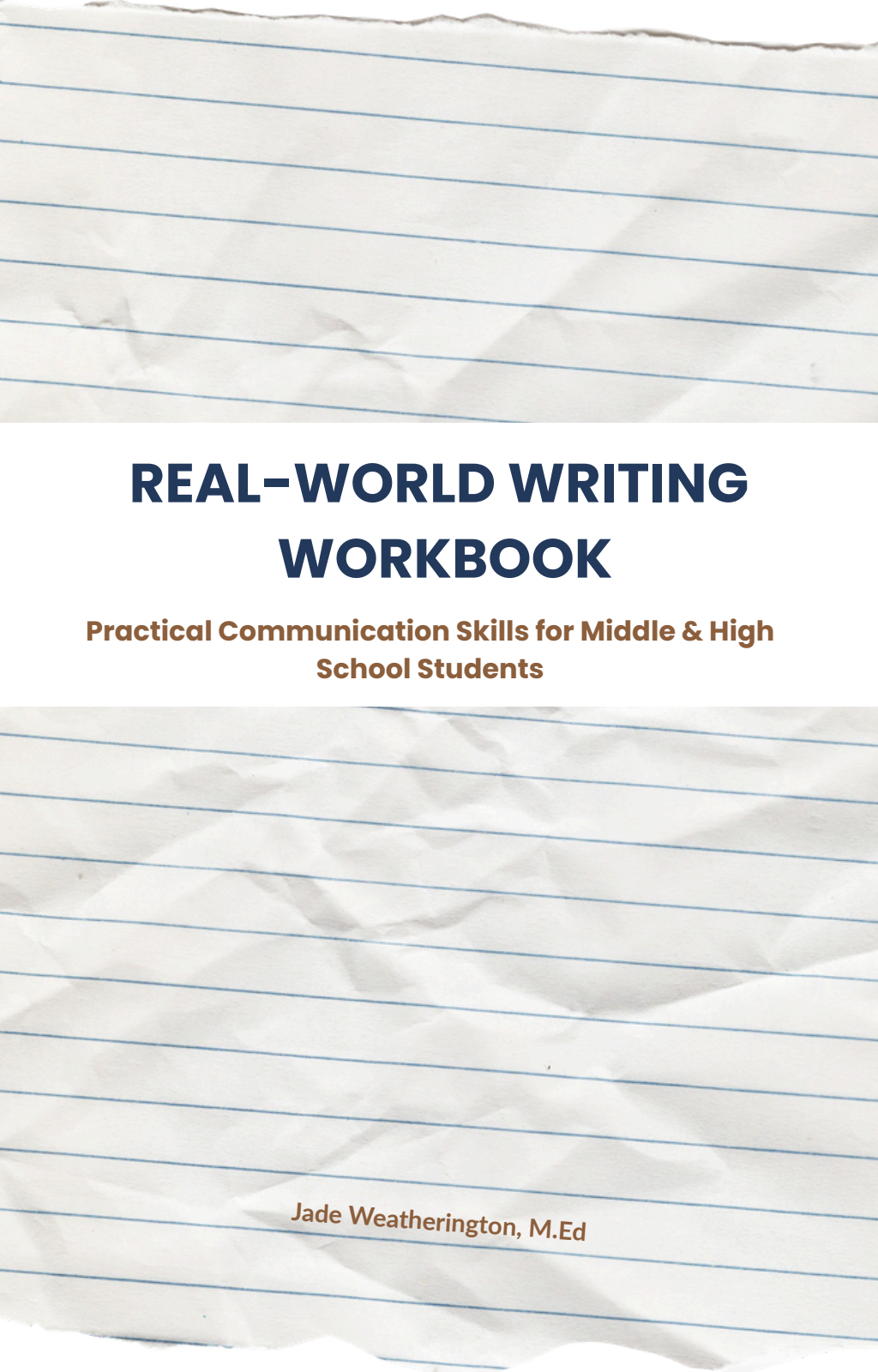


The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of crumpled, off-white paper with horizontal blue lines. The paper is wrinkled and folded, creating a textured appearance. The top edge of the paper is torn and irregular.

REAL-WORLD WRITING WORKBOOK

**Practical Communication Skills for Middle & High
School Students**

Jade Weatherington, M.Ed

A Note to Parents and Educators

Dear Parents and Educators,

Welcome to the Real-World Writing Workbook: Practical Communication Skills for Middle & High School Students. Writing is more than completing essays and assignments. Every day, students communicate through emails, messages, applications, forms, online platforms, and professional conversations. The ability to communicate clearly, respectfully, and effectively is a skill that students will use throughout high school, college, the workplace, and everyday life.

This workbook was designed to help students develop authentic writing skills through real-life situations. Instead of focusing only on academic writing, students will practice the types of communication they are most likely to encounter, including professional emails, requests, applications, digital communication, workplace writing, and community interactions.

Thank you for supporting students as they develop one of the most valuable skills they will carry into adulthood: the ability to communicate with purpose.

Sincerely,

Jade Weatherington

Teacher Jade's Writing Academy

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed to help middle and high school students build practical writing and communication skills through authentic, real-world situations. Each lesson focuses on a writing task students are likely to encounter in school, the workplace, college, or everyday life.

