

Learning Unit 4

Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts

After completing this Learning Unit, you will be able to write texts for a range of communicative contexts, by successfully completing the following:

- Write/sign for a specified audience and purpose.
- Use language structures and features to produce coherent and cohesive texts for a wide range of contexts.
- Draft own writing/signing and edit to improve clarity and correctness.

Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts

During the course of your studies you will learn to write creatively and to study a wide range of documents and books. You will explore different ways of writing texts and will have to be able to read and write about a wide range of philosophies, beliefs and principles. This will enable you to gradually grow and understand a large variety of forms of writing.

This section will look in particular at how to write for a specified audience and purpose. This includes:

- purpose, audience and context
- selection of appropriate text
- selection of appropriate language
- structuring writing

4.1 Write for a specified audience and purpose

Many people feel intimidated when they have to produce a piece of writing, and you may be one of them. We may feel quite comfortable speaking to people, but when we have to write, it feels quite different. It is mostly just that we are more used to **speaking** than to **writing**. But still, there are occasions in our lives when we have to produce something in written format. Some of us may even want to write.

So the first thing to keep in mind is that writing is essentially speech that has been written down. And just as when you speak, there is a **context** - you are saying something to someone - so when you write, you are writing to a reader or an **audience** and you are writing for a **purpose**. The advantage is that writing is a process that gives you the chance to "get it right" – you can think about why you are writing, what you are going to write and how best to say it. You can make thoughtful choices, try things out, correct or change what you have written and finally produce the best piece of writing that you can. This section will start you on the process of becoming an effective writer.

We will use the word text to refer to any piece of writing that is presented for consideration. This includes writing of any length (from a single letter or word to a book).

More generally, the term text may be used to refer to any product that can be read, decoded (this means understanding any other kind of text e.g. picture) or deconstructed (when something is analysed to understand how it works). Thus, although we will be working mainly with written texts, other examples of 'text' are oral (spoken) text, a movie, a painting, or a chocolate wrapper.

When writing there are various formats that are used in order to bring the message across to your specific audience. They are as follows:

- **Narrative** - To narrate is to tell a story; it tells a sequence of events (how things happened in a particular order). Narration is not necessarily factual and may be written from the perspective of a character in the text.
- **Discursive** - Discursive writing tries to give both sides of a topic or issue. The way it is written covers all aspects or points of view by going back and forth
- **Reflective** - This is more of a personal response to an experience, situations, events or new information. It is an internal process of digesting information and writing your reaction to it.

- **Argumentative** - To argue is to present your opinions in a one-sided manner. Argumentative texts are intended to persuade and convince the audience of your opinion. This term can be used to define the action of justifying an opinion or thesis (giving good reasons for) through reasoning or arguments, with the aim of changing the views of another person or merely communicating our own ideas
- **Descriptive** - Description is a style of writing which can be useful for a variety of purposes in order to paint a picture with words. It aims to show rather than tell the reader what something/someone is like, and uses careful chosen words to describe something in detail in order to create a response or understanding. The term “in mind’s eye” can be used as this is what it sets out to do – describe something for the reader to “see”.
- **Expository** - Exposition is a type of oral or written communication that is used to explain, describe and give information. The person who is writing wants to fully explain something and assumes that the reader does not have knowledge or prior understanding of the topic that is being discussed.
- **Transactional** - This form of writing is more used in a work context. It includes business letters, e-mails, advertising and such. It thus has a specific function.

When you write text for any audience, it is important that you keep the various forms of text writing in mind. This will allow your text to have far more impact when focused on the target audience.

4.1.1 Use critical thinking skills as strategies for planning the writing

We are now going to look briefly at how to structure writing in order to convey a message clearly.

Consider the following. A medical aid organisation has posted a new membership card to each member, together with a sticky plastic covering. The following instructions for covering the card came in the letter:

Please use the attached plastic sticker to cover the card. Cut out the card along the dotted line. First you should make sure you sign it before you cut it and cover it with the plastic. This card is proof of your membership. If your signature is not sealed under the plastic cover, the card is not valid.

