact with an individual, so recipients form their total impression of an organisation from the letters it writes. Carelessly written, arrogant or incomprehensible letters can do untold damage.

## Guidelines for Business Correspondence

1. Decide what you want to say.
2. Put it in sequence.
3. A paragraph for each step.
4. Immediately identify the subject.
5. End by pointing the way ahead.
6. Use short simple sentences.
7. Use correct punctuation.
8. Use simple words



## **Memoranda**

Memoranda are written communication. They allow us to exchange information informally. Informal does not mean casual. Often information sent by “memo” is crucial. It is easier and more appropriate when frequently writing back and forth to use the memo rather than to write a formal letter each time. A memo form can be pre-printed on company stationery or can be constructed from the blank paper.

## **The Business Letters**

Unlike a personal letter that you may write to a friend, the business letter is a very formal letter and is usually found on a letterhead.

### **The Letterhead**

The letterhead contains a lot of very important business information. It is generally used by a business to quickly identify the business and to provide contact details.

The information that can generally be found on a letterhead will include the business name, business logo, the address of the business (or Post Office box), telephone and fax numbers, and perhaps email and World Wide Web addresses.

Sometimes a letterhead will also contain a company motto although, this is more commonly found at the bottom of the page.

### **The Letter**

There are many parts to a business letter that are not found in a personal letter. Not every letter will use all features, but it is important to know them because, you may be called upon at any time to use any or all of these features. The next page provides an example of a business letter. Identify the following elements of the letter:

- Date
- Inside address
- Attention line
- Salutation
- Letter title line
- Body
- Formal close
- Signature
- Writer’s identification
- Enclosure notation and under separate cover notation



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**AADES Training Ltd**

25 February 2008

[Date]

The Personnel Officer  
Whynot Education Office  
78 York Street  
CHARTERS TOWERS QLD 4820

[Inside Address]

ATTENTION Ms Alyssa Whitely

[Attention line]

Dear Alyssa

[Salutation]

RE Paid Leave

[Letter title line]

Please be advised that due to your endless loyalty and hard work you have been granted six months leave with pay. I value your efforts and wish to display my gratitude. Please find enclosed two first-class tickets to Bali for yourself and a friend. [Body]

If you wish to contact me for any reason, you can call me on (07) 47875222.

Yours sincerely

[Formal close]

*J. B. Cooper*

[Signature]

Joshua Cooper  
Chief Executive Officer

[Writers Identification]

Enc1  
Cc Ms Pickford

[Enclosure notation]

[Carbon Copy]

## Date

It is very important that all business letters are dated. This is so that the receiver knows when they have been sent and also so that you have a record for your own files. It is especially important that correspondence be dated for record purposes. Generally the date should be in the form: day, month, and year. Example of correct dating is:

2 September 2009



## Inside Address

The inside address is the name and address of the person to whom the letter is being sent. It is made up of several parts including the receiver's title, organisational name, and the receiver's address.

## Attention Line

An attention line is often used on a business letter so that it is drawn to the attention of its intended recipient. This is especially important when communications have previously taken place with a particular person within an organisation. The attention line makes sure the letter gets to the person whom is aware of the dealings that have previously taken place. (Used when the inside address does not specify the intended recipient.)

## Salutation

The salutation is a formal greeting used on a business letter. It should always begin *Dear ...* It is also protocol to address them as Mr, Miss, Mrs or Ms in all business dealings, even if they are known personally.

## Letter Title Line

The purpose of the letter title line or subject line is to make it clear to the receiver exactly what the body of the letter is about.

## Body

The body of the letter is where you include all the information. The body generally consists of at least three paragraphs - the introduction, the middle paragraph(s) and the concluding paragraphs. The introductory paragraph introduces the letter theme. The middle paragraphs are used to develop the subject matter of the letter and should contain all the important information. The concluding paragraph allows you to make a clear and courteous statement and indicate what particular action is requested of the recipient.

## Formal Close

The formal close, also known as the complimentary close is used to indicate the end of the letter and to thank the recipient for their attention. In a letter where the name of the recipient is not known, it is customary to use *Yours faithfully*. In this case, the salutation would have been *Dear Sir/Madam*.



## Signature

The sender should sign all business letters. This is considered a courtesy and demonstrates that the sender has given the matter their personal attention.

## Writer's Identification

The writer's identification is used to indicate who has sent the letter and their organisational title. This is important so that the recipient knows to whom a reply should be sent.

## Enclosure Notation

The enclosure notation is used to inform the recipient that something has been included with the letter. This may be a cheque, invoice or some company information. In place of the abbreviation **Enc**, sometimes the notation **Attach** may be substituted. If multiple enclosures are referred to in a letter, the notation may read for example **Enc3** to indicate that there are three attachments included.

## Under Separate Cover

This notation, while not commonly used, is used to indicate that something related to a business letter has been sent separately. For example, a letter to acknowledge receipt of an order may be sent and a parcel containing the order itself may be sent separately.

## Carbon Copy

If copies of the letter have been sent to other people, a notation at the bottom of the letter is used to indicate this to the recipient. The notation is **cc:** followed by the names of the people who have been sent copies.



# Letter Styles

Generally there are three letter styles that are used for business letters. These are the Fully Block letter, the Block letter and Semi-block letter. The advent of computer-based word processors has largely seen the demise of the latter two styles in favour of the Fully Block style business letter.

## The Fully Block Letter

With the Fully Block style letter, everything is aligned on the left-hand margin. An example of a Fully Block style letter is shown below.

### ***Richlands Management Services***

27 Esplanade  
CAIRNS QLD 4700

Telephone: 07-40567821  
Fax: 07-40567834  
Email: richlands@iig.com.au

21 July 2004

The Marketing Manager  
Crows Travel Service  
341 Piere Street  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3240**

ATTENTION Mrs Cathy Crow

Dear Mrs Crow

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINERY TOURS**

I refer to your brochure that states that South Australian Winery Tours focusing on the premium red wine range are to commence in the next season.

Please send me price details on this special offer.

Yours sincerely

*Charles Nhung*

Charles Nhung  
Director

## The Block Style Letter

With a block style letter, the date, formal close, signature and writer's identification begin at the centre of the page. All other parts of the letter begin on the left-hand margin.

### ***Richlands Management Services***

27 Esplanade  
CAIRNS QLD 4700

Telephone: 07-40567821  
Fax: 07-40567834  
Email: richlands@iig.com.au

21 July 2004

The Marketing Manager  
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Please send me price details on this special offer.

Yours sincerely

*Charles Nhung*

Charles Nhung  
Director

## The Semi-block Style Letter

Very similar in structure to the Block style letter, the only difference between the two is that in a Semi-block style letter, the first line of each paragraph in the body of the letter is indented five spaces. CLOSED punctuation is normally used with Semi-block letters.

28 March, 2004

Mr K. Thomson,  
74 Gilmore Road,  
KYOGLÉ NSW 2174

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> March in which you expressed an interest in our Consumer Awareness Course.

The Consumer Awareness Course is a weekend course held at our premises in Blackstone Road. Our next session is being held on the weekend of 19 and 20 May. Closing date for acceptance is Friday, 9 May at 4.30 p.m.

I have enclosed a leaflet about the Course containing relevant information on topics covered, meal arrangements and costs. You might also be interested to note that there is an opportunity for questions and problems in our “Let’s Have Your Say” session.

Thank you for your interest and if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Alison Olsen,  
Public Relations Officer.

# Types of Business Letters

Letters are used for a variety of purposes in the business environment. Letters provide a more formal means of communication between a business and its clients than many other forms of contact. Letters should be prepared using the accepted standard of at least three paragraphs: introduction, body and conclusion. Following are examples of the types of situations you may encounter. Remember to expand the information into three paragraphs.

## Acknowledgement

Letters of acknowledgement are sometimes sent in response to a letter, telephone call, order and so forth. For example, you may receive an order in the mail from a customer and in response; it may be sound practice to send a letter of acknowledgement.

*Dear Ms Machielse,*

*Thank you for your order for 15 large 800 x 600 picture frames. our order is currently being processed and we hope to ship your order within 14 days.*

## Complaint

Letters of complaint will sometimes be received by educational organisation in response to family dissatisfaction with school services. You may have to deal with letters of complaint or may need to write letters of complaint yourself. Sometimes a family may also ask for a refund or replacement of goods provided by the school. This is known as a claim.

*Dear Sir or Madam,*

*I recently purchased a watch from you and after a week, the watch has stopped working. I have returned the watch and ask that it be repaired or replaced as soon as possible*

## Covering Letter

A covering letter is generally sent along with goods that have been sent. It generally states what has been sent and may include a statement about further product or service offerings.

*Dear Ms Simpson,*

*Please find enclosed one dozen Staedtler Overhead Projection Markers, which were on back-order with us.*

## Letters of Confirmation

Letters of confirmation are used to confirm arrangements that have been made. This is a formal way of recording agreements that have been made in person or over the telephone.

*Dear Mr Campbell,*

*In response to your inquiry on 6 September, I wish to confirm your booking on our 19-day tour to Europe. The tour will depart on 1 October at 9.00am with a stopover in Japan and return on 21 October with a stopover in Hong Kong.*

## Letters of Request

When specific goods or services are required, it may be necessary to write a letter of request. This may include requests for bookings, quotes and so on.

*Dear Mr Sharma,*

*I would like to ask for a quote on the following items at your earliest convenience:*

- 10 Toshiba Satellite 2400 Laptop computers*
- 2 Iomega Zip drives*
- 1 Canon Laser Printer*

## Letters of Enquiry

A letter of enquiry is generally a letter asking for information. Generally these will be brief and to the point.

*Dear Mr Bosnich,*

*Please supply me with information concerning the upcoming Better Business Training Seminars including cost, dates and venues.*

## Orders

Generally, orders should be on a proper order form and in state schools this is automatically generated by SMS when orders are generated. If however, your educational organisation does not use this school management software, you may be required to write a letter in order to order goods or services. When writing a letter of order, it is important that the following details are provided:

- A complete description of the goods or services required
- The number of items ordered
- The price of each item
- The total price of the order
- Contact details

*Dear Mr McCarthy,*

*I would like to order the following:*

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost per unit</i>	<i>Sub-Total</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>Boxes Floppy Disks</i>	<i>\$9.00</i>	<i>\$45.00</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Daewoo 15 inch monitor</i>	<i>\$235.00</i>	<i>\$235.00</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>LS120 Superdisk Drives</i>	<i>\$175.00</i>	<i>\$525.00</i>
		<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$805.00</i>

*Please forward the goods to the above address as soon as possible.*



# Punctuation in Business Documents

When writing business documents, there are two punctuation styles that are generally used.

## Open Punctuation

In open punctuation style, only the body of the letter is punctuated. The date, inside address, salutation, formal close, writer's identification and so on have no punctuation whatsoever. Open punctuation style is particularly common in the fully block style letter.

### ***Civil Engineering Services***

29 Aspley Street  
AYR QLD 4806

Telephone: 07-47830560  
Fax: 07-47832467  
Email: [civil@burdehin.com.au](mailto:civil@burdehin.com.au)

24 August 2009

The Executive Manager  
Atlas Engineering  
341 Augustine Street  
**ADELAIDE SA 3240**

Dear Ms Jackson

### **INTERNATION FARMING ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE**

I recently attended the International Conference, "Farming Engineering - The Emerging Problems", where you spoke.

I enjoyed your address and the perspective you have on women in this emerging industry.

Yours sincerely

*Charles Nhung*

Charles Nhung  
Director

## Closed Punctuation

In closed punctuation style, every part of a letter or document is punctuated. This style is usually reserved for the Semi-block , but may also be used with the Block style.

### **Civil Engineering Services**

29 Aspley Street,  
AYR QLD 4806

Telephone: 07-47830560  
Fax: 07-47832467  
Email: [civil@burdehin.com.au](mailto:civil@burdehin.com.au)

24 August, 2009

The Executive Manager,  
Atlas Engineering,  
341 Augustine Street,  
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Dear Ms Jackson,

#### **INTERNATION FARMING ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE**

I recently attended the International Conference, "Farming Engineering - The Emerging Problems", where you spoke.

I enjoyed your address and the perspective you have on women in this emerging industry.

Yours sincerely,

*Charles Nhung*

Charles Nhung,  
Director.

While a workplace may favour a particular style, it looks more professional if either OPEN or CLOSED punctuation is used, but not a combination of both. Check with your workplace to see if there is a preferred style, but aim to adopt a consistent style throughout all letters.



## Section 3

### Reports

On completion of this section, participants will be able to:

1. Identify and use elements that assist in effective reports.
2. Identify and use a range of simple business documents.



# What Is A Report?

## Definition of a Report

A report is a piece of writing (usually), short or long, that provides information so that the reader can make decisions in order to solve a problem or initiate some action. This feature distinguishes reports from all other forms of writing. The information is expected by, or requested by, the reader as part of the normal operations of an organisation. Obviously reports move up the organisation, though the information they contain may often be shared by people at the same level and of course the decision made as a result of a report will be sent down through the organisation. Reports are also produced by writers outside an organisation, especially where the information is specialised or sensitive.

Reports are commonly used in education organisations.

Reports are almost always written for a single reader: the person who must make the decision. If they are written for a group, that group has a common interest that makes it operate like a single reader. Sometimes reports are read by people other than the decision-maker. In most cases writers ignore these readers when they are compiling our report.