Getting Started

Work through the lessons in order or choose topics based on your student's needs. While the lessons build on one another, each can also be completed independently. Students should read the instructional pages, study the examples, complete the guided practice, and then apply what they have learned in the independent writing activities.

Suggested Pace

This workbook is flexible and can be adapted to fit a variety of learning environments.

- One lesson per week for a semester-long course
- Two to three lessons per week for a quarter course
- Independent study at the student's own pace
- Supplemental practice alongside an English Language Arts curriculum

Communication Skills Checklist

Use this checklist before submitting, sending, or sharing any piece of writing. Checking your work for these key elements will help you communicate clearly, confidently, and professionally.

Purpose

- ☐ I understand why I am writing.
- ☐ My message stays focused on the main purpose.
- ☐ I included all the necessary information.

Audience

- ☐ I know who will read my writing.
- ☐ My tone is appropriate for my audience.
- ☐ I used respectful and courteous language.

Organization

- ☐ My writing has a clear beginning, middle, and ending.
- ☐ My ideas are presented in a logical order.
- ☐ Each paragraph focuses on one main idea.

Clarity

- ☐ My writing is easy to understand.
- ☐ I avoided unnecessary words or repetition.
- ☐ I explained my ideas clearly.

BEFORE YOU SEND IT

Purpose: Why am I writing?

Audience: Who am I writing to?

Clarity: Can the reader understand what I need?

Tone: Does my language fit the situation?

Spelling: Did I proofread?

Communication Skills Checklist(continued)

Professionalism

- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I chose appropriate vocabulary.
- ☐ I avoided slang, texting abbreviations, and emojis unless the situation called for them.
- ☐ If I wrote an email or letter, I included the appropriate greeting and closing.

Mechanics

- ☐ I checked my spelling.
- ☐ I corrected grammar mistakes.
- ☐ I used proper capitalization.
- ☐ I checked my punctuation.

Final Review

- ☐ I read my writing aloud.
- ☐ I made revisions to improve clarity.
- ☐ I am confident my writing communicates my message effectively.

Reflection

After reviewing your work, answer these questions.

What is one strength of this piece of writing?

What is one thing you could improve next time?

If your reader had only one takeaway, what would you want it to be?

Basic Email Communication

Email Communications

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write an email that is clear, respectful, and gets a response?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

In school and the workplace, email is one of the most common forms of communication. Knowing how to write a professional email helps you make a positive first impression and communicate effectively.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose: To share information, ask questions, make requests, or build connections in a clear and professional way.

When to Use It: When communication needs to be written, kept as a record, or sent to someone you may not see in person.

Key Rules

- Use a clear subject line.
- Be respectful and professional.
- State your purpose early.
- Keep your message focused.
- Proofread before sending.

Common Mistakes

- Missing or unclear subject lines
- Using slang or text abbreviations
- Being too vague or too long
- Forgetting a closing

SEE IT

WEAK EXAMPLE

Subject: Hey

Hi,
Can u help me?
Thanks!

STRONG EXAMPLE

Subject: Question about Friday's Assignment
Hello Professor Johnson,
I have a question about Friday's assignment.
Would you clarify whether we need to submit both the outline and the final draft?
Thank you for your time.
Regards,
Jason Jones

BREAK IT DOWN

- ☐ Subject line
- ☐ Greeting
- ☐ Purpose
- ☐ Details
- ☐ Closing
- ☐ Signature

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Subject: practice
hey coach,
is practice 2nite? It's raining a lot
and i dont know if we r still having
it.
Thanks!

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Scenario:

Your soccer practice has been cancelled due to rain. Email your coach to ask whether the game on Saturday is still scheduled.

REFLECTION

1.What did you learn?

2.What was the hardest part?

3.Where might you use this skill?



COMMUNICATION TIP

Always include a clear subject line. A specific subject line helps your reader understand the purpose of your email

QUICK CHECKLIST

Before sending an email, did you...

- ☐ Include a subject line?
- ☐ Use a greeting?
- ☐ Explain your purpose?
- ☐ Check the spelling?
- ☐ End politely?



EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Skill	What to Do	Avoid
Email Etiquette	Be polite, respectful, and professional. Get to the point and proofread before sending.	Slang, texting abbreviations, unnecessary information, or sending without proofreading.
Subject Lines	Write a short, specific subject that tells the reader what the email is about.	Blank, vague, or overly casual subject lines such as "Hey" or "Question."
Greeting	Begin with an appropriate greeting such as "Hello Ms. Johnson" or "Dear Mr. Lee."	Starting with "Hey," "Yo," or no greeting at all in a professional email.
Closing	End with a polite closing such as "Thank you," "Sincerely," or "Best," followed by your	Ending with "Thanks," without your name, "Sent from my phone," or no closing.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE:

Quick Guide

Professional	Casual
Hello Ms. Garcia,	Hey!
I have a question about the assignment.	I have a question...
Could you please clarify the deadline?	When is this due?
Thank you for your help.	Thanks!
Sincerely, Pasha	See ya, Pasha

PRACTICE

hi mr johnson

I missed class yesterday because I was sick and I need to know what I missed. can you send me everything we did and the homework because I dont know what it is. Also I heard there is a test soon when is it? I might not be here friday either so can you tell me if I can take it another day.

thanks

jake

THANK YOU EMAIL

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write a thank-you email that sounds sincere, professional, and appropriate for the situation?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Thank-you emails are useful after interviews, meetings, volunteer experiences, internships, presentations, or when someone has helped you. A thoughtful thank-you email can show appreciation and leave a positive impression.

