

# On the Job **WRITING**



## BASIC EDITION

### Lesson 6

*In this lesson, you will learn to:*

- Include specific details
- Be precise

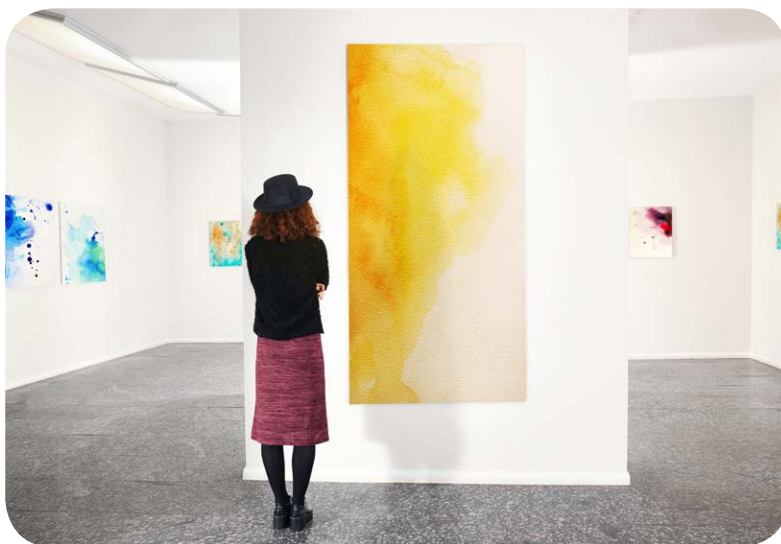
## MAKE YOUR MESSAGE CLEAR

Working at Main Street Artists Gallery as an assistant is Jess's dream job. She meets with the artists to display their canvases and with the customers to help them select art. She wakes up each morning eager to get started because every day is different.

Jess has met some really interesting people in her work. In fact, today she is setting up a luncheon to be held next month for four art dealers. Her boss asked her to contact several caterers, explain the type of menu the gallery prefers, schedule the date and time of the luncheon and obtain prices. After that, Conetta Engels, the gallery owner will decide which caterer to use.

The best way to go about this task, Jess believes, is to create written specifications that she can email to the caterers. Jess quickly writes her message. After reading it, she recognizes that she didn't give enough details for the caterers to establish a price.

Jess is busy with many other aspects for the luncheon. She prefers not to rewrite her note, but if she doesn't provide clear details, the caterers will call or email with questions, and that will take even more of her time.



## DEFINE IT! Clarity

Clarity in writing refers to a carefully defined purpose, logical organization and well-constructed sentences in paragraphs.

What if Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, John Legend or Shakira left out some of the words to their songs, or if the words didn't make sense. Would you download their music? Go to their concerts? Think of them as bad performers?

Readers feel the same way when they receive a written communication that leaves out some of the details or is so vague that the meaning is not clear. You have already discovered how to make your business writing clear and concise. Being "concrete" will make your documents even clearer.

## INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAILS

Clear writing makes sure that words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs are easy to understand and that details are specific, descriptive and concrete. Drawing a word picture for the reader is the goal of clear writing.

Look at these example of unclear writing that has been revised to form a word picture.

**Non-clear detail** "I'll meet you as soon as possible (or I'll meet you ASAP)."

**Clear detail** "I'll meet you in 30 minutes."

**Non-clear detail** "It's not far to our client's office."

**Clear detail** "Our client's office is about five miles away."

**Non-clear detail** "Acme Office Supplies is really pricey."

**Clear detail** "Acme Office Supplies charges 20% more than most of their competitors."

**Non-clear detail** "I will be sending you a long, complex report."

**Clear detail** "I will be sending you a 10-page report with many technical details."

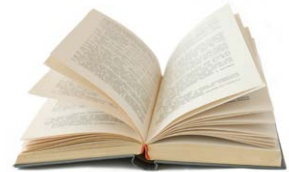


### DID YOU KNOW



Redundancy refers to using two words when one will do. A few redundancies are shown below. Use one word, but not both.

- each and every
- full and complete
- first and foremost
- plain and simple
- right and true



***What would your challenge be if you were asked to write a letter no longer than one page, but one that needs to include several details.***

## BE PRECISE

Just as you make details specific and clear, also use precise words that will help create an image in the reader’s mind. This is called “picture power.”

**Non-precise words** “The sales staff gave an outstanding performance this quarter.”

**Picture-power words** “The sales staff showed a 25% increase in sales and added eight new clients during the third quarter.”

**Non-precise words** “You failed to meet your two last deadlines and that created problems with some of our other departments.”

**Picture-power words** “You failed to meet your August 4 deadline to install the kitchen for the Everett’s home and the September 19 deadline to install a bath for the Paisley’s. That created problems with both the customer service and finance departments.”

## APPEAL TO THE FIVE SENSES

One of the easiest ways to be concrete is to appeal to the five senses: see, hear, smell, touch and taste. To activate the senses, think about the message you want to get across and then create a picture that connects with the reader’s senses. Here are examples for “see” and “touch.”

**“Seeing” sense:** *Written by an architect who is alerting his staff about a new contract:*

The home we will build for the Marlow family looks out on a half-acre green lawn that leads to a sandy beach and beautiful blue river. We need to create a design that captures this gorgeous landscape.

**“Touching” sense:** *Written by an interior designer who asks a supplier to recommend fabric for a couch:*

The fabric for this contemporary couch should be soft, but durable, as it must accommodate the activities of a two-year-old and four-year-old. The room has a mix of beige and teal paints. Please send fabric samples that will blend with the decor.

## LESSON 6 ACTIVITY



**Appeal to the senses as you write for the situations described below. Create any details you need to complete your message.**

**Taste:** A restaurant owner writes a description of a new hamburger that will go on the menu.

**Smell:** A hair stylist writes a letter of complaint to a supplier about the scent of one of its hair sprays.

**Hear:** A hearing aid technician writes a note of appreciation to a senior citizen who ordered a new hearing aid.