

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Writing	1
Social Notes.....	3
Email Messages	9
Friendly Letters	11
Business Letters.....	13
Envelopes	15
Job Application Cover Letters	17
Résumés.....	19
Interview Follow-Up Letters	21
Agendas.....	23
Meeting Notes	25
Brochures.....	27
Web Home Pages	29
Chapter 2: Speaking	31
Telephone Communication	33
Requests for Information	37
Complaints	39
Solicitations.....	41
Job Seeking.....	43
Introductions.....	45
Announcements	47
Interviews	49
Discussions	51
Meetings	53
Speeches	55
Campaigns.....	59
Honours	61
Chapter 3: Listening	63
Directions and Messages.....	69
One-on-One Conversation.....	73
Group Discussion.....	77
Speech and Lecture Notes	81
Stories and Poems	85
Broadcast Media	91

Introduction

Most students do not aspire to become famous orators or writers. However, they do need to be able to communicate in numerous ways, both with individuals and with groups, throughout their lives. In many different settings, they need to be able to listen effectively, and they need to competently express their thoughts and feelings in speech and writing. Many of these communication skills will eventually help them to advance in their careers or to participate more meaningfully in social and political arenas. The more immediate benefit, however, is the ability to learn effectively, think critically and enrich personal relationships.

Page 33 of the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts (1996) highlights the importance of this study:

Throughout their lives, students will write and speak in widely differing social arenas: as informed citizens, as employees and co-workers, as neighbours. They will also use language as members of a family, for personal affirmation and reflection, and for cultural enrichment. In each instance, they will draw on their knowledge of language conventions as they adjust their speech and writing to respond to the needs of specific audiences, purposes, and situations.

This book focuses on communication strategies and conventions for situations that students confront in their daily lives. Three chapters address fundamentals of audience, purpose and occasion in various writing, speaking and listening situations. Activities help students to apply strategies to make their communication - personal or public - more active and more purposeful. Whether they are following directions, interviewing for a job, designing a Web page, using the telephone or writing a sympathy note to a friend, students learn to analyse the communication situation and respond appropriately.

Chapter 1: Writing

Forget about school writing for a moment. Think, instead, about the other writing you do. Maybe you wrote a note to a friend this morning about your weekend or a thank-you note to your aunt and uncle for the birthday money they sent you last week, or maybe last night you posted an email on your favourite Internet board about the latest Leonardo DiCaprio film.

Assess Your Writing Needs

Look at the following list of common types of personal and public writing. In the second column, check those types that you have already written at some time in the past. Then think about your future writing and, in the third column, circle the word that indicates how often you think you will write each of these types of correspondence.

Types of Writing	Have Already Written	Will Need to Write in the Future		
Thank-you notes		often	occasionally	never
Congratulatory notes		often	occasionally	never
Sympathy notes		often	occasionally	never
Invitations		often	occasionally	never
Email messages		often	occasionally	never
Friendly letters		often	occasionally	never
Business letters		often	occasionally	never
Résumés		often	occasionally	never
Meeting agendas		often	occasionally	never
Meeting notes		often	occasionally	never
Brochures		often	occasionally	never
World Wide Web pages		often	occasionally	never

The following pages focus on the above types of writing. Although you may not have prepared all of these documents in the past, you probably will in the future. The instructions, samples and activities in this chapter will help you improve your skills in real-life correspondence.

Purpose and Audience

In everything you write, what you say and how you say it are determined by two important elements common to all writing: purpose and audience. First of all, what you say is determined by your purpose - whether it is to bring your friend up-to-date on your social life or to thank your relatives. Secondly, your relationship with your audience - the person or people to whom you are writing - determines how you say something or what words you choose. Your choice of words determines your tone, which is usually defined as the writer's attitude. For example, if your attitude toward your aunt and uncle is formal, you may thank them for the 'generous gift'; however, if it is informal, you may jokingly thank them for the 'cash flow', giving your thank-you note a humorous tone.

Assess Your Tone

Your choice of formal or informal tone depends on your audience. Usually, correspondence with close friends and family is informal; correspondence with businesses and school personnel is formal. Think of writing that you have done recently. List three examples in the first column (include the audience). In the second, state your purpose for each piece of writing. In the last column, circle the tone you used in that writing. (Follow the model in number one.)