📖 LEARN IT

What Is a Thank-You Email?

A thank-you email is a short message that shows appreciation to someone for their time, help, advice, or an opportunity.

The Purpose

A good thank-you email should:

- Show that you appreciate the person.
- Mention what you are thankful for.
- Remind the reader of the interaction or opportunity.
- Leave a positive and respectful impression.

When to Use It

You might send a thank-you email after:

- A job or college interview
- A meeting or presentation
- An internship or volunteer experience
- Someone gives you advice or assistance
- Someone helps you with a project or opportunity

STRONG EXAMPLE

Dear Mr. Fellini,
Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday to discuss the volunteer opportunity. I appreciated learning more about the program. I am excited about the possibility of getting involved.
Thank you again for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Sam

BREAK IT DOWN

- ☐ Subject Line: Purpose
- ☐ Greeting: Name + Formality
- ☐ Thank You: Appreciation
- ☐ Specific Detail
- ☐ Closing: Appreciation
- ☐ Signature: Name

PRACTICE

Write a thank-you email for one of the situations below:

Option 1: You interviewed for a volunteer position.

Option 2: A teacher helped you with an important project.

Option 3: Someone gave you advice about a job or career.

Requesting Information

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write a clear and polite email when I need to request information?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

You may need to request information from a school, business, employer, organization, college, or community program. A well-written request makes it easier for the reader to understand your questions and provide the information you need.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A request for information email is used to ask someone for specific information, details, instructions, or clarification.

When to Use It

Use this type of email when you need to:

- Ask about a program or opportunity
- Request instructions or details
- Ask about a schedule or deadline
- Get information about a product or service
- Clarify something you do not understand

Key Rules

1. Clearly explain why you are contacting the person.
2. Ask specific questions.
3. Use polite and professional language.
4. Make it easy for the reader to understand what information you need.
5. Thank the person for their time.

SEE IT

WEAK EXAMPLE

Hi,
I want to know more about the program. Can you send me some information?
Thanks,
Maya

STRONG EXAMPLE

Subject: Question About Summer Internship Program
Dear Mr. Davis,
I am interested in applying for the summer internship program. Could you please provide information about the application deadline, required materials, and weekly schedule?
Thank you for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.
Sincerely,
Maya

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Subject: camp
hey
I heard about the summer camp and want to know stuff about it. When is it and how much does it cost? Also what do I need to bring?
thanks
Chris

Requesting Information

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write an email requesting information about **ONE** of the following:

- A volunteer opportunity
- A summer program
- A job opportunity
- A college event
- A community activity

Common Mistakes

Being too vague
Asking too many unrelated questions
Using casual language or slang
Forgetting a greeting or closing
Not explaining why you need the information

Reflection (Choose One)

1. Why is it important to ask specific questions?
2. How does professional language affect the response you might receive?
3. What information would you need to request in a real-world situation?



COMMUNICATION TIP

Be specific and polite. Tell the reader exactly what information you need instead of simply saying, "Can you give me more information?"

QUICK CHECKLIST

Before sending an email, did you...

- ☐ Include a subject line?
- ☐ Use a greeting?
- ☐ Explain your purpose?
- ☐ Check the spelling?
- ☐ End politely?



Asking for Help

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I ask for help in a way that is clear, respectful, and appropriate?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Everyone needs help sometimes. You may need to ask a teacher for clarification, ask a supervisor for guidance, ask a coworker for assistance, or ask someone for support with a problem.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

An email asking for help allows you to explain what you need and respectfully request assistance.

When to Use It

Use this type of email when you:

- Do not understand something
- Are having difficulty completing a task
- Need clarification
- Need guidance on what to do next
- Have tried to solve a problem but still need assistance

Key Rules

1. Clearly explain what you need help with.
2. Show that you have made an effort when appropriate.
3. Ask politely instead of demanding help.
4. Be specific about the assistance you need.
5. Thank the person for their time.

SEE IT

Subject: Request for Help With Assignment

Dear Ms. Brown,

I am having difficulty understanding the research assignment. I reviewed the instructions and my notes, but I am still unsure about how to organize my sources. Could you please help me understand what I should do next?

Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely,
Marcus

Common Mistakes

- Saying only "I need help."
- Blaming someone for the problem.
- Using demanding language.
- Expecting the person to solve the entire problem.
- Failing to explain what you have already tried.

BREAK IT DOWN

- Greeting: Use an appropriate greeting.
- Problem: Clearly explain what you are having difficulty with.
- Effort: Mention what you have already tried when relevant.
- Request: Clearly state the help you need.
- Politeness: Use respectful language.
- Closing: Thank the person and sign your name.

