

Tel: 0161 428 3547  
Fax: 0161 491 1096  
e-mail [info@structuredlearning.com](mailto:info@structuredlearning.com)

Structured Learning Ltd

## Business Writing Programmes

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## Business Writing for Confidence and Credibility

Correct writing is a vital skill. Through understanding and using the ABC (accuracy, brevity, clarity) of excellent writing we open up our ideas to our readers and ensure that we are always understood –

- Accuracy - because without accuracy, mistakes happen.
- Brevity - because speed matters in our business lives.
- Clarity - because we must be understood first time, every time.

To influence others we must first have valuable ideas, and then express these clearly. Writing well, writing confidently, writing correctly is how we do this. Our writing remains for all to see as a permanent record of our thoughts. It is crucial, for our personal and professional credibility, to get it right.

On this one day programme we examine how to improve writing structure, punctuation, grammar and style so that our letters and emails properly reflect the style and ethos of the organisation to its partners and stakeholders.

Delegates on this event will be experienced enough to understand what is required by the organisation, but will probably have been too busy to reflect on the overall effectiveness of their own writing. This event provides an opportunity for them to assess their writing competence and to determine areas that may need attention.

## Our Approach

To be fully effective the training provided must be a combination of:

- Authentic knowledge drawn from the real experiences of seasoned professional presenters and,
- A strong mix of activity, feedback and review
- Genuinely innovative, inspiring and engaging for the delegates

To achieve this, we propose the following format for the training. Of course, this is only an initial outline of our ideas, which would need to be finalised with you if our bid is accepted.

## Event Duration

1 day. From 9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

## Objectives

By the time they have completed the training delegates will be able to:

- Effectively plan and write their letters and emails
- Use frameworks for letters and emails correctly – knowing what goes where and why
- Recognise the importance of accuracy, brevity and clarity - the ABC of WRITING
- Use plain English
- Consider their audience and select style and tone accordingly
- Write a proper sentence
- Use correct punctuation
- Avoid common grammatical errors
- Avoid common word use errors – from affect to effect and practise to practise
- Know and use PDSA standards and guidelines

## Our Proposed Agenda

- Starting points
- Accuracy, brevity and clarity
- Letters and email layouts
- Style, tone and language
- Being understood
- Finishing points

Throughout the programme there will be many individual and group exercises to spot and correct errors.

## Report Writing – one day

Writing a report is difficult. Surprisingly, often those who are best at communicating an argument or an idea face to face cannot cope when it comes to putting it on paper. By the time they have completed this training delegates find it both easy and enjoyable.

### Target Audience

Anyone who has to prepare and write reports of any nature, including technical, developmental, progressive and investigative.

### Objectives

By the time they have completed the training delegates will be able to:

- Recognise the special characteristics of reports.
- Establish clear objectives for a report, considering their audience.
- Plan the stages for the preparation of a report.
- Follow and/or adapt a recognised and helpful structure for reports.
- Distinguish between facts, conclusions and recommendations.
- Use an accurate, clear and brief writing style.
- State what does and does not work in terms of layout and presentation.

### Programme Content

- What is a report?
- The stages of report writing.
- Starting points: readership and purpose.
- Different report structures - how and what to use to make your case.
- Organising the information - prioritising and sequencing.
- Basic grammar issues
- Illustrations and numbering.

## Report Writing – two days

### Our Approach

Writing a report is not easy. Often those who are best at communicating an argument or an idea face to face cannot cope when it comes to putting it on paper. Others bring with them from school many myths about writing and, particularly, grammar, which they cling to as firm principles. Common errors and misunderstandings include:

- Over-use of the passive voice.
- Use of 'antique' words and phrases.
- Poor use of punctuation.
- 'Over-writing' – using twenty words when five would do.
- A mistaken belief that sentences cannot start with 'and' or 'but' or 'because'.
- 'Sentences' that are lengthy but do not contain a verb.

As a professional writer and experienced trainer, the course leader understands these difficulties and focuses on the key areas of:

- Having clear objectives and a clear readership.
- Planning your report carefully before writing.
- Using the correct words, grammar and punctuation.

Our aim is that, by the time they have completed this training, delegates will find report writing easier and more enjoyable.