Are these instructions clear? If you follow them, will you end up with what you need?

Notice that the first instruction tells you to cover the card with the plastic sticker.

Then it tells you that you should first cut it. Then it instructs you to sign it. Near the end it explains what the card is for. Lastly it warns you of the importance of signing the card before covering it with plastic – but after you may already have invalidated it.

Of course, it is advisable to read instructions through completely before starting a task, but even so, the instructions should be presented in the exact order in which the steps of the task are to be done. If you followed these instructions as they were given, you would have stuck the plastic on before you had signed it – and the card would be invalid.

What genre of writing is this? This is expository writing as it is an explanation of how the process to assemble a membership card is performed.

Learning task

The following piece of writing expresses the writer’s opinions on the lotto.

“So why do people throw money away week after week? They would know that their money would grow steadily. Instead, it seems that they would rather live with the probability of kissing it goodbye every week. The chances of winning the lotto are very slim. After all, if they put that same money in a bank account they could bet on one thing with certainty.”

It is confusing to read because the sentences are disorganised. The writer has jotted down a series of thoughts, but has not planned properly.

Rearrange the sentences to make the meaning clearer for the reader. (You may need to make minor final adjustments to the wording, as in the above example, but you should not make major changes to the sentences.)

Can you identify the genre of the text?

Note: Any minor changes in wording are shown in italics.

The genre is given after the passage.

The chances of winning the lotto are very slim. So why do people throw money away week after week? After all, if they put the same money in a bank account, they could bet on one thing with certainty. They would know that their money would grow steadily. Instead, it seems that they would rather live with the probability of kissing it goodbye every week.

Genre – Argumentative

4.1.2 Ensure that the purpose for writing, the target audience and the context are clear

Selection of appropriate text

Consider the following e-mail:

Hi Mom

I am writing to tell you of my latest disaster. I am in bed with one hell of a sore ankle! Poor me - wish you were her to spoil me with nice food and a mug of coffee. I went and twisted the stupid thing while I was out collecting plant samples with my mates Ronnie and George and now I am in big trouble. I had two mega projects due today and with all the drama I have been unable to complete them so I have to write notes to the lecturers and tell them the whole sad story.

Anyway I guess it could be worse - remember when I broke my arm when I was just a silly little kid?

Love

Roberto

PS If you could send me some koeksisters to help heal the ankle that would be great!!

Now compare it with the following note to a lecturer:

	Harfield
House Res	Leliefontein
Street	
Worcester	
2005	25 April

Dear Ms Adams,
Please excuse me from lectures for the next two days. Please could I also have a two day extension on my project on Fynbos of the Overberg Region? I injured my ankle while doing yesterday's plant practical and have been unable to get to the resource centre.

I do have a doctor's certificate which I will give you when I return to lectures on the 2nd May.

Yours sincerely,
Roberto Jones

Both are written by the same person, in response to the same set of events, but what are the differences between these two pieces of writing?

There are differences in **style**: the e-mail is informal, chatty and colloquial (that means it uses everyday language). The letter on the other hand is formal, serious and distant.

There are differences in **form**: the e-mail has no address, and is not as carefully punctuated. The letter has an address, is well punctuated and ends with a formal salutation (greeting).

Now let us explain why these pieces of writing are so different.

Consider the **context**, **audience** and **purpose** of each text, and think about how these factors affect what is written and how it is expressed.

Context refers to the circumstances, or environment, in which a text is produced and/or read. This can refer to the time of writing (anything from time of day to historical period), the place (from physical space to geographical location), as well as to the social and/or cultural environment in which the text operates. The context can impact significantly on the way a text is produced or read, as we shall see.

Audience refers to the reader or 'consumer' of the text.

The term usually refers to an intended audience, i.e. the target reader for whom the writer produces the text. This may be a specific person or a wider audience, for example when something is written for publication.

Purpose: this is what motivates the production of the text.

Firstly, we will look at the context of each piece. A careful reading of the text can tell us quite a lot about the context in which it was produced.