Asking for Help

PRACTICE: Fix It

Subject: I need help

Hey,

I don't get the project and I don't know what I'm doing. Can you just tell me what to do because the directions aren't clear. I tried looking at them but they don't make sense.

Thanks

Jordan

REFLECTION

Why is it helpful to explain the problem before asking for help?

What is the difference between asking for help and demanding help?

Professional Communication

Cover Letters

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write a cover letter that shows an employer why I am a good fit for a position?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

A cover letter can accompany a resume when applying for a job, internship, or other professional opportunity. It gives you a chance to introduce yourself and explain why your skills and experience make you a strong candidate.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A cover letter introduces you to an employer and connects your skills and experience to the position you are applying for.

When to Use It

- When an employer requests a cover letter
- When you want to provide additional information beyond your resume

Key Rules

- Customize the letter for the specific position.
- Focus on skills and experiences that relate to the job.

Common Mistakes

- Sending the exact same letter for every job
- Repeating the entire resume

SEE IT

SIMPLIFIED

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to apply for the Customer Service Representative position. Through my volunteer experience, I have developed strong communication and problem-solving skills. I enjoy helping others and would be excited to use these skills to support your customers.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my qualifications.

Sincerely,
Alex

POOR EXAMPLE

Dear Hiring Manager,

I want this job because I need a job. I have worked before and I am good at a lot of things. I think I would be good at this job. Please hire me.

Thanks,
Alex

Cover Letters

PRACTICE ONE: FIX IT

Hi,
I want to apply for the job at your store. I am good with people and I have worked with customers before. I think I would be good at this job because I am nice and work hard. Please let me know if I get the job.
Thanks,
Taylor

BREAKDOWN

- ☐ Introduction: State the position you are applying for.
- ☐ Skills: Highlight relevant skills or experience.
- ☐ Connection: Explain why you are a good fit.
- ☐ Interest: Show enthusiasm for the opportunity.
- ☐ Closing: Thank the employer and express interest in continuing the conversation.



TIP

Connect yourself to the job. Do not just list what you have done. Explain how your experience would help you succeed in the position.

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a cover letter for one of these positions:

- Part-time job
- Summer job

Include the position you are applying for, one relevant skill or experience, and an explanation of why you would be a good fit.

[illegible]

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I communicate professionally when dealing with conflict at work?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Disagreements can happen in any workplace. Knowing how to communicate calmly and respectfully can help you solve problems, protect professional relationships, and prevent small issues from becoming larger ones.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

Professional conflict communication allows you to address a problem, explain your perspective, and work toward a reasonable solution.

When to Use It

- When you disagree with a coworker or supervisor
- When a workplace problem needs to be addressed

Key Rules

- Focus on the situation rather than attacking the person.
- Explain your concern calmly and suggest a solution when possible.

Common Mistakes

- Using angry, insulting, or threatening language
- Blaming someone without explaining the problem

SEE IT

Situation: A coworker repeatedly leaves unfinished tasks for you at the end of a shift.

Professional response:

"Hey Jerri, I wanted to talk about the closing tasks. I've noticed that some tasks have been left unfinished at the end of your shift, and I've had to complete them before I can leave. Could we review the task list together so we can make sure everything is completed before each shift ends?"

BREAKDOWN

- Focus on the specific problem
- Use calm and respectful language
- Avoid personal attacks or blame
- Explain how the problem affects the situation
- Suggest a solution when appropriate



TIP

Address the problem, not the person. Describe what is happening and focus on finding a solution.

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Rewrite this response so that it addresses the problem professionally:
"You're always leaving your work for me. It's not fair, and I'm tired of having to do your job. You need to start doing your work."

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

You are working on a group project with a coworker who frequently misses deadlines, causing the rest of the team to fall behind.

Write a professional message that:

- Explains the problem
- Describes how it affects the team
- Suggests a way to move forward

TAKE YOUR JOB WRITING SKILLS FURTHER

Want more practice with real-world writing?

Teacher Jade's Job Market Self-Paced Course helps students build the communication skills they need to navigate the workplace with confidence.

Students learn how to:

- Create a resume and cover letter
- Complete job applications
- Prepare for interviews
- Communicate professionally with employers
- Write workplace emails and messages
- Develop important job-readiness skills

Learn at your own pace with short, practical lessons designed for real-world situations.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE JOB MARKET COURSE]

Consumer Writing

Writing a Complaint

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write a complaint that clearly explains a problem while remaining respectful and professional?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

You may need to complain about a product, service, purchase, or experience. A professional complaint letter helps you explain the problem and request a reasonable solution.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A complaint letter explains a problem and asks a business or organization to address it.

When to Use It

- When a product or service does not meet expectations
- When you need to request a solution to a problem

Key Rules

- Clearly explain what happened and include relevant details.
- State what solution you are requesting.

Common Mistakes

- Using insults, threats, or angry language
- Complaining without explaining what you want the business to do

SEE IT

EXAMPLE

Dear Customer Service Manager,

I am writing about a backpack I purchased from your store on August 5. After only one week of normal use, the zipper broke. I have attached a copy of my receipt.