Reports can be made orally, but either these are of less significance and are confirmed later in writing, or they are special presentations, especially to a group, of material already contained in a written report.

## Types of Reports

Reports are almost always written in an organisation by a member of that organisation, or by a consultant contracted to produce a report for the organisation.

An organisation has levels of function and responsibility; people higher up the organisation increasingly have, as part of their function, to make decisions. As a result, they need information.

In particular:

1. They need information so that they can make those decisions themselves - information reports. These include eyewitness reports, accident reports and work reports.
2. They need someone else (who has specialised knowledge) to solve a problem, and offer a recommendation - analytical

reports.

3. They need a solution to a problem which may not yet have arisen, and they look to the findings of someone else who has already investigated the problem - investigative reports and feasibility studies.

### **Writing The Different Reports**

1. Information report - The decision-maker obtains information he/she needs and makes the decision.
2. Analytical report - The decision-maker commissions someone else to investigate the problem; the report writer solves the problem and offers the solution as a recommendation; the decision-maker decides whether to accept the recommendation or not.
3. Investigative report- A person investigates a problem and offers the solution to anyone who wants that solution.
4. Feasibility study - The report writer provides information about a project and possible problems to help the decision-maker decide whether to go ahead with that project.



### **Practical Exercise**

Name four types of reports. Design a cover sheet for fax messages. Use this to send your answers to your teacher/assessor.

## **Styles Of Reporting**

Which style will suit your report?

Factual reporting may be thought of as that where an undistorted account of some phenomenon is all important.

Interpretative or Analytical reporting is where logical analysis shapes and gives meaning to the facts.

Personal reporting is dominated by the personality, opinions or style of the writer, often over and above the ostensible subject.

Expressive reporting is far more concerned with an entertaining or artistic version of the subject than with straight “facts”.

Human interest reporting is almost more a social ritual with the audience than a transmission of real information.

# Who Is Your Reader?

What does your reader want to know? This comes down to three main considerations:



1. What is the reader interested in?
2. How much does the reader already know?
  - Don't tell your reader what they already know.
  - Don't keep them in the dark or assume knowledge they aren't likely to have.
  - Getting a clear impression of where your reader's knowledge begins and ends is a vital starting point.
3. How can you interest the reader in the topic? Within the broad limits imposed by factors (a) and (b), a good writer still has room to move.

## Practical Exercise

Give an example of situations where your understanding of where the reader's knowledge starts and ends? Email your answer to your teacher/assessor.



# Reader-Centred Writing

## **Writing for the reader**

Writing for your reader means knowing what meaning you want to convey, knowing what response you want your reader to make and using the information, language and presentation that will most effectively allow your reader to make that response. Only by writing for your reader can you hope to write successfully.

## **What do my readers expect from my report?**

The same as anyone who reads any document. They expect it to be easy to understand, the information to be accurate and relevant, the language to be correct and they expect the design to make the document easy to read.

## **What individual preferences do my readers have?**

Some readers like things done in a particular way. They like lots of headings, or they don't like headings. Engineers expect tables and diagrams. Scientists expect formulas and equations. Some readers have funny preferences for (or against) certain words and constructions.

## **Why do my readers need this report?**

The answer is almost always, "In order to solve a problem". Sometimes they may need that information to give to someone else. They may have to sell the idea to a board or a committee. If you know this, you can put in information that will be especially useful to them.

## **Planning the report for the reader**

For a report to be successful, it needs to be planned. A report has to be constructed, and like most things which have to be built, a specification of the subject, and a plan of how it will look will help to accommodate the reader's requirements.

The report's specifications determine the subject, reader, purpose, context and scope.



## Practical Exercise

Fax your response to your teacher/assessor Do not forget to provide reasons as to why you made the decision in each of the scope areas.

### Scenario:

You work in a small but busy school office, which makes extensive use of computers. Your boss has decided to link all the computers together into a local area network (LAN), and he has asked you to examine the proposal and come up with the most efficient way of installing such a network. You are writing a report for your boss about the proposal. Your purpose will be to find reasons to justify your boss's proposal. Now you have to decide what information you will look for - you have to define the scope of your research.

Which of the following topics will you research? Why did you make that decision?

1. How a LAN works:

will research       won't research

2. What different systems are available:

will research       won't research

3. Cost of different systems:

will research       won't research

4. Names of contractors to wire up the network:

will research       won't research

5. Writing a manual for the chosen system:

will research       won't research

6. How the LAN will benefit the office:

will research       won't research

7. Considering if a LAN is the best solution to the problem:

will research       won't research



# The Introduction And How To Assemble A Document

The problem has been (hopefully) clearly identified, you know who your readers are, and now it's necessary to find the information for the body of the report. Creating an introduction will put some structure to the report, and will help you to identify the information needed.

Firstly the introduction to a report has a very distinct form. It is not the same as an introduction to an essay or article which might be just a paragraph introducing the topic and giving background and reasons for writing the essay.

Your introduction should include:

- The purpose of the report.
- For whom it is written - the authorisation.
- Resources you have used and ways you have gathered facts and information, opinions etc.
- Any limitations to the scope of the report.
- In brief form, your summary, which comprises your conclusions and recommendations.

(This is optional here).

By briefly stating the summary here, the readers are able to see at a glance the results of the inquiry and decide whether they should read the whole report immediately, or defer it till a more convenient time.

Naturally the summary will be stated again in more detail at the end of the report. In short reports such as this a summary at the end of the report is not really necessary.

# Assembling Information

Once you know your problem you can assemble information to help you solve it. The word 'assemble' is used quite deliberately. 'Collecting' information sounds as if it's there waiting to be gathered like oranges off a tree. It doesn't work like that.

First, the main source of your information is yourself. You have stored in your memory a huge amount of information, much of which you can use to solve your present problem. In any case, if you don't already know a great deal about your problem, you won't be able to understand the information that you could get from other sources. So you need to dip into your memory to see what's there.



Second, you have to get the information that you do not know. That entails two steps. First, you have to identify possible sources of information that you do not have. These will include other reports, people, standards, perhaps even books and journals, and of course your own observation. Second, you have to get that information and record it in some way so that you can use it when you come to do your organising. This process is often called research.



## Practical Exercise

State why you think it's vital to understand where your reader's knowledge starts and ends. Post your answer to the discussion board of the learning web. If you do not have access to this website, email to your teacher/assessor.

# Tapping Into Your Memory

You have stored in your memory a huge amount of information. At any moment you are unaware of most of it. You keep dipping into it as you need information (the process is known as recall). Sometimes you are aware that you are recalling information; you deliberately think of something. Much of the time you are unaware of recalling information. When you are going home after work, when you are using language, when you walk, you do not think consciously of all the information you need to perform those tasks. They have become habit. You don't even know what information you have stored in your memory (a process you call learning), because much of your learning goes on without your being aware of it. So you need a technique to help you get at the information in your memory, especially what you may not be able to recall consciously.

## Concept Mapping

The first thing you do is to write down all the information that you can think of consciously. Sit down and quite deliberately think of what you know about the subject. Write it down just as a word or two. You don't need more than that. These words will act as triggers for the information.

Then you need to get at that information you cannot think of consciously. The technique described is called concept mapping. What you're going to do is to use the ordinary processes of the brain to help you recall information that you are at present unaware of. One process that the brain uses constantly is association. As you think of one thing, your brain associates something else with it.

Think of a subject, any subject, then get yourself a large sheet of blank paper. Find a quiet place to work, where you will not be interrupted for about fifteen minutes. Tune yourself in to the subject, by letting it run round inside your head. Then write in the words that label your subject and let yourself go.

Remember the following two rules. If you don't observe these, the concept mapping will not work.

- Let your mind go free. Do not try to think specifically of the topic.
- Make no assessment of the information you are recalling. Do not try to judge if it's relevant or not. Write down everything.

Did it work? If it didn't, don't worry. Maybe it will next time, or maybe you didn't follow the rules. And just maybe it's not the way

your brain works. If so, devise your own technique. Consult a book on thinking or problem solving for other techniques.

Concept Mapping is a technique for getting at your own information.



## Practical Exercise

Practise some Concept Mapping by completing this exercise. When completed fax your notes to your teacher/assessor.

To make this activity most useful, use as your starting point the problem set out in the assignment - Safety in the Workplace.

Remember the following two rules. If you don't observe these, the concept mapping will not work.

- Let your mind go free. Do not try to think specifically of the topic.
- Make no assessment of the information you are recalling. Do not try to judge if it's relevant or not. Write down everything.

## What About Other Information?

Information that you do not know and have not learned? This is a two step process: identifying the sources, and then finding those sources and getting the information from them.

What sort of information might you need to get from your sources? Three kinds:

1. Factual information, such as names, addresses, phone numbers and dates.
2. Figure information, such as distances, exchange rates, process and statistics.
3. Personal information, such as people's opinions.

There's no need to learn lots of facts. You can get them from reference books. Figure information keeps changing, so it's a waste of time learning it. Personal information you can't know until you ask people for it in interviews and questionnaires.

## Practical Exercise

Name four kinds of factual and figure information.



# Doing Research

Where might you go to find information?

- Libraries - national and state, public, universities and colleges, embassies and consulates, private companies, government departments and agencies, statutory authorities, scientific and technical organisations, professional associations, trade associations, clubs and societies, private individuals.
- Official records - national and state archives, departmental registries, national film and sound archives.
- Organisation records - your organisation's own reports, letters, memos, and so on.
- Internet - use a search engine to obtain sources of information. Be as precise as possible with your search definitions or you will end up with too much data, which could take you too long to sort out.

That's a lot of sources you have access to. In most cases at work, you won't need to go outside the records of your own organisation.

## Retrieving Information

Once you have your list of sources, you have to supply details: titles of reports and standards, names of people you want to interview, and so on. Then you have to go to those sources and retrieve the information. This aspect of research can be dreary and time-consuming. But it must be done.

Work within your scope - which you have defined on the specification sheet - and remember your reader - whom you have identified on your specification sheet. Do not retrieve information that you do not need. Your criterion is: Do I need this information in order to solve my problem? You collect information because it is useful, not because it is interesting.

# The Body Of A Document

This section includes all the basic facts or findings - the results of investigation and so on.

The body of your report should be divided into short, easy-to-read sections that will do the following things for your readers:

1. Make it quick and easy to find out what they want to know without having to jump from one part of the report to another.
2. Make it easy for them to follow your line of thinking so that they can see why you discussed one aspect first, then another, while some other aspect was covered later.
3. Make it easier to see why you made the particular recommendations you did.

## **Basic Rules for Planning a Layout**

1. Start with a definite goal in mind.
2. Decide what kind of factual information you want to use in your report - and why.
3. Use opinions too, but make sure they are not mistaken for facts. Keep them together in a separate section and label them as opinions or discussion.

## **Start with a Definite Goal in Mind**

If you say you've heard that before, you are right. It's one of the basic rules for letter writing, for making speeches and using the telephone and just about every other topic in this book. The clearer your goal the better your report, and the easier it will be to lay out. The actual writing will be easier too.

Keep referring to your introduction to see whether:

1. You are on track.

OR

2. You need to change your aims.



## Check Your Understanding

Email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

1. What is a report?
2. Can you explain three reasons for writing a report?
3. What is the main difference between an information report and an analytical report?
4. Information reports are written simply to give the reader information.

True

False

5. State the three basic rules for planning a report layout.
6. State some of the advantages of dividing reports into short, easy to read sections.



## Section 4

### Other Documents

At the end of this section, participants will be able to:

1. Record messages in writing.
2. Draft simple correspondence and reports which are then presented for approval and signature within designated timelines.
3. Write text that uses clear and concise language.
4. Use spelling, punctuation and grammar correctly.
6. Construct written documentation that makes sense to the reader.
7. Self check information present for frequent progress checks by designated officer.





# Memorandums (Memos)

A memorandum (memo) quite literally means, “to be remembered”. The memo is a less formal means of communication that is often used by business to circulate internal messages. Regardless of the purpose of the memo, the message should be relatively short and to the point.

It is sound practice to include on all memos:

- Date
- Subject
- To
- From

When writing memos, the language should be as simple as possible. You do not want to confuse the reader with technical terms, nor do you want them reaching for a dictionary to understand what you are saying. Make your point as simply and briefly as possible. If you use a technical term, it might be sound practice to put it in simplified form in brackets. It is also important to avoid long complicated phrases.

Below is a memo written in complicated language. Also included is a redrafted memo to simplify the meaning.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Staff

**FROM:** J. Jaensch, Manager, Computer Com

**DATE:** 6 June 2004

**SUBJECT:** Communication with customers

When dealing with customers it appears that much use is being made of argot.

It is important to realize that customers don't always understand the way we would communicate with other staff. We use many words that the general public do not comprehend. Please bear this in mind when serving our customers so that they will comprehend our communications.

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Staff

FROM: J. Jaensch, Manager, Computer Com

DATE: 6 June 2004

SUBJECT: Communication with customers

It has come to my attention that staff have been using technical terms when dealing with customers. Customers don't understand many of the terms that we use. Please bear this in mind when dealing with customers.

If the memo is about an unpleasant topic, do not use threatening language - be polite and courteous at all times. Abusive messages will generally be met with hostility. Avoid the use of fiery language and do not embarrass the reader if referring to them in a memo.

Some organizations use a preprinted memo pad that can be purchased from newsagents or stationery suppliers. Alternatively, businesses may choose to have their own memo forms printed or use a standard memo form that can be stored in a computer system and printed out as required.