The context for the example of the e-mail is a son writing to his mother. He is informing her that he had an accident. He is also writing from the point of view of a son missing the care he would get at home. The letter, however, is written in the context of a student asking to be excused from lectures and due dates.



Remember, when you produce a piece of writing, your reader may be picking up a range of cues (hints) regarding the context in which you are writing that piece. You should therefore be aware of the implications (intentional or otherwise) of what you write.

What about the audience and purpose? How do they affect what is written and how it is written?

The **audience** for the first piece – the e-mail – is his mother, clearly someone he knows intimately. So what he writes about is detail of his accident and how he is feeling, as well as his nostalgia for home. By analysing his writing we can detect an informality that reminds us of spoken language. Roberto's e-mail reads like a chat with his mum.

Your writing needs to suit your audience.

What is his **purpose**? His purpose is to inform his mother of what has happened to him. Partly it is also to ask for sympathy and to make a request for a gift.

The **audience** of the second text is a lecturer. This person is able to excuse Roberto from lectures and give him an extension of his due date for one of his projects.

Thus we can see how the writer chooses a form of writing that is suited to the context, audience and purpose of the text.

4.1.3 Select the text-type, style, and register appropriate to audience, purpose and context

Selection of appropriate language

Using appropriate language is a critical factor in writing. You have done work on issues such as sexism, racism and ageism. You are aware that using language that is insensitive to these and other socio-cultural issues is inappropriate.

In the same way, using a particular form of writing or type of text is critical to the message that is being conveyed. Choosing an inappropriate form for a piece of writing may have an effect that is entirely unintended.

What happens if an inappropriate text type, style and register are used?

We can determine the effects of this if we try to write each of Roberto's texts in a different form. Let us see how each example might work (or not work!).

First, consider the piece written by Roberto to his mother. It happens that his mother used to be the owner of a small business. Consider how appropriate it would be for Roberto to write her a business letter in the form of an e-mail:

The Director
Ajax Supplies
P.O. Box 455
Cape Town
8000

Dear Ms Jones

INFORMATION REGARDING TEMPORARY DISABILITY

You are aware that I am currently studying plant production at Boland College. This necessitates undertaking practical field trips with fellow students. During one such field trip I unfortunately met with a small accident which resulted in some minor damage to my ankle. This in turn necessitates my being away from lectures and failing to hand in two projects.

This accident has also caused me to recall how in the past you displayed a sympathetic manner towards me under similar circumstances. Ideally I would appreciate such care at the present juncture.
I have also recently recalled a prior occasion on which I broke my arm some years ago.
Finally I wish to place an order for some koeksisters to be delivered as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely
(Mr.) R Jones

Roberto's e-mail to his mother is inappropriate in the following ways:

The **form** of greeting is formal (although as an e-mail it does not put in details of address). The **content** leaves out details that would be relevant to a mother.

The **style**: uses an over-formal register, vocabulary (present juncture, necessitates), syntax (You are aware..., finally I wish, this in turn...)

Clearly, this letter is totally inappropriate to the context, the audience (his mother as mother, not his mother as businesswoman) and the purpose (to share his feelings and make a very personal request, not to make a business proposal).

This is, of course, unlikely to happen. But let us consider Roberto's letter to the lecturer.

Let us suppose that the context were not as simple as we first assumed. What would happen if the relationship between Roberto and the lecturer had another side to it?

Let us now suppose that Roberto and the lecturer are members of the same church and know each other quite well as they have served on the church youth group committee together for two years. How could that affect the way Roberto writes his letter?

4.1.4 Select and use language appropriate to socio-cultural sensitivities

When you are writing for audiences that are different from your own culture, means that you are sensitive and aware of this. A culturally sensitive person would understand other countries' traditions and ways of life, or attempt to learn and apply new understandings. As a culturally sensitive author you attempt to be free from prejudices and preconceptions about other cultures.

This means that regardless of what you think or feel you need to put aside your own prejudice about a particular culture. Your research skills that you learned earlier will come in handy here, as you may research a bit more if you know that you are aiming your text at someone who could be different from you.