I would appreciate a replacement or refund for the damaged backpack. Thank you for taking the time to review my complaint.

Sincerely,

Makayla Jones

PRACTICE 1

Hey,

I bought this backpack and it broke basically right away. This is ridiculous. Your products are terrible and somebody needs to fix this. I want my money back ASAP.

Makayla

Read the poor example. Identify three changes that would make the complaint more professional and effective.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Explain the problem clearly
- ☐ Include important details
- ☐ Use respectful language
- ☐ Request a specific solution
- ☐ Include an appropriate closing

Writing a Complaint

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a complaint letter about one of these situations:

- A product you purchased was defective.
- A service you paid for did not meet expectations.

Explain what happened, provide relevant details, and request a reasonable solution.

Writing a Positive Letter

A positive letter allows you to recognize someone for their helpfulness, service, effort, or positive experience.

Keep it simple:

- 1.State what you appreciate.
- 2.Give a specific example.
- 3.Explain why it made a difference.
- 4.End with a sincere thank you.



COMMUNICATION TIP

Focus on the problem and the solution, not your emotions.

Requesting a Refund

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I clearly and respectfully request a refund?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

You may need to request a refund when a product is defective, a service was not provided as promised, or a purchase does not meet the stated terms.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A refund request explains a problem with a purchase and asks the business to return some or all of your payment.

When to Use It

- When a product or service does not meet expectations
- When you are eligible for a refund under the company's policy

Key Rules

- Explain what you purchased and when you purchased it.
- Clearly state why you are requesting a refund.

Common Mistakes

- Using angry or threatening language
- Demanding a refund without providing relevant details

SEE IT

EXAMPLE

Dear Customer Service,
I am writing to request a refund for a pair of headphones I purchased from your store on August 3. The headphones stopped working after two days of normal use. I have attached my receipt and would appreciate a full refund.
Thank you for your assistance.
Sincerely,
Taylor Xiong

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Hi,
I bought headphones from you and they already broke. I want my money back. This is ridiculous and you need to fix it now.
Taylor

Requesting a Refund

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a refund request for one of these situations:

- A product arrived damaged.
- A service you paid for was not provided.

Explain the problem and clearly request a refund.

LEAVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Constructive feedback explains what worked well and identifies specific ways something could be improved. The goal is to be honest, helpful, and respectful rather than simply negative.

1. Be specific: Explain exactly what worked or could be improved.
2. Be respectful: Focus on the situation, not the person.
3. Offer a solution: When possible, suggest a way to improve the situation.

Workplace Communication

REQUESTING TIME OFF

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I request time off from work clearly and professionally?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Employees may need to request time off for appointments, vacations, family responsibilities, or personal needs. A professional request gives an employer enough information to plan for your absence.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A time-off request informs your employer that you need to be away from work and asks for approval.

When to Use It

- When you need time away from your scheduled work hours
- When you need to request vacation or personal time

Key Rules

- Ask as early as possible and provide the dates you will be absent.
- Follow your workplace's procedures for requesting time off.

Common Mistakes

- Waiting until the last minute when it could have been avoided
- Assuming the request is approved without receiving confirmation

SEE IT

Subject: Time-Off Request for September 12

Dear Ms. F,

I would like to request time off on September 12 for a personal appointment. I am submitting my request in advance and will make sure my responsibilities are handled before I am away. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Thank you,
Monty Jefferson

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Subject: I can't work
Hey,
I need next Friday off. I have something to do, so I'm not going to be there. Let me know.
Monty J.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ State that you are requesting time off
- ☐ Include the date or dates
- ☐ Give an appropriate reason when required
- ☐ Ask rather than assume approval
- ☐ Use professional language

REQUESTING TIME OFF

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Scenario:

Write a professional time-off request for one of these situations:

- You need a day off for an appointment.
- You are planning a vacation.

Include the dates you need off and a polite request for approval.

CALLING IN SICK PROFESSIONALLY

When you are too sick to work, notify your employer as soon as possible using the communication method your workplace requires.

Keep it professional:

- 1.State that you are unable to work.
- 2.Give the date or shift you will miss.
- 3.Follow your workplace's call-out procedure.
- 4.Avoid unnecessary personal details.
- 5.Thank your supervisor for understanding.

PROFESSIONAL TEXTING

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I use text messages to communicate clearly and professionally at work?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Many workplaces use text messages for quick communication. You may need to text a supervisor, coworker, or client about a schedule, task, or workplace issue.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

Professional texting allows you to communicate quickly while still maintaining a respectful and appropriate tone.

When to Use It

- When your workplace uses texting for communication
- When you need to send a brief, time-sensitive message

Key Rules

- Keep your message clear, brief, and professional.
- Use complete words and appropriate punctuation.

Common Mistakes

- Using slang, excessive emojis, or unclear abbreviations
- Sending messages that are too casual or difficult to understand

SEE IT

Hi Mr. Allen, I wanted to confirm that I am scheduled to work from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. today. Please let me know if there have been any changes. Thank you.