### Practical Exercise

Open your word processor and load the template for Memorandums. Complete this template using the second example of memos from this section. Save and email as an attachment to your teacher/ assessor.



# Suggestions For Writing Effective Memos

1. Write a memo only when necessary.
2. Use a standard format.
3. Keep to one page if possible.
4. Organise material so it is easy to see and read: Use lists, headings, outlines and white space.
5. Use side headings in full caps or underlined; easy to see.
6. Use block or indented style to show paragraphs; be consistent.
7. Make headings precise and meaningful.
8. Identify subsequent pages by subject, date and page number.
9. Omit a complimentary close.
10. Develop a clean, to-the-point writing style.
11. Present yourself as a well organised, logical, no-nonsense, relevant thinker.

## Example 1:

<b>MEMO</b>	
July 31 2009	
TO	Dr Joan Smith Mr John Shaw All programming and operations personnel
FROM	Jane Doe
SUBJECT	S219P-104

There is now a job stream available to access data element 016 in the Alumni File. The job number is S219P-104, and it can be found in the file cabinet by the stockroom door.

Previously, only the Alumni's employer code number in 026 was accessible. By using the S219P-104 job stream, the actual name of the company can be obtained.

Although S219P-104 requires a longer execution time, it will save at least 10 times this amount of time for the Alumni Department. They will no longer have to manually look up the company name according to the employer code number.

This new job stream will be implemented Aug 10, 199x after a briefing in my office at 1pm. Please contact me if you cannot attend.

## Rewrite of Memo Example 1

### MEMO

TO Dr Joan Smith, Director of Computer Centre  
Mr John Shaw, Co-ordinator Computer Centre  
Operations

FROM Jane Doe, Student Programmer

SUBJECT New Way to Access Data Element 016 in Alumni File

DATE July 31, 2009

Previously when the Alumni Department requested the name of the employer of an Alumni, only the employer's code number in 016 was accessible. The job stream S219P-104 is now available to provide more useful information. S219P-104 has the following advantages:

- 1 The actual name of the company can be obtained instead of just the code number.
- 2 It is cost-effective measure for the Alumni Department. Personnel will no longer manually have to search the company's name according to employer's code number.

This new job stream will be implemented after a briefing in Room A227 at 1:00pm on August 10th, 2004. Please contact me at 4781234 by August 6th, 2004, if you cannot attend.

## Example Of A Memo

This memo has been used to report on a specific issue within the business.

### MEMORANDUM PRINTWELL LTD

DATE: 10 February 2004  
TO: Mr James Dadson, Manager  
FROM: Graham Sullivan, Assistant Manager  
SUBJECT: Delays in the Printing Department

#### INTRODUCTION

As instructed, I spent two days (February 8, 9) in the Printing Department, conferring with the Officer-in-Charge, collecting data and observing operations with a view to establishing reasons for current delays in printing orders.

#### FINDINGS (OR CURRENT SITUATION)

1. There is at present a two-week delay between placing and completion of printing orders, as against the normal lead time of three days.
2. There is a bank-up of eighteen printing orders awaiting processing.
3. Of a staff of seven in the printing department, two have been off duty for the past week. John Connell deputy officer-in-charge, is not expected to return to duty for another four weeks (motor accident). Ross Tiller, machine operator, will be absent for another two weeks (workers' compensation, injured hand).
4. One of the three stapling machines has broken down and has not been repaired because of a shortage of funds in the printer maintenance account.

#### CONCLUSION

Unless immediate steps are taken, delays in the printing section will continue and are likely to worsen.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) That Josh Goodall of the maintenance staff be seconded to the printery during John Connell's absence.
- (b) That the officer-in-charge be authorised to engage immediately a temporary machine operator to replace Ross Tiller.
- (c) That \$400 be made available from the contingency account for the immediate repair of the defective stapling machine.

# Structuring Material Into Headings and Sub-Headings

Study the samples of writing noting how easy the writer makes it for you to understand the information.

Any information, if presented haphazardly, can be ignored or misunderstood making it worthless. Readers do not know what to do with information unless they are guided by the writer, and can perceive an organized purpose about it. The writer has to organize the information in such a way that it provides the reader with the background, and the facts that lead to a certain conclusion.

By studying the sample reports you can see that the structure of headings and sub-headings is making it easy to follow the writer's line of thought.

## Putting Your Findings Into Order

Having collected your findings the next thing is to sort them into a logical sequence. Different kinds of sequence suit different topics, though often two or three will all be suitable, if used in different parts of the same report. The following are some of the many different ways of presenting your findings.

### 1. Order of time

Used for response about a series of steps or events, or any other type of information that is related to the clock, the calendar or the time sheet. For example, a salesman's daily report or a report on an accident.

### 2. Order of location

In dealing with areas, dimensions and parts, report headings can follow the most obvious path or the one that is easiest to explain. For example, a study of future markets for a product may discuss the potential for sales in the city first, then the potential in the country, then the potential overseas.

The description of a building may take the route of the person inspecting the premises: "ground floor, upper floor, garage, yard".

A report on an organisation structure could work from the top positions down to the lowest, or the other way around.

### **3. Order of importance**

Headings may be arranged in order of ascending or descending importance. If the report stresses the need for a certain course of action, a strong ending is important. Reasons are therefore presented progressively with the strongest arguments given last. On the other hand, it may be desirable to state the most important ideas first. Reports on company policy begin with the most important points because the reader is likely to pay more attention at the beginning.

A survey of a company's competition may consider the smaller competitors first, then the threat of larger rivals.



### **4. Order of familiarity**

If your reader does not know very much about the subject of the report, begin with details that are familiar to him or at least easy to understand and then work towards the more difficult ideas.

### **5. Order of acceptability**

When some recommendations are likely to be less acceptable than others, move from the most acceptable to the least acceptable. Agreement with the initial points can help to lessen objections to the others.

### **6. Order of process**

This is similar to order of time. It is useful when describing a manufacturing programme, or the assembly of various parts to make a complete product.

### **7. Order of usefulness**

In many reports there are some kinds of information that must take precedence over others, to help understanding, or to allow comparison with other reports in the same series.

### **8. Parallel order**

In a comparison of two or more things such as different brands or models, there should be parallel treatment.

Another type of parallel order is called "pairing". Examples include such arrangements as Questions and Answers; Problem and Solutions; Before and After; Cause and Effect.

# Numbering Systems For Documents

The numbering of the headings is important. Various styles are used, but which ever is chosen it is essential that the headings and the material it covers can be found quickly in the Table of Contents. If the numbered heading is not important enough to be indexed, it should still be easy to locate, if referred to in other parts of a document.

Although numbers are sometimes used effectively with letters to divide documents into appropriate parts, the decimal system is probably the simplest and easiest method to follow.

This example shows how it might be done:

1. MAJOR HEADING
  - 1.1 Sub-heading
    - 1.11 Minor heading
    - 1.12 Minor heading
2. MAJOR HEADING
  - 2.1 Sub-heading

A document would continue in this manner.

## **Combined Letter-Number (Alpha-Numeric) Numbering System.**

This is a more traditional numbering system and will be familiar to most people. Its difficulty lies in the mixtures of letters and numbers. It is all too easy to forget whether you are using a capital letter for main headings; small letters for sub headings; Arabic numbers for lower levels and Roman numerals for paragraph, or if it is all the other way around!



# Layout

## Layout of the Report

The report layout assists the reader in assimilating the information - the following points are good guidelines:

1. Well-presented material creates a good first impression on the reader.
2. Take care to set out the text in a clear, easy-to-read arrangement. Headings, numbering, margins, paragraphs, visual aids, footnotes, must not only be appropriate to the kind of report being written, but they must follow a uniform pattern throughout the whole document.
3. The body of the report should be arranged in natural separate sections, each under a main heading.
4. With each of these sections there should be subheadings where necessary and further divisions under minor headings when required.
5. It is suggested that capital letters be used for the main headings and the subheadings and minor headings be written in lower case letters. Notice that each heading in the outline has at least two sub headings beneath it. If you break an idea down, then it must have no fewer than two parts.

## The Summary

Many people, particularly those who are busy, will read the summary of a report before studying it further.

The summary should be concise; usually not more than two or three paragraphs will be sufficient. The essential facts must be lifted from the mass of material in the subject matter and clearly highlighted for the benefit of both the person who reads the entire report and the one who only has time to read the introduction and summary.

The summary, therefore, should be a well-written, condensed, factual statement of:

1. Why the report was written.
2. The conclusions reached, if any. Any conclusion is an interpretative topic. It should indicate very briefly the findings of the writer based on the information produced in his submission.
3. What action the writer recommends should be taken. The

recommendation often follows on from this conclusion. It suggests what should be done based on the facts presented in the report and on the conclusions drawn from these facts.

No new material should be included here.

Note the difference between Conclusions and Recommendations, two very important parts of a report.

**For example:**

An investigation report into the cost of installing new machinery in a factory might include in the summary the following conclusion and recommendation:

**Conclusion:** The advantages that are likely to follow from installation of the new machines do not appear to justify the cost.

**Recommendation:** No further mechanisations should be carried out for the time being.

**Note:** It is quite valid to write a report that recommends no immediate action. It is useful to know that a situation has been examined, found to be satisfactory, and needs no improvement until new circumstances warrant a subsequent report.

## References

It is often necessary in essays and reports to acknowledge sources of ideas, facts or quotations. Two widely used systems for recording references are:

1. Footnotes or end notes.
2. The Harvard, or author-date system.

### **Footnotes or Endnotes**

With this traditional system, each reference is numbered consecutively. Information about each reference is then given under that number either in a footnote at the foot of the page or in endnotes at the end of the document.

*Worms do not talk. Most researchers attribute this to a lack of intelligence. Gobblegook<sup>2</sup>, however, has proposed that it is because they live underground where there is not much to talk about. Other supporters of the worm have pointed out that it is difficult to talk freely with your mouth full of dirt<sup>3</sup> and have warned against 'mistaking silence for stupidity'.<sup>4</sup>*

1. If you are referring to a book, give author, title (underlined or in italics), place of publication, date of publication and page number(s).
2. If you are referring to a journal, give: author, title of article (enclosed in inverted commas), title of journal (underlined or in italics), date of publication, volume number and page number(s).

References to the above passage would be given like this:

1. W F Polywaffle, *The Boring Worm*, London, 1975, pp. 15 - 16.
2. R Gobblegook, "The Worm Turns", *Journal of Worm Psychology*, vol. 41, no. 2, 1976, pp. 94-97.
3. F O Guff, "Words of Worms", in MT Chatt (ed.). *The Wormlover's Encyclopedia*, New York, 1968, pp. 480 - 537.
4. V Winbag, quoted by L Hottair in *Back to the Worm*, Melbourne, 1972, p 380.

## Bibliographies

A bibliography is a list of books and journals that you have consulted for your essay, report or book. It is arranged in alphabetical order of author's surnames. The following information should be included in bibliographical references:

BOOKS	JOURNALS
Author's surname & initials	Author's surname & initials
Date of publication	Year of publication
[Title of article - optional]	Title of Article
[Name of editor - optional]	Title of journal including volume and issue numbers (if issues not consecutive)
Title of book	Date of issue
Place of publication	Pages occupied by article



# Check Your Understanding

Email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

1. Describe the differences between footnotes and bibliographies.
2. Create three fictitious references for each of a book and a journal.
3. Describe what the benefits of a summary are.

## Other Questions

Some other Questions often asked about Business Documents

**Q. Is there a place for humour in business correspondence?**

A. Probably less than anywhere else in the business communications area. To most people, business reports must be treated seriously. Humour will lower the credibility of your report, so leave it out.

**Q. Is there just one correct way to set out a report?**

A. The answer is a definite no. The setting out can be as flexible as the essentials of a good report. The last thing we would want to do is to limit your originality or stop you from using your own judgement. If you can see a better way of presenting your reports, use it.

**Q. Which report is the most persuasive?**

- A.
1. One that argues strongly for one side against the other.
  2. One that argues strongly in favour of one side and does not even mention the opposite point of view.
  3. One that presents both sides of the issue as objectively as possible, but fails to offer any conclusions either way.
  4. One that presents both sides of the issue objectively, then without emotion or bias, shows why one point of view has the advantage.

Your powers of persuasion are increased by showing that you understand the opposition argument and appreciate its point of view. By refusing to accept that the opposition has any argument, you actually reduce your chances of persuading people to see your

side. By trying to be too persuasive, you end up with a report that won't persuade at all, because it shows you as biased or prejudiced.

Follow these general rules:

1. Use language that is understandable.
2. Use language that is believable.
3. Use language that is rational and unemotional.
4. Do not use the emotional words, I, me or we until you get to the opinion part of your report - the conclusions and recommendations.

You, your and our are acceptable words because they are less emotional. Try to avoid they, them and us if you can; which suggest that the writer is biased. If you can present both sides of the argument from an unbiased point of view, you make your report more believable.

## Appendices

Appendices contain information relevant to the report, but not essential to the understanding of the report.

For example, appendices can contain:

1. Samples of questionnaires and surveys.
2. Detailed costs, quotations and changes recommended.
3. Relevant extracts from Acts as OSH&W Act.
4. Maps, drawings, photographs that add credibility to your findings.
5. Background information.

Each appendix needs to be identified by a letter or a number. For example, A, B, C, etc. or 1, 2 or 3. Include a title that describes the contents. Appendices are bound at the end of the report unless they are very bulky, for example, videos and samples OR long documents in which case they are bound separately.