### Course Structure and Content

This course is highly interactive and practical. Lecture content assumes a very small proportion of the training days – instead we focus on:

- Practical exercises in small groups
- Discussion
- Quizzes, recaps and refreshers
- Practical report writing
- Individual coaching

*Our course is unique in that the second part of day two is devoted to working with each delegate individually. Each will receive personalised coaching from the trainer about their own writing. The aim is to work with the needs of each person so that each leaves with a clear idea of what they need to do next.*

We also provide a set of detailed handouts for delegates to remind them of the key principles and learning and assist them back in their workplace.

The maximum number of delegates for this programme is eight.

## Objectives

By the time they have completed the training delegates will be able to:

- Recognise the special characteristics of reports.
- Establish clear objectives for a report, considering their audience.
- Plan the stages for the preparation of a report.
- Follow and/or adapt a recognised and helpful structure for reports.
- Distinguish between facts, conclusions and recommendations.
- Use an accurate, clear and brief writing style.
- State what does and does not work in terms of layout and presentation.

## Course Agenda

**Two days. 0930 – 1630. Lunch 1230-1315**

### Day One

What is a report?

The stages of report writing.

Starting points: readership and purpose.

Organising the information - prioritising and sequencing.

Different report structures - how and what to use to make your case.

### Day Two

Writing your report.

Managing punctuation.

Grammatical myths.

Inaccuracy and tautology.

Illustrations and numbering.

Editing and proofing.

Individual Coaching

## Copy-editing and Proofreading

### Our Approach

Marketing officers, committee clerks, secretaries, managers – what they all have in common is a responsibility for editing and/or proofreading the work of others. Emails, websites, notices, leaflets, reports, minutes, newsletters – the possibilities for errors are endless. Muddled grammar, homonyms or simple typos – if it's wrong it may completely destroy the value of your message in the eyes of your reader. This course will help you to get a grip on common errors when preparing documents for publication, in-house and/or externally.

This course is highly interactive and practical. Lecture content assumes a very small proportion of the training day as we focus on:

- Practical exercises
- Discussion
- Individual coaching

We also provide a set of detailed handouts for delegates to remind them of the key principles and learning and assist them back in their workplace.

To be fully effective the training provided must be a combination of:

- Authentic knowledge drawn from the real experiences of seasoned professional presenters and,
- A strong mix of activity, feedback and review,
- Genuinely innovative, inspiring and engaging for the delegates.

To achieve this, we propose the following format for the training. Of course, this is only an initial outline of our ideas which would need to be finalised with you if our bid is accepted.

#### Event duration

1 day. 0900 -1700

## Key Outcomes

By the time they have completed the training, the participants will be able to:

- Understand the difference between copy-editing and proofreading
- Know how and when to use the standard proofreading symbols
- Improve their skills of copy-editing and proofreading - picking up errors of consistency, capitalisation, numbers, abbreviations, spelling, grammar, punctuation, fonts and so on.
- Recognise words that are easily confused and misused
- Know how to use the proofing tools in Microsoft Word to ensure documents created piecemeal achieve a consistency of style and content

This is a very practical course and there will be many opportunities to practise editing text and marking errors (with the standard proofreading marks if required).

## How We Will Manage the Work

We will work in partnership with you to deliver the learning programme. We are aware that you know your own business and its needs, whilst our experience of working with many other organisations allows us insights which you may not have. Working with you, we can capitalise on the strengths of both our organisations. Specifically we would like you to provide for us, in advance of the training:

- Copies of documents *not* considered acceptable
- Copies of documents considered acceptable
- Copies of any style guides, templates and so on which must be used

These will help us to make an assessment of need and aim the programme more exactly. In addition, we would value a conversation with you to talk about what it and is not required.

In addition, delegates will need to bring with them a decent dictionary – preferably Chambers. Helpful too, though not essential, is an English Usage and an English Grammar.

## Agenda

What is copy-editing?

What is proofreading?