4.1.5 Ensure that writing is well-structured and conveys its message clearly

A well-structured piece of writing traditionally has an introduction, a body of paragraphs with topics and supporting information as well as a conclusion. Language must not be ambiguous (vague) and the audience and style must be kept in mind.

In the introduction, you should clearly state the subject you are going to deal with, the narrowed topic, as well as the viewpoint you are taking throughout the document. The introduction and conclusions do not always need to be labelled as such, but they need to be there.

When writing paragraphs you need to keep it to one relevant sub-topic. This must be clear at the beginning. Keep a clear relationship to the main topic of your document; if not, either the paragraph should be removed, or the main topic should be revised.

Use complete sentences – this is becoming very relevant in the age of text messaging (SMS). We are quickly losing the art of communicating by means of text. Except in extraordinary circumstances, sentences in the main text must be complete, i.e., they must have a subject and a verb, so that they express an entire thought, not just a fragment or the beginning of a thought.

Punctuation is part and parcel of conveying your idea across. Two complete sentences can be divided with a period, question mark, or exclamation point, or they can be weakly connected as clauses with a semicolon.

In more formal writing section titles are used. These introduce what information the audience is expected to gather from the text below it. The titles allow your audience to scan through your document quickly.

Everything important goes in your introduction and conclusion! These sections create the ideas at the beginning and your final thoughts at the end, so these sections should be able to stand alone with the core of your writing.

4.2 Use language structures and features to produce texts

In this section we will look at how to use language structures and features in ways that help us produce coherent and cohesive texts. We will look at various writing contexts as we do this. We will focus on sentence lengths, types and complexities.

We will then move on to look at how to use paragraphs. Finally, we will look at the overall structure of a piece of writing, and pay particular attention to the conclusion of a text.

In this unit there will be relatively little theory - you will, however, be asked to do a fair amount of writing on your own.

This unit will look in particular at how to use language structures and features to produce cohesive texts. This includes:

- coherent writing
- sentences: lengths, types and complexities
- paragraphs

4.2.1 Express meaning clearly through the use of a range of sentence structures, lengths and types

Sentences – lengths, types and complexities

As writers, there is a range of ways that we can structure our sentences. Let us look at short simple sentences.

Technically, a **simple** sentence is one which contains a single verb (or action word). Generally a simple sentence is relatively **short**; e.g. "Nelson Mandela is admired worldwide." "He still travels widely."

The term **compound** is used to describe two simple sentences that are joined by using a common joining word such as 'but' or 'and'; e.g. "Nelson Mandela is admired worldwide and he still travels widely." The word **complex**, which as we know means the opposite of simple, is used to describe **longer**, more complicated sentences; e.g. "Nelson Mandela, who is still admired worldwide, manages to find time in his busy schedule, to still travel widely."

4.2.2 Use paragraph conventions

Paragraphs

We are now going to move on to the use of **paragraphs**. You have already done a fair amount of work with paragraphs when you did the brainstorming exercise, but we now focus on the conventions of paragraph writing.

A **paragraph** is a section of writing that consists of one or more sentences; begins on a new line, and contains a distinct idea or the words of one speaker; e.g. "The essay on substance abuse contained eight distinct paragraphs." Paragraphs are used in order to obtain logical progression through a text. They can also be used to show cause and effect and contrast.

The examples you were given earlier on in the section, when we were dealing with sentences, showed texts which were divided up into paragraphs. Look back at these before you read through the next example.

Example:

Read through the following extract from a text on Communication Theory. As you read, be aware of where each new paragraph begins.

Perceptual barriers

Perception refers to how we understand or see situations and people as a result of our personal desires, views and values. Perceptual barriers refer to situations in which people struggle to communicate well as a result of these differences. So when we communicate with one another, we need to keep in mind that perception plays an important part in how the message will be received.

Different people can interpret the same message in different ways. In the work environment, all people do not share the same view and will have different perceptions about how things need to be done. These differences stem from a wide variety of factors, which influence the way we look at and experience life. Some of our perceptions may be sexist, racist or elitist.