Make sure that your appendices are referred to in the text of your report, and clearly relate to and enhance the text.

# Facsimile (Fax) Messages

Generally the fax is used in the business environment for the transmission of short messages or urgent (non-personal) messages. The fax generally is not as formal as a business letter but corporate fax forms will generally have much the same information as a business letterhead. Regardless of the type of business concerned, there should be some information common to fax forms. This should include:

- To whom sent
- Who fax is from
- Date sent
- Number of pages included
- Subject



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***A.A.D.E.S. Training***

## Facsimile

<b>To:</b>	<b>From:</b>
<b>Fax:</b>	<b>Pages:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Cc:</b>
<b>Re:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Urgent</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Review</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Comment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Reply</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Recycle</b>	
<b>• Comments:</b>	

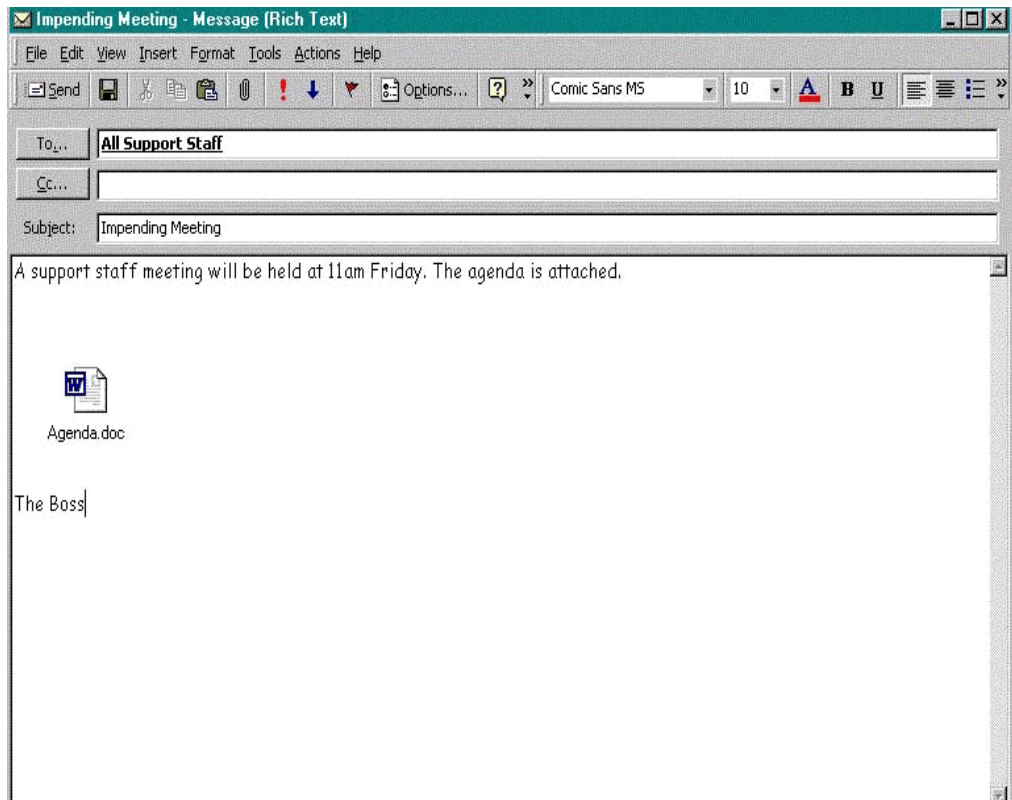
# Electronic Mail (Email)

Email is becoming an increasingly important means of communication in the business world. There are no set standards for email messages, but generally they are an informal means of communication between businesses. They provide a quick, cheap method of communication with the added advantage that documents however formal, can be sent as file attachments.

Regardless of the nature of the email message there are some things that should be included. These are:

- The name of sender
- Date
- Subject
- Email address (although this is generally displayed automatically)

Email can be used for both internal and external business communications. The main advantage of email is the speed with which they are delivered. However, email also has its disadvantages including the fact that there is a small chance that email messages can go astray and only persons with a computer and email can send and receive messages.





## Section 5

# Production Of Document

At the end of this section you will be required to demonstrate your competence by producing a document which:

1. Uses language that is applicable to the task and audience.
2. Contains accurate information.
3. Is organised logically (according to the purpose, audience and context).
4. Follows a specified structure.
5. Is coherent.
6. Reaches conclusions.
7. Offers recommendations/proposals/options as appropriate to the purpose and document.
8. Achieves a stated and given purpose.
9. Is appropriately presented in accordance with the organisation's or enterprise's requirements.
10. Is completed within the specified time.





## The First Draft

Having successfully completed all the planning stages, you are now ready to write your document.

This is where access to a word processor is very handy because often you may need to draft your documents for perusal by your supervisor.

The process of drafting involves some or all of these steps:

1. Writing one or two drafts. Surveys have shown that managerial and professional workers spend much more time writing letters and memoranda than they do on any other writing task.
2. Editing.
3. Reading your report out loud to 'hear' how it sounds.
4. Asking someone else to read your draft.
5. Leaving your draft for a time then returning 'fresh' to assess it again.

## The Language Of Business Documents

As a general rule, the language of business documents is chosen to suit the needs of the reader, and the purposes of the document.

There are however some general guidelines that apply to all reports.

1. Sit in the reader's chair. Imagine the reader trying to understand what you are writing.
2. Use 'reader - friendly' language. Would you be comfortable saying those words and sentences to the reader 'face-to-face'? Old-fashioned 'business-like' writing is no longer appropriate.
3. Write using your own words. Another person's words may have a message hidden 'between the lines' and so the words don't say what you want them to say.
4. Present the facts using unbiased, non-judgemental language. Keep the first person out of your writing until you get to the point where you are expected to give an opinion.
5. Construct paragraphs whenever necessary. Long sections of

unbroken prose 'turn the reader off' from reading.

6. Use simple words. Where a large number of technical terms are needed, explain them in a glossary.
7. Check for correct spelling, expression, punctuation. Errors create an unprofessional impression.
8. Avoid language that is sexist or discriminatory in any way.

## Business Writing Skills

When you are drafting written communications in the workplace it is important to use simple language, short sentences and uncomplicated words. Written information should be:

### Clear

The message should be easy to understand. Keep sentences simple. Use several short paragraphs rather than long and drawn-out paragraphs. Try to limit each paragraph to a single idea or concept.

#### Bad Example

Pursuant to the reference proposed by the undersigned at last night's meeting, I herewith furnish the preparatory documents.

#### Good Example

Please find enclosed a draft of the report I discussed with you at last night's meeting

### Concise

Use as few words as possible to relay your information clearly. Explain exactly what you mean, do not repeat yourself and do not provide any unnecessary information. Avoid vague references - include specific details.

#### Bad Example

Ms Byrne was forced to cancel her meeting this morning, due to food poisoning she contracted from a seafood dinner she ate at the restaurant adjacent to the train station.

#### Good Example

Ms Byrne was forced to cancel her meeting this morning, due to illness.

### Argot

Argot refers to jargon that is used in the workplace but may not necessarily mean anything to the general public. It is the particular

language that is used by a group but may have no meaning or another meaning to others outside the group. This is especially common in specific purpose business such as the Education. The use of argot should be totally avoided. Use words and phrases that are suitable to convey the intended meaning.

## **Correct**

Correct writing refers to following the specific rules that apply to writing business documents. These rules may be specific to your enterprise or may be general rules that have been discussed throughout this module. This also includes the use of appropriate language, rules concerning disclosure of information and the use of correct spelling and punctuation.

### Bad Example

Greg Wells

Thanks for your stationery order.

### Good Example

Dear Mr Wells

Thank you for your letter of 15 August 2009 and for your order for stationery. We are pleased that all of your requirements are in stock and your order will be dispatched today.

## **Courteous**

All business writing should be polite and courteous. Consider the feelings of others when drafting correspondence. Remember that even when the subject is unpleasant (e.g. chasing up overdue accounts) there may be genuine reasons and you do not want to cause undue upset. Always offer the option of contacting you or your organization to discuss the situation. Never use confrontational language or sound too bossy.

### Bad Example

We have received your letter of 17 April 2009. You claim that the sandals you bought are faulty. However, you failed to post them to us, and so we cannot verify your claim.

### Good Example

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2009. If you post the faulty pair of sandals to us, we will be happy to forward a replacement to you by return post.

# Tips for Handling Documents

When writing workplace correspondence, it is important to consider the following questions.

- Could I use a simpler word?
- Can I break sentences or paragraph into several simpler ones?
- Is the meaning clear?
- Have I checked the spelling and punctuation?
- Do I need to give my work to someone else for proofreading?

## Proofreading

It is good policy to always proofread your work or have another proofread your work prior to distribution. Work that has errors or an unclear meaning will not create a favorable impression of your business. When proofreading you should check the accuracy of:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Figures
- Financial data

In many workplaces it will be your responsibility to prepare correspondence for another's signature. In this case they will generally proofread your work prior to sending and make any corrections or additions. It is a good idea to check the policy in your school or business organization.

When proofreading you should also consider the tone of the written material. Tone refers to the mood, strength, character or quality of your writing. The tone that you adopt must be appropriate for the intended audience. It is the language that sets the tone of your documents. In the business environment, the tone will generally have a formal, business-like quality. This includes:

- Avoiding abbreviations such as you're and they're. These should be written as "you are" and "they are".
- Do not use slang, argot or cliches.
- Address people by their correct title.
- Avoid sexist or discriminatory language.

## Writing aids

To assist you in writing workplace documents and in getting your message across as simply and clearly as possible, there are a number of aids that may assist you. Many educational organizations have standard formats or style manuals that they insist are used.

Two of the best aids that it would be wise to have handy are a dictionary and thesaurus. These will allow you to choose language, which is simple and also assist with spelling. Many computer programs such as Microsoft Word also have an inbuilt spell check function, grammar check and thesaurus which will assist you in your writing.

## **Presentation**

In order to make a good impression it is important that all written information is presented properly and professionally. If your business requires that certain documents be presented in certain ways, it is important that these rules are followed.

If there are no set styles and layouts for written information then it is important to remember that you need to make a good impression. To this end, your documents should be:

- Presented in an appropriate manner (style, language etc)
- Free from errors
- Typed if possible (some handwriting is difficult to read)
- Presented in an appropriate manner
- Clean and unmarked

## **Keeping records**

For all-important correspondence it is sound practice to keep a copy for later reference if required.

When preparing written information it is usual practice in the modern office or workplace to keep a copy on file in the computer. This allows easy retrieval at a later stage. If your business organization does not have this facility it may be necessary to keep a second paper-based copy on file in a filing cabinet.

There will generally be set policies in place in your workplace regarding making and keeping copies of all written information. It is important that you check to see what rules apply in your particular workplace.

## **Working with timelines**

The majority of educational communication is only effective if it is timely. Being able to communicate in a timely manner requires an ability to distinguish the urgent tasks from the non-urgent tasks and knowledge of the quickest way of communicating.

In a workplace situation, you will need to establish priorities for written tasks. This will vary depending on the nature of the

business. In some situations it may be wise to assign priority to the major issues or emergencies. In other situations, which are reliant upon bookings the most important tasks may be handling bookings to ensure efficient operation.

### **Distributing written messages externally**

When you are required to distribute written messages it is important to consider the fastest and most efficient way to reach the recipient. In the vast majority of cases, Australia Post or a courier service will generally be used for business communications.

In instances where the message is urgent it may be more suitable to send a fax or email if possible. The limitations of this are that not every home and business has these means of communication. It may also be inappropriate to send some material via fax or email for security or legal reasons. If a written document is required urgently it is a good idea to check with your Post Office and local courier companies to see what services are offered.

In most organizations there will be specific policies and procedures in place for sending written information. It is important to check the requirements of your particular educational organization for the distribution of both urgent and non-urgent written communications.

### **Distributing written messages internally**

The smooth flow of information within a school is crucial to the daily operations. The methods used for distributing internal written communications will vary depending on the size and nature of the organisation. Some educational enterprises may use an internal email system for distributing written messages. Others may require that messages are hand delivered to the appropriate person. Once again, it is important to check if there are procedures in place in your workplace, which you are required to follow.

# Common Problems In Grammar

## Some Solutions for Common Weaknesses in Writing

### When should a sentence finish?

When the subject has completed its action (main verb), unless there is a lesser clause to follow. The fire destroyed several houses, before it was finally put out.

Subject	Main Verb	Object	Additional Clause
The fire	destroyed	several houses,	before it was finally put out

This sentence could stop after 'houses', but the joining word 'before' allows the additional clause to be added on.

### **A Comma must not be used as a sentence break.**

For example after the word 'subject' in this sentence:

Mathematics is a most useful subject, it is also my best one.

Use either a full stop or a semicolon; which is almost the same as a full stop. Then why have it? The semicolon is very useful to connect two sentences linked in ideas but separate in structure.

e.g. Friends can often be a mixed blessing; they are wonderful for company, but a nuisance when you are busy.

There is a complete sensible statement both before the semicolon and after it. The difference between a semicolon and a full stop is detected by the use of a capital letter after the full stop, and not after the semicolon.

### **Ambiguous Pronouns**

Though my car bumped a road sign heavily, it does not seem to be dented.

What is not dented - the car or the road sign?