Communication Tip

Treat a workplace text like a short email. It can be brief, but it should still be clear and respectful.

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

yo can u tell me what time im working tmrw?

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Start with an appropriate greeting when needed
- ☐ State the purpose clearly
- ☐ Use professional language
- ☐ Keep the message brief
- ☐ Proofread before sending

PROFESSIONAL TEXTING

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a professional text to your supervisor asking whether your work schedule has changed for tomorrow.

Your supervisor texts you:

"Can you stay an extra hour today to help finish the inventory?"
Write a professional response that accepts or declines the request.

Community Communication

WRITING TO A LOCAL OFFICIAL

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I communicate with a local official clearly, respectfully, and effectively?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Local officials make decisions about schools, roads, parks, transportation, public safety, and other community issues. Writing to an official gives you a way to share concerns, ask questions, or express support for an issue that affects your community.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A letter or email to a local official allows you to communicate your opinion or concern and ask for action, information, or consideration.

When to Use It

- When you have a concern about your community
- When you want to support or request a change

Key Rules

- Clearly explain the issue and how it affects the community.
- Be respectful and make a specific request.

Common Mistakes

- Using insults or aggressive language
- Complaining without explaining what action you want the official to take

SEE IT: STRONG EXAMPLE

Subject: Request for Safer Crosswalk Near Jefferson Middle School
Dear Councilmember Martinez,
I am writing to ask about improving pedestrian safety near Jefferson Middle School. Many students cross the street near the school each afternoon, but there is no marked crosswalk at the intersection of Oak Street and First Avenue.

Would the city consider adding a marked crosswalk or additional pedestrian signage in this area? I believe this would make the intersection safer for students and other community members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Martin Fjorn



Communication Tip

Focus on the issue, not the person. A respectful, specific message is more effective than an angry or insulting one.

SEE IT: WEAK EXAMPLE

Subject: Fix the Crosswalk

Hi,

The streets around our school are dangerous and nobody is doing anything about it. You need to fix this because someone is going to get hurt. Why hasn't the city done anything?

Martin

WRITING TO A LOCAL OFFICIAL

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write an email to a local official about one community issue you care about.

You might write about:

- A neighborhood park
- Public transportation
- Road or pedestrian safety
- Recycling or litter
- A community facility

Explain the issue and ask the official to take a specific action.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Address the official appropriately
- ☐ Clearly explain the issue
- ☐ Explain why it matters
- ☐ Make a specific request
- ☐ Use respectful language

VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I present my skills and interests effectively when applying for a volunteer opportunity?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Volunteer experience can help you build skills, explore careers, contribute to your community, and gain experience that can later be included on a resume.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A volunteer application introduces you to an organization and explains why you are interested in volunteering and what you can contribute.

When to Use It

- When applying for a volunteer position or program
- When an organization asks about your skills, interests, or availability

Key Rules

- Connect your skills and interests to the volunteer opportunity.
- Be honest about your experience and availability.

Common Mistakes

- Saying only that you "want to help" without providing details
- Exaggerating skills or experience

SEE IT

Volunteer Position: Animal Shelter Assistant

I am interested in volunteering at the animal shelter because I enjoy working with animals and would like to gain experience in animal care. I am responsible, dependable, and comfortable working as part of a team. I am available on Saturday mornings and would be happy to help with cleaning, organizing supplies, or assisting with other tasks.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ State why you are interested
- ☐ Highlight relevant skills
- ☐ Include relevant experience or interests
- ☐ Provide accurate availability
- ☐ Use positive, professional language



Communication Tip

Focus on what you can contribute. Even if you have no formal work experience, skills from school, hobbies, sports, or other activities can demonstrate that you are a strong volunteer candidate.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Write a response for a volunteer application for one of these opportunities:

- Animal shelter
- Community food bank

Explain why you are interested, describe two skills you could contribute,
and include your availability.

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a response for a volunteer application for one of these opportunities:

- Library
- Youth sports program

Explain why you are interested, describe two skills you could contribute,
and include your availability.

Financial Communication

FINANCIAL AID EMAILS

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I write a clear and professional email about financial aid?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Students may need to contact a college, school, or financial aid office about applications, deadlines, documents, awards, or questions about financial assistance. A clear email can help you get the information you need and avoid misunderstandings.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A financial aid email is used to ask questions, provide information, or resolve an issue related to financial assistance.

When to Use It

- When you have a question about your financial aid
- When you need clarification about a financial aid requirement or deadline

Key Rules

- Clearly explain your question and include relevant information.
- Use a professional tone and avoid sharing unnecessary sensitive information.

Common Mistakes

- Sending an unclear or overly casual message
- Including private information that is not necessary for the question

SEE IT

Subject: Question About Financial Aid Documents

Dear Financial Aid Office,

I am completing my financial aid application and have a question about the required documents. The application indicates that I need to submit additional information, but I am unsure which documents are needed.

Could you please clarify which documents I should provide and the deadline for submitting them?