For example, the junior assistant might have a very creative idea, which is radically different to what the company has been doing. The manager, who is used to the old way of running the company, might not even pay attention to this idea if the assistant has little experience, is a woman, or has a different cultural background.

However, if they share their thoughts and ideas, they might come up with a practical solution, where they combine the idea with the manager's experience to be more effective in their company.

You need to be sensitive, understanding and tolerant when people differ from you. You need to realise that your way of thinking and doing is not necessarily the only way or the best way. You should practise good listening and negotiating skills when you deal with people who have different perceptions.

Can you see how each paragraph contains one single main idea?

- Paragraph 1 defines what is meant by perception.
- Paragraph 2 explains differences in perception.
- Paragraph 3 gives an example of how a barrier to perception might arise.
- Paragraph 4 gives a possible solution to such a barrier.
- Paragraph 5 gives a brief, general overview of how to avoid barriers to perception.

How can you ensure that when you write texts your paragraphs progress logically and promote coherence and cohesion? In the examples that follow we will look at ways in which to arrange paragraphs logically.

Let us do another example of how to logically sequence paragraphs.

We can also use paragraphs to compare ideas or points. Look at the following example:

Let us say you had been asked to write a brief text as a filler for the company magazine on something to do with contrast in nature.

- You decide to write an article on colours of leaves.
- You choose green and autumnal colours as your examples.
- You write a brief description of these.
- You then contrast each of the types you have chosen.

Your finished text might look something like this:

Colours are an important part of all of our lives. Imagine how dull it would be to live in a totally grey world, with only different shades to enliven our lives. Different colours are used to represent different moods. Colours abound in nature from the brilliant hues of various flowers to the more subtle shades of leaves of which we will look at two examples.

The first example is the most common leaf colour of green. Of course we all know that the green in leaves is caused by chlorophyll, which is used by the plant to manufacture carbohydrate sugars from water and carbon dioxide in the process known as photosynthesis. Not all leaves are green; many have additional pigments that produce colours other than green despite the presence of chlorophyll, and some may lack chlorophyll in all or part.

The brilliant autumn colours characteristic of the leaves of many plants result from the presence of accessory leaf pigments that normally assist the plant during photosynthesis by capturing specific wavelengths of sunlight. These pigments, called carotenoids, become visible when the leaf dies in the autumn.

Which is your favourite colour for a leaf? Is it the bright green we associate with summer and spring or the more muted yet still varied colours in autumn? Or does this depend on your mood? Do you sometimes just have days when everything simply seems grey?

Hopefully not! Go out there and enjoy our rainbow world!

Do you see how each paragraph is used for contrast?

4.3 Draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness

In this section we will be looking, in some detail, at how you can use drafting and editing to improve your own writing. At all times you must remember that the purpose and audience are essential aspects to consider when it comes to your own writing.

What do we mean when we say you will learn to draft written texts?

A **draft** is a preliminary version of a piece of writing such as a speech, essay, or report. In other words it is the work we do before we actually complete a piece of text. To **edit** means to prepare a text by correcting errors and ensuring clarity and accuracy.

This section will look in particular at how to draft your own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness. This includes:

- writing: purpose, context and audience
- grammar features
- consistency
- logic and unity
- editing out errors
- removing offensive language
- layout and presentation options

4.3.1 Ensure that writing produced is appropriate to audience, purpose and context

Ensure that the text you produce is appropriate to your audience, the purpose of the message and the context in which you are producing the text. As you have seen, a letter to your mom will differ clearly from a letter to your manager in terms of format, tone and register.

Improve the text through corrections on the original

Once you have composed the text, you need to edit it and make corrections to ensure that it achieves its purpose and creates the correct impression.

4.3.2 Redraft to achieve logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity

Now let us look at how we can achieve the logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity through redrafting.

What do we mean when we talk about a "**logical sequence**"? This refers to the way ideas follow one another in a way that makes sense to the reader. Sometimes you can have very good ideas about a topic but because these are not presented in a well thought out way, the meaning of what you are writing about, gets lost.