Rewrite: My car does not seem to be dented though it bumped a road sign heavily.

or Though it bumped a road sign heavily, my car does not seem to be dented.

## Using Who, Whom, and Whose (relative pronouns)

1. He was an unsafe worker who endangered the lives of his workmates.

If this had been two sentences, there would have been a full stop or semi colon after 'worker' and 'he' instead of 'who'.

2. The writer whom they arrested for murder is in court now.

If this sentence had been split into two parts 'whom' would have been replaced by 'him'.

e.g. The native is in court now; they arrested him for murder.

3. The soldier, was granted special leave; his wife was ill.

Use a relative pronoun to join these two statements.

The soldier whose wife was ill, was granted special leave.

Who replaces	he,	she,	they
Whom replaces	him,	her,	them
Whose replaces	his,	her,	their

## A Participle (verb-adjective) with the wrong Noun or no Noun.

Driving along the road, a snake was seen. 'Driving' is a verb-adjective (or a participle) not a complete verb. It needs a noun or pronoun to go with and 'snake' will not do since it can't drive.

Driving along the road, he saw a snake.

Here 'driving' goes with the first word after the comma - 'he'.

## Variety of Sentence Structure

Practise some of these techniques if your writing lacks variety.

The simple sentence goes: subject, verb, object. It soon becomes very boring and repetitious.

e.g. We cannot supply the book you wanted. We have sent you another book. This book contains similar information.

1. Combine simple sentences with conjunctions - joining words

And But Because Since Although Until As etc.

e.g. Although we cannot supply the book you wanted, we have sent you another with similar information.



2. Combine simple sentences using a relative pronoun

who            whom whose for people  
which that    for animals or things

I enjoy the company of George whom I've known for years.  
Near the shower recess, the renovators used chipboard which soaked up the water and rotted.

3. Combine simple sentences with a verb - adjective (a participle) instead of a complete verb. These participles are 'ing' words - writing, copying, adjusting, revising, etc.

Digging in the garden, we found a skeleton.  
Racing to the scene, they saw the car thief in action.

You can use the participle when the same subject is doing both actions e.g. digging and finding, racing and seeing.

4. Begin with a verb-noun (a gerund). This is also an 'ing' word, but it functions as a noun; it is the name of an activity.

Adjusting the timetable is a lengthy process.  
Editing a draft is a skilful task.

5. Begin with an adverb, a word telling how, when or where.  
Often Sometimes Regretfully Politely Sarcastically

Usually, such a process needs two people.  
Ordinarily, courses in business letter writing involve solving problems.

6. Begin with the Infinitive. This is part of the verb, but cannot complete a sentence as a main verb can.

To walk, to choose, to rely, to activate

To activate this machine, you pull the lever.  
To be successful, you need more than money.

7. Begin with the subordinate clause (the less important clause beginning with the joining word) and keep the main action till the end.

Though it is made of oak, the front door has severely warped.  
Because he thought he could defeat the Russians in less than six months, Hitler did not equip his troops with winter gear.

## **Punctuation Rules**

### **Full Stop**

1. Use at the end of a sentence.
2. After abbreviations and contractions.

### **Colon**

1. Use as an introduction before a list of items.
2. To introduce an explanation or an extension of thought, e.g.  
There are two things to aim for in life: first, to get what you want, and after that to enjoy it.

### **Semicolon**

Use to separate two independent thoughts that could have been expressed in one sentence by using a conjunction such as 'and' or 'but':

The sun shone; all was ready for the match.

Use to separate long items in a list; e.g.

Please order the following goods: two blouses, style 21, colour white, size 14; three frocks, style 382, colour blue, size 16; two coats, style 148, colour red, size 12.

### **Comma**

1. Unnecessary commas are a waste of time. If you are in doubt about the necessity of using a comma omit it.
2. The comma is a signal indicating a needed pause within a sentence.
3. Commas are sometimes necessary to make meaning clear and avoid ambiguity.
4. Commas are also used to:
  - Separate successive adjectives or nouns in a list.
  - To introduce spoken words.
  - To enclose a group of words that could have been omitted without damaging the sense of the rest of the sentence.
  - As a thousands marker.

### **Apostrophe**

Apostrophes are used for two purposes: to indicate that letters within a word have been omitted; or to show ownership. Like other forms of punctuation, the modern tendency is to reduce the use of the apostrophe where possible.

When writing, it is usually better to spell out a word fully rather than give an abbreviated version that omits some letters. However, there are times when abbreviations are unavoidable, such as when you have to report accurately how someone spoke. In these cases the apostrophe stands for the omitted letters, such as:

who's for 'who is'  
there's for 'there is'  
I'm for 'I am'  
I've, you've and they've for 'I have', 'you have' and 'they have'.

It is still useful to use an apostrophe to show ownership because it avoids ambiguity and misunderstanding. In English, both plural endings and ownership are indicated by the letter s. By using an apostrophe when you want to show ownership, you tell the reader that the s in this case does not indicate a plural.

the girl's toys - the toys owned by the girl  
the girls' toys - the toys owned by the girls  
the company's property - the property owned by the company  
the companies' property - the property owned by the companies.  
the man's clothes - singular  
the men's clothes - plural

Avoid using a double letter "s" to show possession. Treat any word ending with s as a plural, even though it might be singular: Instead of Bob Jones's dog write as Bob Jones' dog.

The only place where it is normal to drop the apostrophe when indicating possession is the word 'its': (Every dog has its day).

## Practical Exercise

Email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

### 1. Change punctuation that is unnecessary or incorrect:

- a. Section Chief, Bill Jones, will meet with us Friday.
- b. The accountants gave us the good news and then they sent us their bill.
- c. I have not completed my report so I cannot answer your question.
- d. The boss likes scotch bourbon and beer.
- e. She is a clever efficient manager.



- f. Ms Johnson, who gave the incorrect figure to the IRS will lead us in a moment of silent prayer.
- g. The error, that Mr Fleegle discovered, was not a serious one.
- h. "We are going to meet our deadline" the manager said.

**2. Punctuate the following:**

- a. Womens shoes are incredibly expensive.
- b. The Girl Guides hall was renovated.
- c. Its late so lets go home.
- d. He shouldnt have bothered so dont come complaining to me if you arent satisfied.
- e. She often forgets to dot her is.
- f. The office managers new rule was unpopular with the secretaries.
- g. The secretarys chair was adjusted by the managers assistant.
- h. The managers smiled when they read the salesmens reports.
- i. Both speakers comments were greeted with applause.

**Capital Letters**

Capital letters are used with surnames, days of the week, months, holidays, titles before a name, specific place names, and important words in titles. In the sentences below, add or subtract capital letters as needed:

- 1. Last year the meeting was held on a wednesday in june, or maybe it was later in the summer.
- 2. Do we cross the onkaparinga river before we get to the lake?
- 3. I understand that captain johnson will speak first and then the senator.
- 4. The boss has a picture of his mother on his desk.
- 5. The new salesperson is a conservative, a catholic, and he speaks fluent norwegian and chinese.
- 6. He is also taking history and health eductaion 1a.
- 7. His favorite novel is the catcher in the rye.



## Inverted Commas

Inverted commas are sometimes called quotation marks because their main purpose is to mark direct quotations, or the actual words of a speaker.

If the punctuation was part of the original material you are quoting, then put the punctuation within the inverted commas.

She said, *'Do you know where it is?'*  
*'I never want to see that place again,'* he cried.  
*'There is one thing,'* he said, *'that you have not considered.'*

If the punctuation derives from the sentence you have written, then it goes outside the inverted commas.

Do not use inverted commas when you are reporting what someone said in your own words, rather than the exact words used by the speaker:

He told us that he would be there just after eight.

## Practical Exercise

Email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

WHICH IS CORRECT?

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of wearing seatbelts can \_\_\_\_\_ the number of people injured in automobile accidents.  
(Affect &/or effect)
- 2a. The party pledges not to raise taxes, which would be harmful to the economy.
- 2b. The party pledges not to raise taxes that would be harmful to the economy.
- 3a. An historic choice
- 3b. A historic choice
- 4a. He implied that we were not to blame.
- 4b. He inferred that we were not to blame.
5. The boss can \_\_\_\_\_ all the files \_\_\_\_\_ the ones we receive today.  
(except &/or accept)
6. I would \_\_\_\_\_ you to follow the \_\_\_\_\_ of your supervisor.



(Advise &/or advice)

7. We were \_\_\_\_\_ to leave when Mrs Smith asked us if we had \_\_\_\_\_ been given a copy of the agenda.

(all ready &/or already)

This exercise addresses some common grammatical and punctuation problems. Try some and check your answers as you go, so that you can reinforce each point.

Place the correct word, so that a singular verb has a singular subject and a plural verb has a plural subject.

8. A roster of duties (is, are) on the notice board.  
9. The pliers (are, is) on the work bench.  
10. The guest speaker, with his colleagues, (arrives, arrive) on the next plane.  
11. Twenty years (are, is) the term of the loan.  
12. "Gulliver's Travels" (is, are) still absorbing reading.  
13. The ropes tying the crate (was, were) snapped on the wharf.  
14. The strength of the gorilla and the speed of the jaguar (continues, continue) to amaze me.

Choose the correct preposition from the list to place before the noun.

By            To            At            For            From            On

15. He is afflicted \_\_\_\_\_ gout.  
16. He is reconciled \_\_\_\_\_ the idea.  
17. He recoiled \_\_\_\_\_ the suggestion.  
18. He is unfitted \_\_\_\_\_ the job.  
19. I am susceptible \_\_\_\_\_ flattery.  
20. This is preferable \_\_\_\_\_ that.  
21. You must refrain \_\_\_\_\_ doing that.  
22. She is sensitive \_\_\_\_\_ criticism.  
23. The officer is responsible \_\_\_\_\_ his men.  
24. We are responsible \_\_\_\_\_ our superior.

25. This is different \_\_\_\_\_ that.
26. He insists \_\_\_\_\_ having his way.

Put sentence breaks in the following passage. Use full stops or semicolons, and add the comma and apostrophe where necessary.

27. The manager said it was difficult to get satisfactory children's toys at present those we could purchase have several faults they are not durable they are not attractive in appearance and they are beyond the average persons ability to buy.

Insert the hyphen where necessary. (This mark - makes two or more words into one.)

28. A used car salesman is required.
29. The water cement ratio should not exceed 0.4 in HAC.
30. A razor blade is a remover of superfluous hair.
31. The electrically headed storage system, and the gas heated instantaneous systems, both with simple draw offs, are easily installed.

Place the correct relative pronoun in the space.

Who      Whom      Whose      Which      That

32. The contact clerk \_\_\_\_\_ did this job last, has left.
33. Here is the person \_\_\_\_\_ I recommended to you.
34. The museum \_\_\_\_\_ you wanted to visit is closed today.
35. The person \_\_\_\_\_ car is parked there, doesn't work here.
36. I'd like to go through with you several items \_\_\_\_\_ were left out of the report.

## Practical Exercise

After completing this set of exercises, email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

1. Write the contracted (shortened) forms of the following using the apostrophe:
- a. are not \_\_\_\_\_ we are \_\_\_\_\_



- b. should have \_\_\_\_\_ they are \_\_\_\_\_  
c. it is \_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_  
d. she has \_\_\_\_\_ I have \_\_\_\_\_  
e. that is \_\_\_\_\_ you are \_\_\_\_\_

2. Insert the apostrophe where needed. Place the apostrophe mark after the owner or owners, and add a letter s purely for sound, where you think necessary.

- a. The videos cover is lost.  
b. A moments hesitation can lose the race.  
c. A months leave, two weeks absence.  
d. Chief Justice opinion.  
e. Mack and Walters firm.  
f. Urban workers problems.

Finish these activities and email your answers to your teacher / assessor.





## Practical Exercise

After completing the next round of practical activities, email your responses to your teacher/assessor.

1. Put commas in appropriate places to make the meaning clear and the sentence construction correct:
  - a. The witness not being available the case was postponed.
  - b. Students whose English is poor find shorthand difficult.
  - c. Pilots whose minds are dull seldom live long.
  - d. If you would like to shoot the attendant will demonstrate the rifle to you.
  - e. As soon she entered the room became silent.
  - f. To the young people of forty or more have rigid opinions.
  
2. Less is used for quantity, fewer for number, e.g. He ate less cake than usual but he ate fewer cakes than usual. Which of the following is correct.
  - a. There is (less, fewer) petrol in my car than in yours.
  - b. (Less, fewer) people arrived than I expected.
  - c. The report demonstrated (less, fewer) problems than we anticipated.
  - d. There is (less, fewer) need for money than for time.

### Use farther or further

3. Farther means 'more distant' eg. They went farther into the bush than they intended. Further means 'to a great extent', e.g. Find further information on the subject if you can. Select which word is correct.
  - a. There was no need to pursue the matter any \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How much \_\_\_\_\_ have we to go?
  - c. "You must go two kilometres \_\_\_\_\_ on", the man directed.
  - d. We went to the library to obtain \_\_\_\_\_ details relating to our project.
  - e. Have you had any \_\_\_\_\_ news from our friends abroad?

### Use "unless" or "without"

4. Unless is a conjunction and introduces a clause (a group of words containing a verb). Without is a preposition and introduces a phrase (a group of words without a verb). Insert the correct word.
- Their home will be burnt \_\_\_\_\_ the wind changes.
  - I shall not go to the party \_\_\_\_\_ you come, too.
  - The boys had to leave \_\_\_\_\_ hearing the end of the story.
  - Vicki will not sing at the concert \_\_\_\_\_ her father agrees.
  - The goods will not be sold \_\_\_\_\_ the price is reduced.