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mayra O'Neil



Communication Tip

Be specific about what you need. A clear question makes it easier for the financial aid office to give you a useful answer.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Use a clear subject line
- ☐ Explain the purpose of the email
- ☐ Ask a specific question
- ☐ Use professional language
- ☐ Include an appropriate closing

FINANCIAL AID EMAILS

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Write a financial aid email for one of these situations:

- You need to ask about a financial aid deadline.
- You are unsure which document you need to submit.

Clearly explain your question and politely request the information you need.

Another Writing Option

Steps for Writing a Scholarship Thank-You Letter

1. Express gratitude: Thank the organization for the scholarship.
2. Mention the impact: Explain how the scholarship will help you.
3. Share your goals: Briefly mention what you plan to pursue.
4. Close sincerely: Thank them again and sign your name.

WRITING PAYMENT INQUIRIES

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I ask about a payment or charge clearly and professionally?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

You may need to contact a business, school, service provider, or organization about a payment, balance, charge, or transaction.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A payment inquiry is used to ask for information or clarification about a payment, charge, balance, or invoice.

When to Use It

- When you do not understand a charge or balance
- When you need to confirm whether a payment was received

Key Rules

- Clearly explain what you are asking about and include relevant details.
- Use a professional tone and protect your private financial information.

Common Mistakes

- Being vague about the payment or charge
- Including unnecessary account or financial information

SEE IT

Subject: Question About Payment

Dear Customer Service,

I am writing to ask about a payment I made on August 10 for my monthly service. My account still shows a balance, so I would like to confirm whether the payment was received.

Could you please check the payment status and let me know if any additional action is needed?

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ally Schmidt



Communication Tip

Give enough information to identify the issue, but never include unnecessary sensitive information such as passwords or full account numbers.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify the payment or charge
- ☐ Explain the question or concern
- ☐ Include relevant details
- ☐ Protect private financial information
- ☐ Use a professional tone

WRITING PAYMENT INQUIRIES

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Subject: Payment

Hi,

I paid my bill but it still says I owe money. What's going on? I already paid it, so please fix it.

Thanks,

Ally

Rewrite the poor example to make the payment inquiry clearer and more professional. Add the relevant payment details and a specific question.

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a payment inquiry for one of these situations:

- A payment you made has not appeared on your account.
- You received a charge that you do not understand.
- Clearly explain the situation and ask for the information you need.

Online Communication

Responding Respectfully Online

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I respond to others online in a way that is respectful and constructive?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Online communication is part of school, work, social media, discussion forums, and community spaces. Knowing how to disagree respectfully can help you communicate effectively and avoid unnecessary conflict.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A respectful online response allows you to share your ideas, questions, or disagreements without attacking or insulting another person.

When to Use It

- When responding to someone you disagree with
- When participating in an online discussion or forum

Key Rules

- Respond to the person's ideas rather than attacking the person.
- Use respectful language, even when you strongly disagree.

Common Mistakes

- Using insults, sarcasm, or personal attacks
- Writing something you would not say respectfully in person

SEE IT

Original post:

"I think schools should have a later start time because students would have more time to sleep."

Respectful response:

"I understand your point about students needing more sleep. I agree that getting enough rest is important, although I think changing the school schedule could create challenges for families and transportation."



Communication Tip

Pause before you post. Ask yourself, "Would I say this to the person face-to-face?"

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Address the idea, not the person
- ☐ State your opinion clearly
- ☐ Support your response with a reason
- ☐ Use respectful language
- ☐ Avoid insults and personal attacks

Responding Respectfully Online

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Respond respectfully to this online comment:
"Students should not have homework on weekends because they need time to relax and spend time with their families."
You may agree or disagree, but include a reason for your response.

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Respond respectfully to this online comment:
"Schools should require students to wear uniforms because it would make getting ready for school easier." You may agree or disagree, but include a reason for your response.

IDENTIFYING MISINFORMATION

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I determine whether information I find online is reliable?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

People encounter information online every day through social media, websites, videos, messages, and news. Knowing how to evaluate information can help you avoid sharing false or misleading claims.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

Identifying misinformation means checking information before accepting it as true or sharing it with others.

When to Use It

- When you see a surprising or questionable claim online
- Before sharing information with others

Key Rules

- Check who created or published the information.
- Look for reliable sources that support the claim.

Common Mistakes

- Believing something because it has many likes or shares
- Trusting a headline without reading or checking the source

SEE IT

Online post:

"Scientists have discovered that drinking coffee completely prevents colds."

Response:

Before sharing the claim, you check who published it, look for the original research, and compare the information with reliable health or scientific sources. You discover that the evidence does not support the claim as stated, so you do not share it.



Communication Tip

Stop, check, and compare.
A popular post is not necessarily an accurate one.

PRACTICE 1: FIX IT

Online post:

"Scientists have discovered that drinking coffee completely prevents colds."

Response:

"This must be true because the post has thousands of likes and everyone in the comments agrees."

Explain two reasons why the poor response is not a reliable way to determine whether information is true.

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check the source
- ☐ Look for supporting evidence
- ☐ Compare with reliable sources
- ☐ Check when the information was published
- ☐ Avoid sharing until you have verified it

IDENTIFYING MISINFORMATION

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

You see this post online:
"A new study proves that students who listen to music while studying
always get better grades."

