



# PLANNING EMAILS

MULTILINGUAL STUDENT SUPPORT (MSS)  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

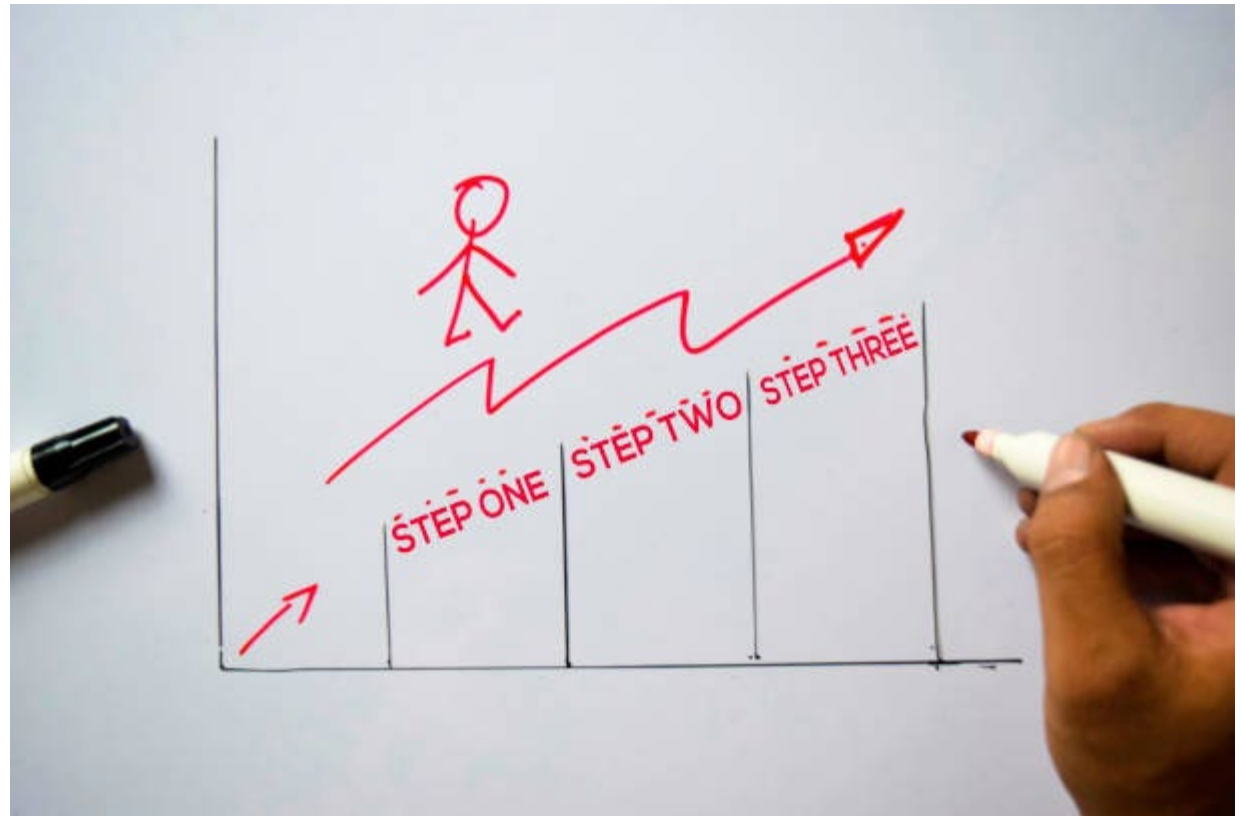
# CONTENT

- **The Prewriting Phase: Questions to ask**
- **Defining Email Writing Goals**
- **Knowing your purpose**
- **Profiling the audience**
- **Choosing an organizational strategy (direct vs indirect)**
- **Making choices in language based on audience**
- **Examining differences in tone**
- **Drafting & revising**
- **Writing techniques**



# THE WRITING PROCESS

- Prewriting
- Drafting
- Revising





# PREWRITING

## Know your purpose.

1. What is your reason for sending the email?
2. What do you want the receiver to do? What does the receiver already know?
3. What will the receiver's response be like? (positive, neutral or negative?)
4. How will this mood affect your organizational strategy (direct or indirect)?
5. How can you adapt your message to the reader?
6. How can you encourage feedback or response?

Strive to use **positive**, **conversational**, and **courteous** language.



# DEFINE EMAIL WRITING GOALS

- Purposeful
  - Solve problems and convey information
- Economical
  - Clear but concise\*
- Audience oriented
  - Receiver's perspective

\*See other slides "Eliminating Wordiness and Redundancy"



# KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

- Why am I sending this message?
- What do I hope to achieve?



# PROFILE THE AUDIENCE

- Who are you sending it to? Who might also receive it? Is it possible the message will be forwarded?
- **Primary audience**, ex. Sheila, your boss.
- **Secondary audience**, ex. Sheila – your boss- her boss – company president...

# PRIMARY AUDIENCE

## **For the primary audience, questions to ask yourself:**

1. How well do I know the receiver of the message? (formal/informal?)
2. What are my personal or professional relationships with this person?
3. What position does this person hold in the organization?
4. How much does this person know about the topic I am sharing?
5. What do I know (if anything) about the person's background? (Education, beliefs, culture, attitude)
6. What kind of response am I expecting? (positive, neutral, negative?)



## SECONDARY AUDIENCE

### **Consider the potential for additional viewers:**

1. Who else might see or hear this message in addition to the primary audience?
2. How are they different from the primary audience?
3. Should I include more background information?
4. How could I reshape my message so it is more understandable/clearer to additional readers?
5. Is there any risk involved in what I am about to say in the message?