### Use "like" or "as"

5. 'As' introduces clauses. 'Like' introduces phrases. Insert the correct word.
- I wish I could dance \_\_\_\_\_ that.
  - We laughed \_\_\_\_\_ we had never laughed before.
  - I have brought you the book \_\_\_\_\_ I said I should.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ her mother, she was a good pianist.
  - You must do \_\_\_\_\_ your father tells you.

### Use "so" or "that"

6. We felt so tired that we lay down. Never use that ..... that. In other words: We felt that tired that we lay down; is incorrect. Insert the correct word.
- The plumber was \_\_\_\_\_ pleased to finish before it rained \_\_\_\_\_ he gave us a special discount.
  - The staff was so angry \_\_\_\_\_ they walked out of the meeting.

### Use "between" or "among"

7. We use 'between' when referring to two people or things and 'among' when referring to more than two. Insert the correct word.

- a. The path lay \_\_\_\_\_ capitulation or domination.
- b. We searched \_\_\_\_\_ the reference books for an updated version.
- c. Great rivalry exists \_\_\_\_\_ Melbourne and Sydney.
- d. The weather is often changeable \_\_\_\_\_ seasons.

### Use the Passive

8. Use the passive voice to eliminate the personal and create a more distant, objective tone. Insert the correct word.

e.g. You made the wrong decision. (active voice) Incorrect  
The wrong decision has been made (passive voice) Correct

Change the following to passive:

- a. Unfortunately we have misplaced your order.
- b. We advise companies to change their product quickly.
- c. You should hand in your report by next week.
- d. You made a mistake in your estimate.

# A Strategy for Proof Reading

1. Take any passage of about 10 lines or more from your own report draft.
2. Read it through once for each one of the list below, looking for nothing else but that one aspect. Do not try to read a passage for more than one purpose at a time until you are an accomplished and correct writer.
  - a. Punctuation - capitals, full stops, commas, apostrophes, semicolons.
  - b. Spelling.
  - c. Paragraphing - does every sentence in this passage belong here, or should you start a new paragraph at some point?
  - e. Flow of ideas: check that the sequence of ideas is correct, logical and fluent.
  - f. Words: are any words used that are inappropriate, discriminatory, slang, jargon or too formal?
  - g. Sentence variety: do all your sentences start and finish the same way or is there some variation?
3. Consult a good book on grammar, such as "Practical English" by R C Corish.
4. Submit the ORIGINAL draft and the FINISHED COPY to your teacher.



## Section 6

### Storing Information

At the end of this section you will be required to demonstrate your competence by producing a document which:

1. Uses language that is applicable to the task and audience.
2. Contains accurate information.
3. Is organised logically (according to the purpose, audience and context).
4. Follows a specified structure.
5. Is coherent.
6. Reaches conclusions.
7. Offers recommendations/proposals/options as appropriate to the purpose and document.
8. Achieves a stated and given purpose.
9. Is appropriately presented in accordance with the organisation's or enterprise's requirements.
10. Is completed within the specified time.

# Filing Systems

Regardless of size, all educational bodies will need to keep records and information for many reasons. These might include student records, accountability reports, sales, purchases, family/student information and staff employment records. While the list is potentially limitless, a school or educational enterprise must be able to determine which records it will keep and which will be discarded.

While the type and quantity of records held will vary, all records regardless of organisation size must be sorted, classified and if necessary, stored for easy retrieval at a later date.



## Information Storage

The storage systems used by an educational enterprise will vary. It is common that most schools will keep their records in a variety of formats. These may include paper based records stored in a traditional filing cabinet, electronic records stored in a computer database or even image based records stored on microfilm. It is your role as a potential education employee to become familiar with the storage systems that you may be expected to work with.

## Filing

Filing is a way of organising papers by placing them into a container or cabinet in an established order.

A good filing system for a business is important to:

- protect important documents from loss or damage; and
- allow quick retrieval of documents when needed.

Filed information may be needed as the basis of crucial decisions so it is vital that the system is efficient and works properly.



## Reasons For Filing

1. Filing is a memory for the office or business
2. Orderliness of documents allows for them to be retrieved
3. Safety of documents
4. Security of documents
5. Easy accessibility for all people in the office
6. Cleanliness of the office environment



## Features of a Good Filing System

### 1. ACCESSIBILITY

"A place for everything and everything in its place."

#### Centralised systems:

Have all the files contained in one area and are more easily supervised but possibly not as easy to obtain access by staff working in a different part of the business.

Decentralised systems allows each department to keep its own files. This gives the individual department direct and easy access to the files it needs.

### 2. SUITABILITY

The filing system must meet the demands made on it by the business personnel.

### 3. SIMPLICITY

The system should be readily understood by all staff members concerned. It should not require a long period of training for its operation.

The system should serve the business and not control it.

### 4. ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The filing system should be capable of expansion as the business itself grows. This needs forward and thoughtful planning.

### 5. ESTABLISH FILING PROCEDURES

A definite filing policy should be laid down with procedures for releasing material, returning, care of material etc. The policy should be made known to all staff members and these procedures rigidly enforced.

### 6. ECONOMY OF SPACE AND TIME

Take a minimum of floor space and allow for quick and orderly placement of all records in the filing system. Material stored should be quickly retrieved. Ways of saving space are the use of microfilm and computer disks for storing information.



## Choosing A Filing System

- Flexibility - as a business grows so do the files. The system used must allow for expansion.
- Economy of space - floor space is paid for in rent. The filing equipment used should be suitable but economical in the floor space it requires.
- Type of system - when establishing a filing system, the business must choose between a centralised system or a decentralised system.

## Filing Equipment

Filing equipment protects important documents from theft and damage. Filing cabinets should be fire resistant and able to be locked.

There are two basic types of filing cabinets - **flat** and **vertical**.

Flat files are used to store large documents which must stay flat, for example maps, photographs, plans.

Vertical files stand on end.

### Flat File

This is a filing cabinet that has large shallow drawers. It is suitable for filing of photo, maps, plans, and drawings.



FLAT FILE

### Vertical Filing Cabinet

This is used to store materials in an upright position. It is usually constructed of steel, can be locked, and is virtually fire-proof. The material is stored in cardboard folders, separated at intervals by guide cards, and suspended on rails (suspension files).



There are several types of vertical filing systems:

**Suspension files** (file folders are suspended on rails). This is the most common form and is found throughout schools.



Suspension files

**Lateral files** (the end of each file is exposed). This is an open shelf system where the folders are suspended. The papers to be filed are inserted at the side of files instead of from the top. This has the advantage of giving space in a room as there is no need to allow for room for drawers to be pulled out. It is also possible to store the files to ceiling height if necessary.



**Compressors that keep folders vertical in files that do not have suspension racks**

#### **Concertina Folder**

This folder contains pockets for documents to be placed in. The pockets are joined at the bottom and have pleats at the side to allow for expansions.



#### **Compactus**

This is a set of vertical open-shelf filing units that can be moved apart for access and compacted together to save space.



### **Electronic Filing**

Computer technology is now well established in the business and educational environment and provides an electronic filing system through the use of databases.

This system is currently used widely by organisations to record information. Businesses use databases to record details of students, families, customers and suppliers as well as product information; schools use these applications for recording financial administration, student records, staff records and the data required by the educational authorities.

Letters sent by an organisation are also able to be kept as digital data using hard disk drives, CDs/DVDs, etc. rather than on paper stored in manual filing systems. Some businesses maintain a paper copy (hard copy) as well as an electronic copy. Depending upon the information to be stored, many organisations would need to operate both manual and electronic filing systems.



# Check Your Understanding

Email the answers to these questions to your teacher/assessor:

1. Features of a good filing system might include:
  - Mobility
  - Simplicity
  - Suitability
  - Accessibility
2. The filing system most suitable for the storage of maps would be:
  - Lateral
  - Vertical
  - Flat
  - Compactus
3. Reasons for filing might include:
  - To keep the office clean and tidy
  - Ease of accessibility to business records
  - Security of records
  - To eliminate a fire risk
4. A suspension file might be suitable for the storage of:
  - Invoices received
  - Telephone messages
  - General business correspondence
  - Letters
5. The main advantage of digital data files would be:
  - It allows the user to carry records about
  - It allows a large volume of documents to be stored in very little space
  - It allows other types of documents to be discarded
  - It increases the security of business records
6. A compressor is used to:
  - Break up sections in a filing cabinet
  - Label guide cards for easy retrieval
  - Suspend files using a lateral filing system
  - Keep filed matter in an upright position
7. The name shown on each individual file is called a:

Guide card  
Caption  
Tab  
Compressor

8. A card placed in a filing system when a file is removed to indicate its location is known as a:

Tickler file  
A borrow card  
An out card  
A miscellaneous file

9. The terms respectively used to indicate the removal of inactive files on an ongoing basis and the removal of inactive files at set intervals are:

Permanent transfer and perpetual transfer  
Periodic transfer and perpetual transfer  
Perpetual transfer and periodic transfer  
Permanent transfer and periodic transfer

10. The method of filing used to sort files in a telephone book is called the:

Lexicographical method  
Directory method  
Alphabetical method  
Cross-reference method



## Section 6

# Filing and Index Procedures

On completion of this section, participants will be able to:

1. Correctly use the terms associated with filing systems.
2. Effectively remove and return files from filing systems.
3. Cross-referencing as a means of finding information.

# Filing and Index Procedures

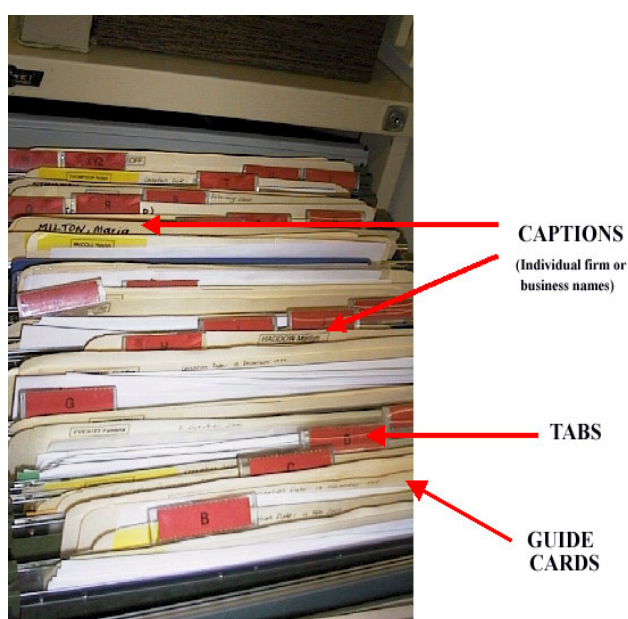
## Terms for Parts of Filing Systems

**Compressors** (or followers) are used in drawers to keep filed material in an upright position.

When documents are filed in drawers, it is necessary to add **guide cards** to break up and identify the sections.

Each guide card has a **tab** to indicate the name of the section.

Each section holds a series of files. These files are in individual folders and each is named by means of a **caption**.



For a filing system to operate effectively, a business must decide on how information is to be filed. The decision should be made according to the most likely way the information may be requested from the files, for example by:

- The name of the writer; or
- The subject matter of the document; or
- The geographical location of the writer or the information.

## Removing and Returning Files

The following procedures only apply when you use cabinet filing systems. Computerised systems often have a password to prevent unauthorised personnel looking up information in an electronic file (database).

If cabinet files are removed and are not to be returned immediately, the following steps should be taken:

- Complete and sign a requisition card which is kept in an outfolder  
  
or
- Complete an 'out guide' card placed where the file is normally situated. These are sometimes simply referred to as 'out' cards.



In either case the following information should be recorded:

borrower's name  
reason for borrowing  
date borrowed  
date to be returned  
signature on borrowing  
signature on returning

### OUTCARD

**File Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**File Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Borrower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Out:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_      **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_      **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



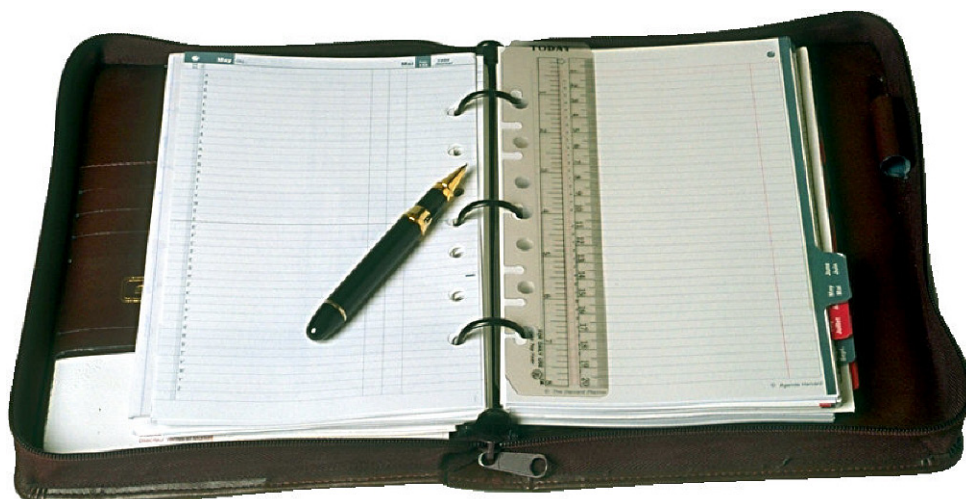
## Should everything filed remain in the files?