It is very important to make sure that your main points are arranged in a sensible and logical way. For example, if you were trying to explain to someone how to use a lamp, you would start by telling them to check whether or not it was plugged in because that is the logical place to start. It is the same principle you should follow when you write a longer text – the ideas must flow logically.

4.3.3 Check grammar, diction, sentence and paragraph structure

Now let us look at how sentence and paragraph structure should be checked for consistency.

Consistency means the ability to maintain a particular standard or repeat a particular task with as little difference as possible. In other words it means to maintain an even and equal standard.

Grammar

Knowing basic grammar terms such as verb, noun, adjective, adverb, phrase and clause is important in order to be able to analyse and improve your language presentation. English may have simpler rules than those of French, German, for instance, but questions could still arise regarding correctness and clarity of your sentences while writing. And because writing is a

process that demands a considerable mental effort, most writers tend to accidentally misuse the grammar rules and make common mistakes.

You should be aware of potential problem areas when you apply the grammar rules of verb tenses: (e.g. did vs have done), subject-verb agreement (e.g. The results show vs The result shows), pronoun usage (e.g. he, his, him, himself), word order (e.g. subject-verb-object), sentence fragments and run-ons, sentence variety and the use of determiners (e.g. a, the, this, my), prepositions (e.g. in, on, at, during), gerunds (words ending in *ing*) and many more. Should "isn't" or "doesn't" be used? When is an s with apostrophe really necessary? All these are issues which good writing has to address in order to appear professional, well-spoken and knowledgeable.

Diction

Your choice of words or diction is also imperative for correctness, clearness, or effectiveness to bring your message across. The English language is rich with synonyms for common words and your language could be enlarged by being aware of them, the danger is of course that the simplicity of your message could be lost by your language being too flowery!

To quote: "*Your diction, the exact words you choose and the settings in which you use them, means a great deal to the success of your writing. While your language should be appropriate to the situation, that generally still leaves plenty of room for variety. Skilful writers mix general and particular, abstract and concrete, long and short, learned and commonplace, connotative and neutral words to administer a series of small but telling surprises. Readers stay interested because they don't know exactly what's coming next.*"

(Joe Glaser, Understanding Style: Practical Ways to Improve Your Writing. Oxford Univ. Press, 1999)

Sentence and paragraph structure

How does this apply to sentences and paragraphs? Think of length and tone of sentences. If the purpose of a piece of writing was to tell a story (narrative text) it would probably be appropriate to use quite long sentences. This would also be true in descriptive writing. If the sentences were **inconsistent** in length and tone they would become unclear.

4.3.4 Identify and adapt/remove inappropriate or potentially offensive language

We are now going to look at ensuring that you do not use inappropriate or offensive language when you are writing. It is important in any form of communication to use appropriate and inoffensive language. This is however, particularly true when you deal with people in positions of authority over you and in formal settings. Friends may forgive you if they feel insulted, but strangers or our seniors will rarely be so forgiving!

What do we mean by offensive language?

Offensive language is language which is upsetting, insulting, or irritating; it is language that causes anger, resentment, or moral outrage; e.g. "My parents find all the swearing on TV very offensive"; or "Aneesa finds people making fun of Islam very offensive".

In an earlier unit you looked at examples of racism, sexism, ageism, and other prejudices, biases and stereotypes. All language that reflects **a negative bias towards a group of people is offensive and inappropriate**. You must avoid using such language in your writing. We also mentioned in an earlier unit that extremely offensive language is classified as "hate speech" (even if it is written) and you can be prosecuted for using it.

How can we ensure that we do not use offensive language? One way is to think how we would feel if we read about our own cultural, sporting, family, or economic level being described in insulting terms. We would feel upset and possibly even angry!

Obfuscation refers to making something obscure or unclear, especially by making it unnecessarily complicated; e.g. "The directions on how to get to the party were obfuscated by so much detail, that we got lost."

Let us now look at how the excessive use of jargon can result in inappropriate writing. You have learnt about jargon in an earlier unit so we will just quickly refresh your memory here.