Type of Writing and Audience	Purpose	Tone
1. A note to my mum	To say I went to my friend's house	Formal or <u>Informal</u>
2.		Formal or Informal
3.		Formal or Informal
4.		Formal or Informal

Pen or Computer?

Audience and purpose also affect what writing medium you use - pen or computer, for example. When you write email to an online pen pal, you use a computer. When you write a cover letter and resume for a part-time job, you also use a computer. When you write a thank-you note for a job interview, you may write by hand to convey a personal tone that the computer cannot provide. List examples of writing that you would prepare by each medium.

On Computer	By Hand

Conventions

Finally, audience and purpose determine protocol - the conventions or accepted rules of style used by most people for various types of correspondence. From an ad for a bicycle to an Internet home page, standard practices guide writers. These conventions guide writers as they decide on form, content, punctuation and word choices for specific occasions and audiences. However, these conventions are not hard and fast rules. In fact, as times change, writing conventions change. For example, electronic mail - now commonplace - has produced a whole new set of writing conventions, called *email etiquette*. The next few pages will provide models, conventions and writing activities to help you improve your everyday writing.

Social Notes

Social notes express recognition of special occasions or achievements; thus, the term noteworthy is used to describe them. We send them to offer congratulations on birthdays and graduations, to invite people to parties, to express our appreciation for a gift or kindness, or just to say we appreciate a person's friendship.

The practice of sending notes is as old as paper itself, and some social notes have even become literary treasures. For example, the poems of the famous American poet Emily Dickinson were actually notes she sent to friends and loved ones. The Dickinson poem below was a thank-you note sent along with a flower. What do you think the poet was thanking her friend for? Explain your answer below or write your own thank-you poem. (If you like Emily Dickinson's poems, you will find more online at <http://userweb.interactive.net/~krisxlee/emily>)

*I pay in satin cash
You did not state your price.
A Petal, for a paragraph
Is near as I can guess.*

Emily Dickinson sent all of her notes by mail or messenger. Of course, she lived in the mid 1800s. Today we use two primary modes for sending social messages - electronic and postal. Notes sent through the mail may be handwritten or computer-generated. Handwritten notes communicate personalised messages, and, in spite of the convenience and efficiency of instant email, the handwritten note is still very much appreciated (think how pleased you are to receive a handwritten note from a friend).

However, some people correspond entirely by computer, sending all of their notes electronically. Others write each note by hand. Some people create and save their own social notes on the computer and then send these personal designs rather than buying cards. Once again, audience and purpose govern these decisions. You probably would not choose to write email to someone who dislikes using electronic mail; whereas, you could send email to anyone who provided an online address on his or her stationery, advertising or business cards.



Handwritten Notes

Most writers use the following conventions for writing notes by hand:

- Write neatly with a blue or black ink pen and use complete sentences.
- Leave margins on the top and bottom and on both sides.
- Write the date in the upper right corner (use standard abbreviations for months).
- Skip two lines, write the salutation (Dear _____,) at the left margin, and add a comma.
- Indent five spaces and begin by stating the reason for your note in the first sentence.
- Depending on the number of topics you want to cover in your note, it may be several sentences or several paragraphs. Change paragraphs whenever you change topics.
- Conclude your note gracefully in the last one or two sentences by summing up your reason for writing and wishing your reader well.
- Skip two lines, write a suitable closing with the first letter capitalised (Yours truly, Love, Your friend,) at the right margin, and end the line with a comma.
- Sign your name below the closing.
- If you wish to add a postscript (a line at the bottom), write P.S. at the left margin and write a short parting comment. Be certain to proofread your entire message.

Review the standard abbreviations for months by completing the chart below. Write out four-letter names; for those longer than four letters, use three-letter abbreviations.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

Guidelines for Hand-Addressed Envelopes

- Use envelopes pre-printed with the four postcode squares.
- Print the four numerals of the destination postcode clearly and neatly within the squares.
- Do not use the squares on hand-addressed envelopes for overseas addresses - even if the overseas postcode can fit into four squares.