Files which are not being used are called inactive files. Inactive files take up valuable space. Most business files must be kept for seven years (by law) but they can be stored in a less expensive area and shredded when no longer required.

The process of removing inactive files is called updating the files. This can be done on a continuous basis known as perpetual updating (perpetual transfer). Or it may be carried out at set regular intervals, for example the first day of a new financial year, or the last day of each three-month period. This is called periodic updating (periodic transfer).

## Tickler File

To enable a secretary to follow up information on certain days, a tickler file is used. A desk diary is a common example. If there are a large number of entries, these may be entered on cards. It is used for reminders on: meetings, dinner appointments, travel, arrangements or trips.



A tickler file is a useful reminder to help the secretary follow up on correspondence.

## Miscellaneous File

It would not be economical to make a new folder for every piece of correspondence received. For example, you may receive a letter of appeal from a charitable organisation, and no further correspondence may eventuate.

Where some subjects are not important enough to warrant a separate file, it is usual to have a Miscellaneous Folder in which all such correspondence is placed. This is kept at the back of the filing drawer. However, should more correspondence be received, it is recommended that a separate file be prepared.

This usually occurs when five or more pieces of correspondence about the one subject have accrued.

Papers are placed in the Miscellaneous File in alphabetical order.



## Indexes

An index is the key to the location of specific information. It shows how the files have been arranged and therefore where the required information is.

**Card indexing** is a very common form of indexing. If you have tried to find information in a library, you would have possibly used a card index either to find:

- the title of a book (in alphabetical order); or
- the author (in alphabetical order); or
- the subject matter (in alphabetical order); or
- the catalogue number of the book.

The cards are kept in order in a small drawer and refer the person looking for the information to a particular section of the library.

The index at the back of your textbook is an example of an **alphabetical index**. It leads you to the page on which you can find specific information.

Under the numerical system of filing, it was seen that an index was essential. The index must be kept in strict alphabetical order for ease of reference. The index would keep such information as the name, address and file number. It may also keep any other information required. The index can be in strip form, or on card, microfiche or computer database. Index cards are filed in drawers while a strip index, which is long and narrow, uses specially designed equipment much like a book page. A microfiche index requires a reader to find the appropriate file number. When an index is kept on a computer database the name of the file is typed. The computer then locates the file number and displays it on the screen.



## **Cross-Referencing**

When there are two or more ways of requesting material, a cross-reference should be used. When using filing cabinets, the information should be filed under the most likely heading and a cross-reference (usually a different coloured sheet in document files), inserted under all other possible headings directing the searcher to the actual location.

### **CROSS REFERENCE SHEET**

**Name or Subject**

**Jones A. K.**

**Regarding**

**Office Supplies**

**SEE**

**Name or Subject**

**Office Supplies**

**A.& J. Distributors Pty Ltd**

**File the cross-reference sheet under the name or subject at top of the sheet. Describe subject matter for identification purposes. The papers themselves should be filed under the name or subject after "SEE".**

In electronic filing, files may be stored and retrieved in numerous ways. For example, they may be retrieved from the database by surname, subject or postcode just to name a few. This is a fast and economical method of retrieving documents.

In many instances it may be desirable to maintain both a paper based copy and an electronic copy. In this instance, it is common to type the location of the file in the footer. This quickly allows the user to retrieve the document electronically should this be required. For example: c:\My Documents\Accounts Receivable\ J. Passmore. This would indicate that the file for J. Passmore is stored on C: drive, in the My Documents folder, in Accounts Receivable.

# Methods of Filing

The four most common filing systems are:

- \* Alphabetical
- \* Subject
- \* Numerical
- \* Geographical

It does not matter which system you use, the papers must be placed in these files in chronological order. This means in order of the date with the latest date on top.

## **Alphabetical System**

This is the most common method of filing documents as it is the easiest to understand and use. It is a **direct** system because it is possible to find any file directly without having to consult an index first. All documents referring to individual persons or firms are kept in the same folder.

Inside cabinet drawers are heavy cards to separate folders into convenient divisions. These are called **primary guides** e.g. A, B, C etc.

Guide cards which break these divisions into subdivisions are called **secondary guides**.

### Advantages

- (a) Provision for grouping of the records relating to the same individual or firm.
- (b) Direct filing and referencing.
- (c) No index required.
- (d) Simplicity of guide and folder arrangement.
- (e) Provision for miscellaneous records.

### Disadvantages

- (a) Congestion under common names.
- (b) Possibility of filing records in more than one place.

## **Numerical Filing**

Documents are numbered and filed in order of number, with the smallest number at the front. This system provides for easy expansion as each new file is given the next number available and this is placed last in the drawer.

**For example:** An insurance company may file policies according to the policy number.

### **Advantages**

- (a) Accuracy.
- (b) Positive numbers that may be used to identify the name of subject when calling for correspondence. These same numbers may be used in various departments and files.
- (c) Unlimited expansion.
- (d) Opportunity for permanent and liberal cross referencing. Index is complete list of all correspondents and subjects.
- (e) No space wasted - one drawer filled before next started.
- (f) No "dead" files. If file is no longer required, it can be removed and its number reassigned.

### **Disadvantages**

- (a) Indirect filing and reference.
- (b) Separate file necessary for miscellaneous records.
- (c) Cumbersome index. Takes longer to retrieve material than with direct alphabetical system.
- (d) High labour cost.

## **Geographical Filing**

The divisions are made according to location. The Primary Guide cards are used to make the main divisions in alphabetical order, e.g. Brisbane, Cairns, etc. While the Secondary Guides break these into subdivision according to suburb.

**For example:** An oil company may file information on its petrol stations according to cities and their suburbs. An exporting company may file its customers according to countries and cities.

### **Advantages**

- (a) Provision of grouping of records by location.
- (b) Direct filing and reference.
- (c) Provision for miscellaneous records.

### **Disadvantages**

- (a) Difficulty in classifying records for filing.

- (b) Need for liberal cross-referencing.
- (c) Unsatisfactory provision for miscellaneous records.
- (d) Need for occasional reference to index to determine subject heading or subdivision.

### **Subject Filing**

The documents relating to one subject are filed under that name and the files are arranged in alphabetical order.

**For example:** An employment agency may file all its applicants according to the type of job they require, e.g. clerk typist, receptionist, stenographer, switchboard operator.

### **Advantages**

- (a) Provision for grouping of records by topics to establish relationships of a statistical or technical nature.
- (b) Unlimited expansion.

### **Disadvantages**

- (a) Sorting by territorial divisions and then by alphabetical order. Increases labour costs and the possibility of error.
- (b) Location as well as name required.
- (c) Need for occasional reference to card index.

## Filing Tips

To assure accurate filing of material and to maintain the files in good working order, you will find it helpful to follow these tips:

1. Always file behind the guides. Experience has shown that this works best and it has therefore become standard practice.
2. There should be a guide for each 4cm of the file card, or approximately every eight folders. Each correspondence file drawer will have about twenty guides.
3. The miscellaneous folder appears BEHIND its matching primary guide and is the LAST folder before the next primary guide. There must be a miscellaneous folder for EACH alphabetic subdivision.
4. In alphabetic or miscellaneous folders, the first order is alphabetical; the second is by date if there are two or more papers about the same correspondent; with the latest date at the front or top.
5. No more than five letters to or from any one firm or individual should be allowed to collect in the miscellaneous folder. Six letters (fewer of they are bulky) is your signal to make out an individual folder.
6. Letters in individual folders should have neatly typed labels. Each should be marked with the code number of the guide behind which it belongs, as well as the name of the firm or the person.
7. Letters in individual folders should be arranged in order of date, the most recent at the front. This facilitates easy finding, since it is the one most likely to be referred to.
8. Keep material neat so that no paper extends beyond the edge of the folder. It not only looks better but also prevents damage to the papers.
9. A maximum of 75 to 80 letters in one folder usually gives greatest efficiency, although there may be as many as 100 pieces. The maximum capacity of an average file drawer is 5000 papers, with necessary folders and guides. However for more efficient operation, the maximum capacity should be held to 4000 papers.



10. Allow 20-25 cm working space in letter or legal drawers to prevent maiming and tearing material.
11. When removing folders from the file, always grasp them by the side or centre - never by the tab. Guides should also be handled from the sides, not the tabs. This saves wear and tear on the folders and guides, and also keeps the labels legible.
12. When filing or removing papers, lift up the folders part way and rest them on the left side of the drawer. This reduces the likelihood of inserting papers between folders.
13. All heading of papers should be to the left as you face the file to facilitate correct placement and easy finding.
14. Avoid the use of clips and pins. These often tear the file and papers often become lost by getting caught behind. Pins may result in injuries.
15. Close every file drawer as soon as you have finished using it, particularly those at the bottom. This is good accident prevention policy.
16. Letters, documents, etc must not be filed until they have a release mark put on them. This may take the form of a rubber stamp, a person's initials or some other office recognised symbol.
17. All inwards correspondence should be date stamped before filing, and filed together with a carbon copy of the reply.
18. When filing newspaper or press clippings, paste them onto a sheet of paper or into a scrap book.
19. Periodicals or magazines can be bound, put into a folder or catalogued.

# Lost or Misplaced Documents/Files

Since finding is the test of your ability in filing, try these clues:

- 1 The first thing to do is to look in the folder standing in front of the one from which the paper is missing. Then try the back one. If this fails, look between and under the folders.
- 2 Check to see if they are filed in the wrong order.
- 3 Papers/documents may have fallen behind the cabinet, under the cabinet, or between drawers.
- 4 They may be covered by other documents on the boss's table.
- 5 Look for transpositions eg James JONES may be under James and not Jones.
- 6 Look under possible abbreviations eg James-Jones Ltd may be under Jones J. if John Jones signed the letter.
- 7 Look at your 'out' cards. The letter may be on someone's desk.
- 8 Look for possible cross-references, even if no cross-reference slip is there. Read the other correspondence for clues.
- 9 Look in your 'To Be Filed' folder or tray, especially if you have been too busy to keep up with daily filing.
- 10 Look in the 'Suspense' folder of the file. Your letter may be part of a pending contract.
- 11 Look into the characteristics of the system you are using:

**Subject filing** - what other subject might have been picked?

**Numerical filing** - what other code number might have been used?

# Indexes

An index is an aid or guide to finding the required information. There are various methods of making up an index:

## Card Index

Cards with the file names and numbers arranged in alphabetical order.



## Slot Index

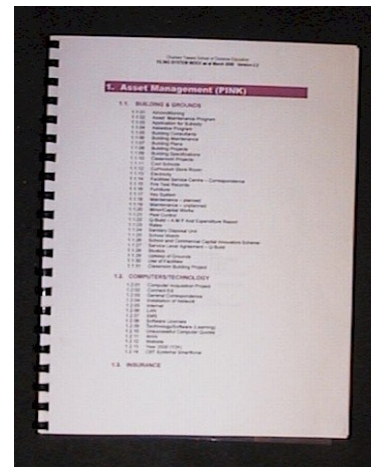
Gives overall information on visible card gives full details.

## Strip Index

Narrow strips of cardboard with file names and details. Placed in metal plates on a stand in alphabetical order.

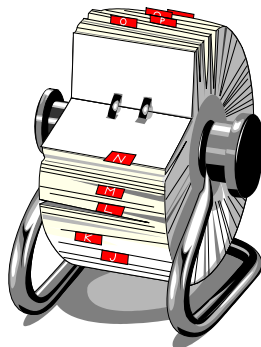
## Book Index

File names and numbers arranged alphabetically in a book.



## Rotary Card Index

Similar to a card index, but placed in a rotary stand.



# Methods of Indexing - Directory

The directory method of indexing is used extensively by business organisations. It is consistent with the method of indexing used in the telephone directory.

Let's look at a sample of how the Brisbane telephone directory has organised names beginning with Mc and Mac.

## Rule 1 Individual names

Think of the names of individuals in the following order: First, the surname or last name; Second, the given name or first name or initial; Third, the middle name or initial. In doing this, names are considered unit by unit, i.e. last name, first name/initial, middle name/initial.

McDonald H W & I M	4778 8264
Bruce Hwy Nme.....	4771 3066
<b>MACDONALD SENATOR HON IAN</b>	
131 Denham Twnvle.....	4771 3411
FAX.....	1800 813 357
FRECALL.....	4723 9482
MacDonald I D 3 Conferta Crt Krwn.....	
McDonald I G & L G	4751 6473
98 Jensen Rd Jnsn.....	
McDonald I L & J S	4782 5285
51 Bowling Green Brndn.....	
Macdonald I M & J A	4751 6232
9 Greendale Crt Drgn.....	
McDonald J A	4778 6186
2 Aurora Drv Black Rvr.....	
McDonald J A 52 Cambridge Givr.....	4779 3993
MacDonald J C 56 Philp Hrmt Pk.....	4771 3421
McDonald J C & Braund R N	4743 4738
14 Kyrie Ave Mt Isa.....	
MacDonald J C & D K	4779 0301
22 Fardon Anndle.....	
McDonald J & D 9 St Ives Mt Lusa.....	4774 8448
McDonald J D & L M	4778 4230
21 Edison Wulgru.....	

The first units, if different, are arranged in alphabetic order. The second units are not considered unless the first units are identical. If both first and second units are identical, then consider the third units.