Jargon refers to specialist language that is used by a particular group, profession, or culture, especially when the words and phrases are not understood or used by other people; e.g. "The doctor used so much medical jargon that the patient did not understand what she was saying".

Jargon should rather not be used when writing something for the general public.

There is a great deal of difference between writing a text full of jargon for a skateboarding article and writing a report full of jargon for fellow students who know nothing about the sport.

Let us imagine you are a semi-professional juggler and magician in your spare time. You are asked to write an article for a magazine entitled "Magician's Tricks!" You are also asked to submit an article on your hobbies for the student magazine.

4.3.5 Experiment with different layouts and options for presentation appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task

Now let us look at how you can experiment with different layouts and options for presentation. These options need to be appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task.

With the development of word processing and computers we now have a wide range of formats available to us when we need to present written texts. You should feel free to experiment with various things such as fonts, font size, italics, the bold function and space bar.

Remember though to always keep the context, purpose and audience in mind.

EXAMPLE

Look at these examples of different layouts. Each one has an A and a B section. Decide in each case which layout and presentation you think is the most appropriate.

Friendly e-mail:

A)

Hi everyone, this is just a quick e-mail to let you all know I am back from my fabulous holiday. Zanzibar is really the most fascinating place I have ever been to. The food was fantastic, so exotic, and the sea was this really deep turquoise colour. It was really outstanding. Bye for now, Kind regards Pieter.

B)

Hi everyone!
This is just a quick e-mail to let you all know I am back from my **fabulous** holiday. Zanzibar is really the most fascinating place I have ever been to. The food was fantastic, (so exotic) and the sea was this **really** deep turquoise colour - it was really outstanding!!
Bye for now!

Kind regards

Pieter

A) Fax to a supplier from whom you have purchased seedlings:

Fax to: Mr Abrahams
Fax from: Zelda Dlamini
Date: 20th June 2005

Subject: Details

Please could you supply me with your bank details. I need these so that I can make a deposit into your account. What I need is detailed below:-

Name of Bank:-
Name of Branch:-
Branch code:-
Account name:-
Account number:-
Account type:-

[Savings/Current/Transmission/Credit Card]

Please fax these details to me as soon as possible at (028) 678 3469

Many thanks.

Zandi Dlamini
Boland College
Phone: (028) 678 3451

B) Fax to: Mr Abrahams

Fax from: Ms Dlamini

Date: 20th June 2005

Subject: Banking details

Please could you supply me with your Bank details. I need these so that I can make a

deposit into your account. What I need is detailed below:-

Name of Bank, Name of branch, Branch Code, Account Name, Account Number, and

Account Type (Savings, Current, Transmission, or Credit Card)

Please fax these details to me as soon as possible at (028) 678 3469.

Many thanks.

Zelda Dlamini

Boland College Phone: 021 6783451

In the first example, B is probably the most appropriate. The e-mail is better set out and conveys greater enthusiasm by using exclamation marks and a casual font with the occasional word in bold for emphasis.

Do you agree? Think of reasons for your answer.

In the second example of the fax, A is the most appropriate choice in terms of presentation.

- It is clearly laid out.
- The font is appropriate for a formal written communication.
- The use of bold highlights important points.
- The use of brackets and spaces in the fax and phone numbers gives greater clarity.
- The font size would be easily visible if transmitted by fax.

On the other hand the example, B, would not be an ideal form of presentation for a fax:

- The font is quite difficult to read and would become even more unclear when transmitted by fax.
- The font is too "fussy" for a formal written communication.
- The information required is not clearly laid out.
- Phone and fax numbers would be difficult to read.

You must feel free to experiment but always bear the following questions in mind:

- What is the context of your presentation?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the purpose of your written communication?
- Does your presentation lead to greater clarity?

You may like to develop a particular presentation style for each of the following:

- e-mails to friends
- e-mails to peers
- e-mails or letters to lecturers
- business letters
- faxes to friends
- faxes for business purposes
- reports for academic purposes
- any other form of written presentations, such as essays, that you do regularly



Class Activity 4: Writing texts for a range of communicative contexts

Please follow the instructions from the facilitator to complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook.