

## APPENDIX 1

# Answers to Exercises

Here are some suggested answers to the exercises presented in this book. In many of the exercises, there are other possible correct answers.

**Exercise 1: Make this sentence more believable**

You've reached the offices of A-to-Z Manufacturing. All of our operators are busy at the moment. We value your business—please stay on the line and the next available operator will be with you shortly.

**Exercise 2: Add back the missing words**

If the oil pressure is under 40 pounds, loosen the right-hand banjo screw.

**Exercise 3: Top 10 list of attributes of good business writing**

1. Use a conversational style.
2. Use short, everyday words.
3. Use first-person and second-person point of view where appropriate.
4. Use short sentences in subject-verb-object sentence order.
5. Prefer active verbs.
6. Use strong verbs.
7. Be concise.
8. Be gender neutral.
9. Use contractions where appropriate.
10. Avoid slang and clichés.

### Exercise 4: Writing tone

Most good business writers strive for the following tones in their writing:

- casual
- courteous
- earnest
- engaging
- forthright
- friendly
- helpful
- honest
- informal
- informative
- objective
- personal
- polite
- sincere

### Exercise 5: Identify and profile your audience

Here are 10 things you may want to know about your readers:

1. what they'll do with the information
2. how much they know about the subject
3. their job and work tasks
4. their educational level
5. their reading level
6. whether they're using English as a second language (ESL)
7. where they will be reading the document (for example, in the field)
8. their attitudes about the subject (are they motivated?)
9. their age and gender
10. where they're located (urban or rural)

### Exercise 7: Break up this long paragraph

Limit paragraphs to a single topic or idea. If you find yourself covering several topics, you probably need several paragraphs. It's better to have too many paragraphs than too few.

Don't let paragraphs get too long. Most professional writers will average only three or four sentences in a paragraph. Ones that span large areas of the page intimidate readers.

Make sure that the opening sentence introduces or summarizes the content of the paragraph. This type of opening sentence is often referred to as the *topic sentence*. The sentences that follow should flow from the first sentence and provide supporting details.

Organize paragraphs into a logical sequence. This sequence might be broadest to narrowest, most important to least important, or chronological, depending on the nature of the information.

If appropriate, replace paragraphs with bullet lists—they're easier for readers to scan. Avoid including more than three list items in a paragraph. If the items are steps in a procedure, use numbers instead.

### Exercise 8: Editing challenge

If you don't have a professional editor available, your best writer will have to do. Or consider contracting the services of a professional editor—an editor's services can be worth their weight in gold. Writers should not edit their own writing, because they are often blind to their own errors. After an edit, the editor and writer should review the changes together. This will help the writer understand the reasons behind the changes. A styleguide should be used to sort out differences of opinion.

### Exercise 9: Calculate the fog index

#### Sample 1

	20	Average words in sentence (100 words, 5 sentences)
+	<u>17</u>	% of hard words (17 hard words)
=	37	Subtotal
x	<u>0.4</u>	Magic multiplier
=	<b>14.8</b>	Required reading level

#### Sample 2

	13.4	Average words in sentence (67 words, 5 sentences)
+	<u>16.42</u>	% of hard words (11 hard words)
=	29.82	Subtotal
x	<u>0.4</u>	Magic multiplier
=	<b>11.92</b>	Required reading level

### Exercise 10: Put "I" and "we" in your writing

1. We made errors in processing the payroll.
2. I had to edit and convert the report to HTML before it could go on the intranet.
3. The arbitration was not going well so we called in the best negotiator.

### Exercise 11: Put "you" in your writing

1. Before you complete the report, check the cross-references for accuracy.
2. You must give staff enough time to review the document.
3. You can't easily modify the annual report once it has been printed.
4. Analyzing the information needs of staff may let you change the way you distribute manuals.

### Exercise 12: Shorten long sentences

Divide the following compound sentences at the slash (/). Note the words that follow—but, and, yet, however, although. These are *conjunctions*, which are used to join ideas together. Avoid using them to join independent clauses together.

We are prepared to cooperate with your consultants in the preparation of a schedule,/ **but** we insist on maintaining complete control of the work as outlined in Article 12 of the General Conditions of the Contract/ **and** any such schedule must be prepared in a manner and form suitable to use as a tool and guide to management for all construction operations on the site.

The facts clearly indicate that motor cars with faulty brakes are being driven on our streets and highways/ **yet** government officials have not taken action to protect the responsible motorist and the general public.

The shipping clerk may have only a vague notion of what happens to the four copies of the bill of lading forwarded to the sales order and billing departments;/ **however**, this will not affect the clerk's ability to assess a proposed recommendation about internal control.

We find the division of business into accounting systems a convenient structure for evaluating internal control,/ **although** management may view its business differently, perhaps in terms of areas of functional responsibilities.