Name	Correct Indexing Arrangement		
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
William John Fulton	Fulton	William	John
Albert J. Halsted	Halsted	Albert	J.
Alfred Henry Halsted	Halsted	Alfred	Henry
Alfred Howard Halsted	Halsted	Alfred	Howard

## Rule 2 Single surnames or initials

Surnames when used alone, like *Johnson*, precede the same surnames with given names or initials. An initial, when not a known abbreviation, precedes a name beginning with that initial. This rule is sometimes stated, '*Nothing comes before something*'.

Name	Correct Indexing Arrangement		
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Johnson	Johnson		
F. Sarah Johnson	Johnson	F.	Sarah
Florence B. Johnson	Johnson	Florence	B.
Florence Bertha Johnson	Johnson	Florence	Bertha

## Rule 3 Surname prefixes

A surname prefix is considered as part of the surname and not as a separate indexing unit. Surname prefixes include *d', D', Da, de, Des, DO du, Fitz, L', La, Le. M', Mac, Me, O', St., Van, Van der, Von, Von der, Mt.* and *Mount* and others.

The prefixes *M', Mac,* and *Mc* are all treated as *Mac*. The prefix *St.* is indexed *Saint*, as though spelled in full but if a whole name is *Saint*, that name comes before any with *St.* *Mt* and *Mount* are treated in the same manner as *St* and *Saint*.

Name	Correct Indexing Arrangement		
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
William W. Fitz Gerald	Fitz Gerald	William	W.
Maude L. La Rue	La Rue	Maude	L.
Laura I. Le Mond	Le Mond	Laura	I.
Alice J. McFarland	Mcfarland	Alice	J.
Arthur T. MacFarland	MacFarland	Arthur	T.
Nancy Ann Saintillere	Saintillere	Nancy	Ann
Eva Jane St. John	Saint John	Eva	Jane

## Rule 4 Firm names

The units in the names of firms and institutions are indexed in the same order as they are written if they do not include the complete name of an individual. If the firm name begins with a foreign word, it is *not* considered as a separate indexing unit but is combined with the word that follows it.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>
Bundlie Metal Distributors	Bundlie	Metal	Distributors
Caldwell Transportation Lines	Caldwell	Transportation	Lines
Capital Key Shop	Capital	Key	Shop
Des Artistes Cafe	Des	Artistes	Cafe

### **Rule 5. Firm names including complete individual names**

When the complete name of an individual is included in the name of a firm or institution, the surname of the individual is considered as the first unit; the given name or first initial is the second unit; the middle name or initial, if any, is the third unit; and the rest of the firm name is the fourth unit.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
North West Produce Market	North West	Produce	Market	
North-West Rope & Supply Co	North-West	Rope (&)	Supply	Company
Northwest Sales, Ltd	Northwest	Sales	Limited	

### **Rule 6 Hyphenated names**

In a hyphenated firm name, the individual surnames are indexed as separate units, but the hyphenated surname of an individual is considered as a single unit. This also applies when a hyphenated surname of an individual is included in a firm name.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>
Reid-Ballard Markets	Reid	Ballard	Markets
Ralph J. Reiss-Manus	Reiss-Manus	Ralph	J.
James Renner-Davis Agency	Renner-Davis	James	Agency

### **Rule 7 Abbreviations**

Known abbreviations are indexed as though they were spelled in full, *Ltd, Inc., Bros, Mfg, Corp*. When initials precede a name, they are treated as the first name regardless of punctuation.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
GBS Productions	GBS	Productions		
Jas. S. Gallagher	Gallagher	James	S.	
H G Delivery Service	H G	Delivery	Service	
Thos. C. Haas Originals	Haas	thomas	C.	Originals
Ideal Plastics Corp.	Ideal	Plastics	Corporation	
Idol, Inc.	Idol	Incorporated		
Jessop Steel Co.	Jessop	Steel	Company	

### **Rule 8 Articles, conjunctions and prepositions**

Articles, conjunctions and prepositions, such as *the*, *and*, *of*, *for*, *on*, *to*, *by*, the sign for *and* (&), and the phrase *of the* are not considered as units and are therefore disregarded in indexing. On filing cards and folders these words are written in their normal sequence, with this exception: when the word '*The*' is the first word in a name, it is placed at the end in parenthesis. If '*the*' comes in the middle of a name, it is placed in parenthesis but is not moved.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
B. Malcolm Bros & Co.	Malcolm	B.	Brothers &	Company
Malcolm of London, Inc.	Malcolm of	London	Incorporated	
The Music Tailors	Music	Tailors (The)		
The Old Rose Cleaners	Old	Rose	Cleaners (The)	

## Rule 9 One or two words

When the same name may be written either as one word, two words or a hyphenated word, it is considered as one indexing unit.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Correct Indexing Arrangement</i>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
North West Produce Market	North West	Produce	Market	
North-West Rope & Supply Co	North-West	Rope (&)	Supply	Company
Northwest Sales, Ltd	Northwest	Sales	Limited	

## Rule 10 Compound geographic names

The parts of compound geographic names are indexed as separate units, except when the first part of the name is not an English word, such as San Francisco.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Correct Indexing Arrangement</i>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
New Zealand Galleries Inc.	New	Zealand	Galleries	Inc.
St. George Warehouse Co.	Saint	George	Warehouse	Comp.
San Francisco Textile Corp.	San	Francisco	Textile	Corporation

## Rule 11 Titles or degrees

Titles or degrees of individuals are not considered as units and are therefore disregarded in indexing. When writing filing cards or folders, place the title or degree in parenthesis after the name. Titles that denote seniority, such as *Jr*, *Sr*, *2nd*, are placed in parentheses at the end of the name but are considered as indexing units.

*Exception A:* When the name of an individual consists of a title and one name not recognised as a surname, such as Queen Elizabeth, the title is considered as the first indexing unit.

*Exception B:* When a title is the first word of a firm name, it is considered as the first indexing unit.



<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>			
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>Unit 4</b>
Dr Wells Beverage Co.	Doctor	Wells	Beverage	Company
Father John	Father	John		
Madame Blanche Beauty Salon	Madame	Blanche	Beauty	Salon
Capt. John Norton	Norton	John	(Capt.)	
Howard S. Seton, Jr	Seton	Howard	S.	(Jr)

## Rule 12 Possessives

When a name ends with apostrophe s ('s), the s is disregarded in indexing. When a name ends with s apostrophe (s'), the s is part of the name and is included in indexing. Think of the apostrophe as the 'stop' sign.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>
Power's Oil Company	Power	Oil	Company
Rudolph J. Power	Power	Rudolph	J.
Powers' Engraving Co.	Powers'	Engraving	Comapany
Powers & Holman	Powers &	Holman	

## Rule 13 Numbers

A number in a name is regarded as though written in words, and the entire number is indexed as one unit. Numbers over 1000, such as 1809, should be indexed *eighteen hundred nine* and not as *one thousand eight hundred nine*.

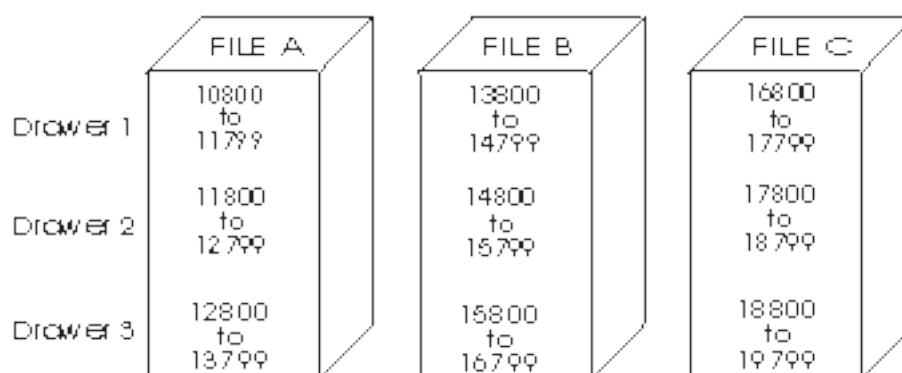
<b>Name</b>	<b>Correct Indexing Arrangement</b>		
	<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>Unit 3</b>
96 <sup>th</sup> Street Warehouse	Ninety-Sixth	Street	Warehouse
The 3 Arts Club	ThreeArts	Club (The)	
306 Management Co.	Three Hundred Six	Management	Company

## Methods of Indexing - Numeric

Material is filed according to numbers. Numerical indexing requires the use of a separate card index in which the names are filed alphabetically. Each card will show the name of the person or organisation, the number of the file folder and any other important information, for example addresses and phone numbers of clients.

Numerical filing systems are indirect systems—it is necessary to find the card in the index before the actual folder can be traced. It would normally take twice as long to retrieve material under this system than under an alphabetical (direct) system.

Each rectangle in the diagram below; represents the front of a file drawer. The numbers on the front of each drawer represent the range of numbers found in the drawer.



This is a numeric lateral filing system.

# Methods of Indexing - Chronological

Under this system, letters, etc., are filed in order of date. Guide cards should be provided for each month of the year and each section then subdivided into days of the month.

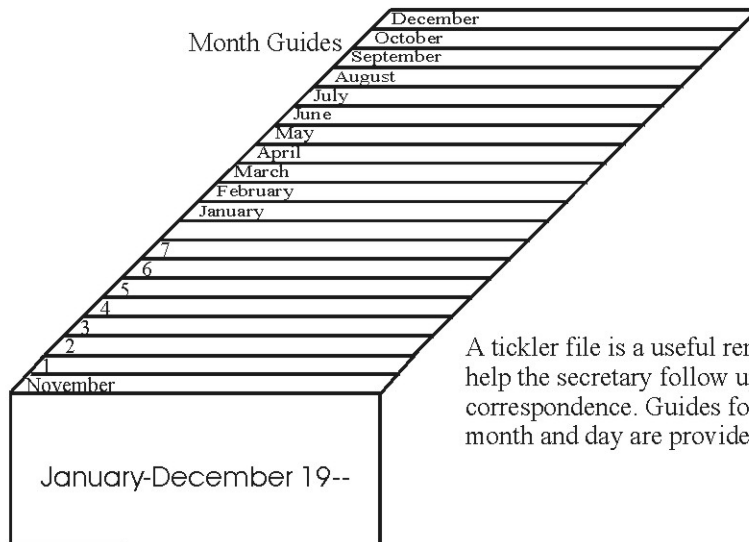
Letters which require 'follow-up' are often filed in this manner.

The most common form of chronological file is known as a 'tickler file'. Tickler files consist of twelve-month guides and thirty-one day guides. The current month is always at the front of the drawer followed by the day folders. Correspondence relevant to the current month is placed in the proper day folder. Material required in a future month is placed in its month folder at the back of the drawer. On the first day of a new month, the old month folder is taken to the back and the new month's papers are distributed in the appropriate day folders.

This card would be behind November 11 guide

NAME OR SUBJECT <i>David Harris</i>	ACTION FOR <i>11/11 --</i>
IN <i>Dictating Equipment</i>	DATE OF LETTER <i>8/10/1 --</i>
TAKEN BY <i>Paul Williams</i>	
SIGNED <i>PW</i>	

Month Guides



A tickler file is a useful reminder to help the secretary follow up on correspondence. Guides for each month and day are provided.

# Glossary Of Terms

ACTUAL REPORTING	Actual reporting may be thought of as that where an undistorted account of some phenomenon is all important.
ANALYTICAL REPORT	Analytical report - the decision-maker commissions someone else to investigate the problem; the report writer solves the problem and offers the solution as a recommendation; the decision-maker decides whether to accept the recommendation or not.
ANALYTICAL REPORTING	Analytical reporting is where logical analysis shapes and gives meaning to the facts.
ARTICLES	Articles are often mistaken for reports - and vice-versa. The main difference is that a report always provides information needed for a decision, and commonly includes recommendations. An article is a general discussion of a particular point of view.
BRIEFING NOTES	Briefing notes are documents that provide background information relating to a situation. The writer provides an analysis of the situation, and suggest alternative outcomes. Briefing notes are written by expert staff to inform managers and others who are going to encounter the situation for the first time.
CONCEPT MAPPING	Concept Mapping is using the ordinary processes of the brain to help you recall information that you are at present unaware.
CONTEXT	Context means the environment in which you are writing. In most cases that means the organisation you work for.
CONCLUSION	The Conclusion of a report provides a concise summary of the facts learnt.

EXPRESSIVE	Expressive reporting is far more concerned with an entertaining or artistic version of the subject than with straight “facts”.
FEASIBILITY STUDY	Feasibility study - the report writer provides information about a project and possible problems to help the decision-maker decide whether to go ahead with that project.
FINDINGS	The Findings section of a report deals with the results of the investigation.
HUMAN INTEREST REPORTING	Human interest reporting is almost more a social ritual with the audience than a transmission of real information.
INFORMATION REPORT	Information report - the decision-maker obtains information he/she needs and makes the decision.
INTERPRETATIVE REPORTING	Interpretative reporting is where logical analysis shapes and gives meaning to the facts.
INTRODUCTION	The Introduction of a report states the objectives and areas of investigation for the report.
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT	Investigative report - a person investigates a problem and offers the solution to anyone who wants that solution.
PERSONAL REPORTING	Personal reporting is dominated by the personality, opinions or style of the writer, often over and above the ostensible subject.
PRIMARY SOURCES	Primary sources of information are taken from first-hand experience with the subject or event in question.