Hints and tips for editing and proofing

The Key to successful editing and proofing

Using Word – electronic copy

How to approach the first read through

Editing and proofing manually — on paper copy before formatting

Editing and proofing manually — on paper copy after formatting

Proofreading Marks — how to use them

Ten Grammar Gremlins

Various Practical Exercises: Grammar / Air Show / Spelling Appraisal / The Wow

Awards and others as required

## Creative Writing for Business

### Overview

Whether it's newsletters, brochure copy or press releases, this course aims to develop your people's ability to produce clear, concise and descriptive writing, which is appealing and interesting to the target audience. Delegates have the chance to explore several different approaches to making their copy stand out from the crowd. The programme is activity based with many opportunities to identify the elements that make writing appealing, interesting, persuasive and eye catching.

### Course Duration

One day, 9.00 – 4.30

### Who should attend?

This short course is for all those who are involved in writing articles, editorials and promotional material from time to time.

### What you will learn

By the end of the session you will:

- Understand the importance of knowing your audience and your purpose
- Be clear on the importance of attention grabbing openings
- Recognise many of the 'dos and don'ts' of writing copy
- Know how to convey enthusiasm, avoid jargon and clearly explain the topic
- Know how write persuasively, using language to bring the topics to life and inspire your audience
- Make use of positive language and descriptive words to describe place and atmosphere in a lively way
- Know when and how to use literary devices such as alliteration and imagery

### Agenda

- Learning from the professionals
- Guidelines for creative writing
- Openings and closings
- Imagery
- Headlines and cross headings
- Write it right
- Communicating clearly
- The writing process
- Your turn - practical Work

## Back to Study – Speed Reading and Assignment Writing Skills for College

Starting an academic course, whether as a first time college student or someone returning to study, can be daunting. The work load can be intimidating especially if you're also in full or part time employment. To be successful means juggling conflicting priorities and making sure that when you are studying, your reading and writing skills are fit for purpose. This one day course aims to help you ensure that this is the case.

### Course Duration

One day, 9.00 – 4.30

### Target Audience

Anyone who is taking an academic course of study, full or part time, which involves reading text and other books and writing assignments.

### Objectives

By the time they have completed the training delegates will be able to:

- Establish their normal rate of reading
- Describe how the eye functions
- Explain the reading process
- Use conditioning exercises to enable them to read faster
- Balance comprehension with speed reading
- Read and retain material at speed
- Double their reading speed [at least - most will go well beyond this]
- Plan the stages for the preparation of a written assignment
- Follow and/or adapt a recognised and helpful structure for assignments.
- Distinguish between facts, conclusions and recommendations.
- Use an accurate, clear and brief writing style.

### Course Content

- Making the most of your reading
- Eye movements and fixations.
- The reading process
- Three reading practices
- Starting to write
- Getting inside the "assessors" head
- Assignment instruction terms
- What assessors do not like
- Structural elements of an assignment and appropriate referencing

## Taking the Minutes

### Our Approach

Meetings, short or long, formal or informal, need minutes and/or action notes. This one day course explains why and shows how easy it is to take effective, readable minutes.

In the process delegates learn how to set and use an agenda – including what 'any other business' is really for – and find out who should be doing what if the meeting is to work well. And, if there are special meetings that delegates are likely to be working with - such as disciplinaries - then we visit these formats also.

The subject may not sound the most exciting – but we guarantee that anyone who takes minutes will find it worthwhile, fun and interesting.

This proposal discusses the programme development necessary to meet your needs, shows a typical course agenda and its objectives, and sets out our costs.

### Typical Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be better able to:

- Prepare effectively for meetings at which you are to take minutes.
- Understand and use effectively the roles of the chair and the minute taker, including preparation, clarification and follow-up.
- Choose and use a suitable method of note-taking.
- Know how to listen for and capture the key points during a meeting.
- Understand the needs of the users of minutes and choose an appropriate format for them.
- Follow a variety of useful and accepted conventions for the format of minutes.
- Recognise and avoid common obstacles to effective listening, note-taking and writing and develop your own skills in these areas.
- Produce a clear, accurate set of notes from a recorded meeting.

## Typical Programme Content

Presentations and structured discussions are supplemented by short practical exercises in particular skills. There is also a major practical exercise that involves taking notes from a recording of a meeting. This recording shows a free flowing meeting that demands excellent concentration to develop a set of viable notes. At every stage we discuss the key points that should be heard and captured.

The programme takes place between 9.15 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. with a break for lunch between 12.15 - 1.00 p.m.

- Introductions.
- Basic principles of minute writing: purpose, uses, users, needs.
- Preparing for the meeting: roles and responsibilities, agendas.
- Different types of minutes: formal, informal, verbatim, action only.
- Format of a minute
- Structure of a set of minutes
- Successful listening: barriers, overcoming obstacles.
- Making and using notes.
- Practical exercise: To produce a set of notes from a video

## Group Size

This programme is designed for between two and 12 delegates

## Our Trainers

Our trainers would be drawn from our pool of experts – see Appendix One. Until we have the exact dates for the training we cannot be specific about who the trainer/facilitator would be for the programme, as this will depend on their current commitments. All our trainers are experienced in working with both public and private sector organisations including:

**Local Authorities**, including – NWE0 Stockport, Bury, Bolton, Wirral, Oldham, Calderdale, Wakefield, Cheshire, Douglas, Cumbria, Stoke, Kirklees , Sefton, Wrexham, Halton, Salford

**Leisure, Tourism and other Services**, including - Merseyside Maritime Museum Natural History Museum, Etherow Country Park, Stockport Cafés, Libraries and Information Centres, T-Mobile, The Co-Op, Visibility Europe, Pindar Set, Iceland, Times Crème, NSPCC, 3i, BE Group. Chapel House Motors

**Health Authorities and Trusts**, including – East Midlands, Sefton, Lancaster, Stockport, Leicester

**Accountancy and Finance**, including - PwC, Dun & Bradstreet, Transatlantic Reinsurance, Miller Reinsurance, MBNA, Lombard. Newcastle Building Society

**Civil Service and Government**, including – DWP, LSC, Department of Health, CPS, Department of Justice, The Probation Service, The Revenue Service, Natural History Museum

**Manufacturing and Distribution**, including – Bakemark, Astra Zeneca, Siemens, ACC, URTU, Pfizer

**Law Firms**, including – DWF, S J Berwin, Howard Kennedy, Olswang, Davies Arnold Cooper, Silverbeck Rymer, Liverpool Law Society

**Education**, including– Manchester Business School The Manufacturing Institute, Bolton Institute, Kingsgate, Open College, DIOL, GlassTap, DBA, Fenman, Gower, Westminster Explained, Stockport College, Schools and LEAs.

## About Us

Structured Learning Ltd offers training that is properly tailored to individual needs and works with each delegate to actively improve and develop their skills. We are not public providers who offer knowledge-based seminars in very large groups with little or no opportunity for training transfer into the workplace. Our aim is always to meet our clients' real business needs.

Whatever the subject matter, our aim is to make the training enjoyable, thought-provoking and practical through a mix of input, individual and group exercises and feedback.

Our expertise, coupled with our friendly style, means that we have been in business for more than two decades; always offering our clients an excellent, tailored service which means that they continue to come back to us.

We are available by telephone, e-mail and in person to answer your questions and are happy to do so outside of 'normal' business hours. Our philosophy is that our partnership must stand with your business need and be accountable to it.

You can find out more about us by visiting our website at [www.structuredlearning.com](http://www.structuredlearning.com)

## Where to Now?

We hope there is enough information here for you to make a decision to go forward with us. If you have any queries please telephone or email us. Our aim would be to meet your needs exactly.

If you would like to go ahead with this training then please call us to arrange a suitable date. We normally need at least a fortnight's lead-time to complete the course design and the materials, and early booking is very much appreciated.

**Thank you for this opportunity.**

## Appendix One: Trainer Biographies

### **Clare Forrest BA, ALA, NLP Master. Dip. Hyp.**

Clare Forrest, following a career in operational management in the service sector and then in human resources, has been a Training Consultant and Seminar Speaker since 1985. Clare specialises in Performance Management, Team Leadership and Team Building and Communication Skills. She particularly enjoys the design and facilitation of motivational seminars and workshops using accelerated learning techniques.

A consultant, designer and facilitator on many programmes for many sectors, Clare adopts an entertaining and highly pragmatic approach – she does not believe in quick fix theories which can't be firmly rooted in the realities of working life. Apart from training she also carries out staff recruitment, including running assessment centres and individual performance development – coaching and counselling, including interview skills.

Clare is an NLP Master Therapist and works with individuals on anxiety and stress management.