### Exercise 13: Break up very long sentences

Our proposal indicates the general approach we would take if we were awarded the contract to write and produce the annual report. However, it does not specifically address the time and costs that would be required to complete the project. Not enough substantive information was provided in the request for proposal that was sent to us on January 2.

### Exercise 14: Use everyday words

- the start date is August 1
- we will have to pay you
- the method is under review
- they used the photocopier
- she got the forms
- they found that
- he knew that
- after our meeting
- she said yes
- it cost about \$50

### Exercise 15: Use active verbs

The committee has not selected an option.

The appendix lists error messages.

I discovered omissions when I word processed the report. (You have to provide the subject since it was missing from the sentence.)

We did not intend to disrupt service during the transition. (Again, you have to provide the subject.)

### Exercise 16: Avoid weak verbs

<b>Instead of...</b>	<b>Use...</b>
give an answer to	answer
reach a conclusion	conclude
do an inspection	inspect
raise an objection	object
send an invitation to	invite
provide a solution	solve
form a plan	plan
conduct an analysis	analyze
make a distinction	distinguish
have knowledge of	know
make a proposal	propose
hold a meeting	meet

### Exercise 17: Make the last three items parallel to the first

The plan is deficient because:

- the budget was not prepared
- two major cost items were not identified
- staffing was not approved
- other errors were made

**Exercise 18: "Which" and "that"**

The manager plans to take us to the new Thai restaurant, which is in our old office building.

Penticton, which lies within the Okanagan Valley, is shown on the attached map.

The proposal that we liked best was from Acme Printing and Binding.

The committee reviewed the best plans that were submitted.

We could not find the digital file that was missing.

**Exercise 19: Rewrite the following noun and modifier strings so their meaning is clear**

It's not possible to identify the correct meaning of these phrases because they all have several possible meanings. That's the point of this exercise.

**Exercise 20: Revise these sentences to replace the general and the inexact with the exact and the concrete**

Mud the gyproc with a 3-millilitre layer of filler, then wait for 2 hours before sanding.

To ensure that the deadline can be met, the draft must be finished by 10:00 a.m. Monday.

The accounting group was unable to connect to the server.

Tighten the bolt to a torque wrench setting of 125 pounds.

Only equipment and payroll expenditures are permitted.

Report any transactions of more than \$10,000.

Exercise 21: Replace the following clichés with everyday words

please feel free to call	call
between a rock and hard place	difficult situation
in connection with	about
with regard to	about
six of one, half a dozen of the other	the same
with respect to	about
easier said than done	difficult
as already stated	(omit)
pursuant to your letter	about your letter
all things considered	after considering
enclosed herewith is	I've enclosed
to say the least	(omit)
to explore every avenue	explore all options
in the neighbourhood of	about
to a certain extent	partially
as a matter of fact	(omit)
suffice it to say	(omit)
hit the nail on the head	you're correct
the fact of the matter is	it is
we beg to acknowledge	we acknowledge
avoid clichés like the plague	avoid clichés

Exercise 22: What do these foreign words and phrases mean?

pro bono	for free
gratis	for free
ipso facto	thereby
c'est la vie	that's life
tout fini	all finished
savoir faire	know how
je ne sais quoi	indefinable something

**Exercise 23: What Latin words do these abbreviations stand for?**

e.g.        *exempli gratia*

i.e.        *id est*

etc.        *et cetera*

**Exercise 24: Translate these numbers**

**IX**            9

**M**             1,000

**CM**            900

**XC**            90

**MCMXCIX**    1999

**MM**            2,000

**Exercise 25: List 10 types of things that should be capitalized**

- personal names
- organization names
- document titles
- form titles
- department names
- position titles
- months of the year
- days of the week
- provinces
- states
- cities
- political parties
- planets and heavenly bodies
- some acronyms and abbreviations

**Exercise 26: Should these be capitalized?**

- Audit of Financial and Management Practices
- Kootenay Regional District
- the regional district (referring to above)
- district management staff
- the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act
- the Act (or act)
- Lower Mainland
- Greater Vancouver
- northwestern British Columbia
- we audited three ministries
- the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
- the Corporation (or corporation)
- the Board (or board) heard three submissions
- the Manager, Human Resources
- the manager of human resources

**Exercise 27: Punctuate the following**

As an experiment, take any randomly selected paragraph and copy it, making no changes other than removing all punctuation marks. You probably will find it confusing with sentences and thoughts running together without any indication of where to stop and pause. The absence of punctuation marks leaves you with no clue for your inflections, and without inflections the string of words is meaningless. You must separate words—group them—before they make sense. To bring order out of chaos is to separate. Separating is the first step toward understanding, and the first function of punctuation marks is to serve as separators.

**Exercise 28: Punctuate this**

That that is, is; that that is not, is not. Is that it? It is!