# ORGANIZATION

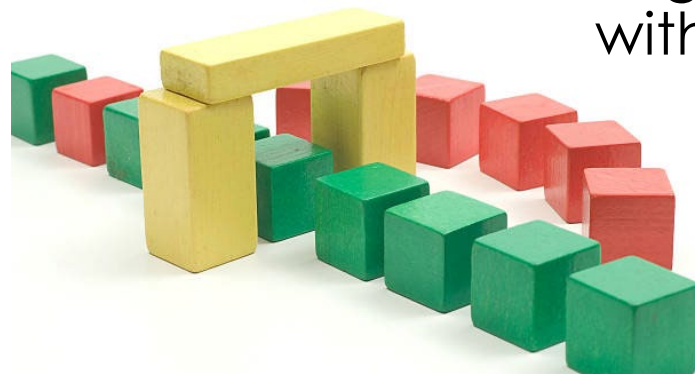
**DIRECT** IS WHEN THE PURPOSE OF THE MESSAGE COMES EARLY, WITH LITTLE PREAMBLE;  
**INDIRECT** IS WHEN THE PURPOSE IS LATER, AFTER SOME EXPLANATION.

## Use a direct approach if readers...

- are informed (familiar with what you are asking for)
- are eager to have results first
- are supportive

## Use an indirect approach if readers...

- need to be informed of the background first
- need to be persuaded to do something
- might be hostile or disappointed with the news you have



# EXAMPLES (STUDENT→TEACHER)

## Direct example:

Dear Cristina,

I am sick, so can I please have more time for the assignment? I hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks,

John

## Indirect example:

Dear Cristina,

Thank you for all the great lessons and slides. I have been doing my best to keep up with the recent materials on rhetorical essays. I have a few more questions about using in-text citations because I missed last week's class due to illness. Would it be possible to meet to discuss my options?

Thank you kindly for your assistance.

Best,

John

How are the two examples above different? Which email do you think is better? Why?

# MAKE CHOICES FOR AUDIENCE

- Language selection
- Tone (formal/informal, vocabulary)
- Greeting/Closing
- Future contact



# EXAMPLES OF TONE

## Positive

### **Negative:**

This plan will definitely **not** succeed if we **don't** obtain management approval.

### **Positive:**

This plan can definitely succeed if we obtain management approval.

## Conversational

### **Overly formal:**

All employees are herewith instructed to return the appropriately designated contracts to the undersigned.

### **Conversational:**

Please return your contracts to me.

## Courteous

### **Less courteous:**

Sohil, you must complete all performance reviews by Friday.

### **More courteous/helpful:**

Stewart, will you please complete all performance reviews by Friday?

# DRAFTING



**What data do you need/what facts will be helpful?**

- **ORGANIZE:**
- **Direct** – Put the big idea first, followed by an explanation in the body and an action request in the closing.
- **Indirect** – Move the request or negative news lower in the message after explaining first (give background or reasons first).
- **Prepare a first draft.** Use an outline for longer messages. Focus on key ideas and keeping language concise/clear.

# REVISING



- 1. **Edit** your message. Check for clarity, concision, conversational/friendly tone and readability.
- 2. **Revise** to eliminate wordiness or redundancy. Avoid overgeneralizing.
- 3. **Develop** parallelism.
- 4. **Consider** headings, bullets, numbered lists for quick reading and clear formatting.
- 5. **Double check** for errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, names and numbers.
- 6. **Evaluate**: Does the tone sound pleasant? Is it appealing to the audience? Did you encourage feedback?

# EXPERT WRITING TECHNIQUES

- Spotlight audience benefits.
  - Always keep empathy in mind.
- Use the “**you**” view.
  - Speak directly to the reader.
  - Avoid “I” dominance.
- Sound conversational but professional.
  - Keep diction conversational (higher frequency vocabulary).



# DICTION EXAMPLES

- Avoid inflated vocabulary. Keep things simple as it will be easier for everyone to read and understand. Examples:

Slang	Conversational	Formal (academic)
badmouth	criticize	denigrate
to rat on (someone)	Inform	betray
ticked off	upset	provoked

# EXPERT WRITING TECHNIQUES

- Be positive rather than negative.
  - Pay attention to tone.
- Express courtesy.
  - Use polite phrases (*please, thank you, etc.*)
- Employ bias-free language.
  - Be aware of gender, race, age and disability (*salesman* → *sales representative*; a *little old lady* → *woman, etc.*)



# EXPERT WRITING TECHNIQUES

- Choose plain language and familiar words. (*obfuscate* → confuse)
- Use **precise**, vigorous words. (*a change in profits* → *an increase in profits*)
- Expand the word choice. (*to say* → *to promise, confess, understand, allege, assert...*)



# SUMMARY

- Recognize the goals and process of email writing.
- Know the purpose of a message, anticipate its audience, and select the best approach (direct or indirect).
- Incorporate audience adaptation techniques.
- Use additional expert writing techniques.\*

# THANK YOU!

Please let us know your thoughts on this presentation!

Short survey:

- <https://forms.office.com/r/B876RWaqNM>



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Camosun Library Student Learning Success Guides
  - [https://camosun.libguides.com/Student\\_learning\\_success\\_guides](https://camosun.libguides.com/Student_learning_success_guides)
- Camosun Writing Centre and Learning Skills
  - <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills>
- Your school's Multilingual Support Specialist (MSS)
  - <http://camosunmss.opened.ca>





# REFERENCE

- Guffey, Lowey & Almonte. (2021). *Essentials of Business Communication (10<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition)*. Cengage Learning Canada Inc. Toronto, Canada.