### **Sandy Marshall CeMAP, CeRGI, NLP Practitioner, member of ANLP**

Sandy Marshall, following a successful career in finance, management and training has been an NLP Coach and Training Consultant since 2005. She has a broad wealth of knowledge in the service sector and specialises in Business Performance Coaching, Management Training and Sales Training Programmes.

Sandy believes that people don't learn when they are bored, so she ensures that the training is delivered in a lively and interesting way. She is always looking for different ways to involve the participants and encourages humour as this can - and does - help the learning process.

As a designer and presenter of various programmes Sandy firmly believes that ideas and concepts must be expressed in everyday language, suited to the culture of the individual organisation and easily put into practice back in the workplace.

### **Tim Lambert BA (1st Class), Dip. Business Coaching**

Tim Lambert is a management development and change specialist working from shop floor to board level. His expertise lies around the implementation of new Performance Management systems, especially the 'softer' skill elements which help managers to use systems well and wisely. He delivers a diverse range of management development programmes, and has a special interest in Absence Management, which he sees as the cornerstone of any Performance Management process.

Tim began his working life as a professional actor and lecturer, and now applies these skills to training and consultancy. He is passionate about his work, and this commitment shines through everything he does. He delivers energising, entertaining

and challenging training programmes; and routinely facilitates in-house events and meetings.

Underpinning all his work is a profound and optimistic belief that 'people matter', and that there is always more potential to be realised.

### **Chris Marsden B.Ed Hons; NLP Practitioner; Life Coaching Diploma; NWRAC Counselling**

Chris is a highly motivated, experienced trainer and personal coach who enjoys challenge. Her varied career working both in Manchester and the Middle East, in colleges, in school, in prison, in the community and in service businesses has given her a wealth of experience in working with people from a variety of social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

Chris is expert in designing, developing and implementing training modules with an emphasis on personal effectiveness, customer service, assertiveness; coaching; communicating; influencing; negotiating and business writing.

As a facilitator she concentrates on building trust with her clients through a warm and practical approach, thus encouraging them to achieve their goals, using Emotional Intelligence and NLP principles.

### **Rachel Phillips BSc Hons Psychology**

Rachel Phillips, a passionate and commercially focussed, personal development executive coach and management trainer, specialises in the successful development of individuals and teams within fast paced commercial Retail & Financial environments.

Using her knowledge of Corporate Psychology, and 8 years experience within Learning & Development (including full training cycle implementation - training needs analysis, design, delivery and evaluation), Rachel works to the premise of delivering development solutions that offer best business and personal value add.

Rachel delights in working with junior to senior level managers to create and deliver training and coaching solutions in management techniques, leadership, supervisory skills, graduate programmes, and retail sales training that specifically focus on company and personal objectives. (Most recently developing management and operational team capability within Topshop Head Office - Arcadia Group Plc, and Intelligent Finance – HBOS). Her exuberant, flexible, and proactive style empowers and engages clients' insight, self-responsibility, and commitment to action producing measurable KPI linked change-orientated results.

Rachel is a member of the ICF, holds a certificate in coaching practice, an NLP Diploma, and is a qualified Strengths Deployment Inventory Practitioner.

## Margaret Zuppinger NLP Master, Cert Couns

Margaret Zuppinger has been a senior Training Consultant for fifteen years, specialising in delivering interpersonal, behavioural and presentation coaching, training and development to existing and aspiring leaders across a range of disciplines and professions.

Margaret's training supports the achievement of personal and organisational goals and objectives. An author, coach and motivational speaker, Margaret brings together her experience as a manager, and her training in NLP, psychology, counselling and assertiveness to encourage people who deal with people to achieve maximum success.

Margaret works at all levels in organisations, delivering training, mentoring and encouragement that improves profitability, and supports the achievement of their commercial objectives via their greatest asset - their people.

## Our Publications

Between us we have written many books and articles for publishers including Gower, Fenman, Training Journal, DIOL and BSC.

• Advanced Presentation Techniques for Trainers	• The Little Book of Sales Tips
• Choosing and Using Training Consultants	• What about me?
• Warehouse Management	• Evaluation of Marketing
• Time Management for Retailers	• Helping people learn through experience
• Understanding Stress	• Motivation for the Millennium
• 20 Workshops for Listening Skills	• Speed Reading for Teachers
• What is a Director?	• Quality Service; Quality Sales