

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Introduction..... | 1 | Module 4 | |
| Module 1 | | Words and Sentences..... | 35 |
| Good Business Writing Style..... | 3 | What's the fog index? | 36 |
| Over-the-top style | 4 | Fog index calculation | 37 |
| Legal style (legalese) | 5 | Writing points of view | 39 |
| Bureaucratic style | 5 | Sentence length | 42 |
| Excessive courtesy | 6 | Types of sentences | 42 |
| Abbreviated scientific style | 7 | Word choice..... | 44 |
| Say it in plain English..... | 8 | Sentence order | 49 |
| Tone..... | 9 | Active and passive verbs | 50 |
| Styleguides and style sheets | 10 | Use strong verbs..... | 52 |
| | | Verb tenses | 53 |
| Module 2 | | Module 5 | |
| Planning to Write | 13 | 20 Rules of Plain English..... | 55 |
| Decide on your purpose | 14 | Write in parallel ways..... | 56 |
| Decide on your objectives | 15 | Keep related words together..... | 57 |
| Understand your readers | 16 | Use prepositions with care..... | 58 |
| Reading at work..... | 17 | Distinguish "which" from "that" | 59 |
| Clustering | 18 | Avoid surplus nouns..... | 60 |
| Organize your ideas..... | 20 | Avoid noun and modifier strings ... | 60 |
| Organize your document | 21 | Use pronouns with care..... | 62 |
| Outline before you write..... | 23 | Avoid slang | 63 |
| | | Be gender neutral..... | 64 |
| Module 3 | | Be specific | 65 |
| Writing Strategies | 25 | Avoid clichés | 66 |
| Write faster and better..... | 26 | Place modifiers carefully | 67 |
| Design a hierarchy..... | 27 | Avoid unnecessary qualification | 68 |
| Paragraph frequently | 28 | Use contractions | 68 |
| Use informative headings | 29 | Be concise..... | 69 |
| Present information graphically | 30 | Avoid foreign words..... | 70 |
| Edit for clarity | 31 | Capitalize properly | 71 |
| Review and approvals | 33 | Abbreviate with care | 72 |
| | | Write numbers consistently | 73 |
| | | Ignore some old rules | 73 |

| | | | |
|--|-----------|---|------------|
| Module 6 | | Module 7 | |
| Punctuation Matters..... | 75 | Designing Effective Pages..... | 89 |
| Commas (,) | 77 | Page design and layout | 90 |
| Colons and semicolons (: ;) | 79 | Using graphics | 95 |
| Punctuating lists | 80 | Using your word processor..... | 97 |
| Apostrophes (') | 81 | | |
| Parentheses () | 82 | Appendix 1 | |
| Quotation marks (“ ”)..... | 83 | Answers to Exercises..... | 99 |
| Hyphens (-)..... | 84 | | |
| <i>Em</i> dashes (—) and <i>en</i> dashes (–) .. | 85 | Appendix 2 | |
| Other marks of punctuation..... | 86 | Writing Styleguide | 109 |
| | | | |
| | | Appendix 3 | |
| | | Dictionary of Plain English..... | 123 |