Write three steps you would take to determine whether the claim is
reliable.

CREATING CLEAR ONLINE POSTS

Purpose: Learn how to organize information so an online post is easy to understand.

Key skills:

- State your main point clearly.
- Include only relevant information.
- Use appropriate tone and language.
- Proofread before posting.

Quick Practice: Rewrite a confusing online post so that the main idea, important details, and
requested action are clear.

Public Communication

SPEECH OUTLINES

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I organize my ideas into a clear and effective speech outline?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Speech outlines help you organize presentations for school, work, community events, and other situations where you need to communicate ideas to an audience.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A speech outline organizes your main ideas and supporting details before you write or deliver a speech.

When to Use It

- When preparing a formal speech or presentation
- When you need to organize several ideas for an audience

Key Rules

- Organize ideas in a logical order.
- Use main points and supporting details to develop your topic.

Common Mistakes

- Including complete paragraphs instead of organized points
- Having main points that do not support the speech's purpose

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ Clear topic or purpose
- ☐ Logical main points
- ☐ Supporting details under each point
- ☐ Consistent outline format
- ☐ Ideas support the main topic



Communication Tip

Think of your outline as a roadmap. Each main point should move your audience closer to understanding your overall message.

Good Example

Topic: Why Students Should Read More

- I. Reading improves academic skills.
 - A. Builds vocabulary
 - B. Improves comprehension
- II. Reading supports personal growth.
 - A. Introduces new ideas
 - B. Builds empathy
- III. Students can make reading part of their routine.
 - A. Read for 15 minutes each day
 - B. Choose books that match personal interests

Poor Example

Topic: Why Students Should Read More

- I. Reading
Reading is good because it helps people learn things and there are lots of books.
- II. Books
Books can be interesting. I like mystery books and sometimes I read before bed.
- III. School
Students have to read for school anyway, so they should probably read more.

SPEECH OUTLINES

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Create a short speech outline about one of these topics:

- Why students should learn financial skills
- Why volunteering benefits teenagers
- Why students should limit screen time

Include three main points and at least two supporting details for each point.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

❓ ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can I create a clear and effective public announcement?

🌐 REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Public announcements are used at schools, workplaces, community events, clubs, and public spaces to share important information with a group of people.

📖 LEARN IT

Purpose

A public announcement provides important information to an audience in a clear, brief, and easy-to-understand way.

When to Use It

- To announce an event, activity, or opportunity
- To share important information with a group

Key Rules

- Include the most important information: what, when, where, and who.
- Keep the announcement brief and easy to understand.

Common Mistakes

- Leaving out important details
- Including unnecessary information that distracts from the main message

SEE IT

School Book Drive

Attention, students! Our school will be collecting new and gently used books for the community book drive from September 8 through September 19. Donation boxes will be located in the main office and library. All students and staff are welcome to participate. Thank you for helping us share the joy of reading!



Communication Tip

Give your audience the information they need to act. Before finishing, ask yourself: What? When? Where? Who? What should they do?

BREAKDOWN CHECKLIST

- ☐ State what is happening
- ☐ Include the date or time
- ☐ Include the location when needed
- ☐ Tell the audience what action to take
- ☐ Keep the message brief and clear

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE 1: WRITE IT

Rewrite this announcement so that it includes the important details and is easier to understand:

There is going to be a fundraiser soon. Bring stuff to school next week if you want to help. It is for a good cause and everyone should participate.

PRACTICE 2: WRITE IT

Write a public announcement for one of the following:

- A school club meeting
- A community volunteer event
- A school fundraiser

Include what is happening, when and where it will happen, and what you want the audience to do.

Choose the Right Communication

Situation	Best Choice
You need information about a summer program	Requesting Information
You need help understanding an assignment	Asking for Help
You want to apply for a job	Cover Letter
You need to report a workplace disagreement	Workplace Conflict Communication
A product arrived damaged	Complaint/Refund Request
You need to ask about a charge	Payment Inquiry
You disagree with someone's online opinion	Respectful Online Response
You want to announce a school event	Public Announcement

FROM CASUAL TO PROFESSIONAL

Too Casual	More Professional
Hey, what's up?	Hello,
Can you tell me what's going on?	Could you please clarify...?
I need this ASAP.	I would appreciate a response as soon as
That's not my fault.	I would like to clarify what happened.
Give me my money back.	I would like to request a refund.
I don't get it.	Could you please clarify...?
I'm not coming in.	I am unable to work my scheduled shift.

TAKE YOUR E-COMMUNICATION SKILLS FURTHER

REAL-WORLD E-COMMUNICATION

Want more practice communicating clearly and professionally online?

Teacher Jade's Real-World E-Communication Self-Paced Course helps students develop practical communication skills they can use at school, work, and in everyday life.

Students practice how to:

- Write professional emails
- Request information and ask for help
- Communicate with teachers, employers, and businesses
- Respond appropriately in different situations
- Navigate real-world digital communication

Learn at your own pace with short, practical lessons designed for real-life situations.

Scan the QR code to learn more or enroll.

Available as a self-paced course and physical book.



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