

Writing



Motivation

The tutor needs to establish at the outset the learners' precise writing needs in the target language in their work. A pre-course questionnaire will establish the kinds of texts they can expect to write, such as notes, e-mails, information sheets, reports, articles and so on.

It is possible that the learners will not need to write long and complex texts for work purposes. However, writing can still be used in the learning context to introduce new structures or vocabulary, to revise and consolidate learning and to assess progress and achievement in the target language.

Written work can be done within or outside the classroom, on an individual or a collective basis. Collective writing is a useful way of increasing learner confidence in this particular skill. Learners can be asked to write in pairs or small groups, where they can make suggestions and improvements to each other about what they have written before it is read by someone outside the group. The tutor should be supportive of the learners' attempts at writing in the target language, and provide encouragement by setting writing tasks which can be completed in short periods of time. Such activities could include short e-mails, text messages, instructions of how to reach a meeting place or how to use a piece of equipment, adverts, invitations etc. Accuracy is more important for learners at levels 1 and 2, while those at more advanced levels can make use of freer and more creative language.

Purpose

It is important to encourage the learner to write in the target language for their own benefit. There are many activities which involve writing exclusively for one's own use, and which is not intended for anyone else to read. Activities such as note-taking, making lists or keeping a diary can all contribute to the development of writing skills in the target language. The learner can be encouraged to write a modest amount every week, and could show their efforts to the tutor on a voluntary basis, or simply keep a record of what has been written. The learner may choose to make a few notes on a TV or radio programme in the target language, listing the main points of interest and any new vocabulary items. S/he may choose to write a short review of a book or a film, or simply keep a learning log, or record of learning activities in the target language (see section on Self-Assessment).

The learner will need to distinguish between different kinds of writing tasks; this will be determined by establishing the reason for the writing, the objective of the writing and who is going to receive the message. For example, if the learner is writing an agenda for fellow trade



unionists, s/he will know the layout that is expected, the amount of detail that is necessary, which abbreviations or acronyms are acceptable, etc.. If the task is to send out an invitation to a meeting, the writer has to decide whether the recipient needs clear details of how to reach the venue, and so on. Such considerations will also inform the style, tone, and complexity of language used.

Planning and execution

The learner's confidence in writing will be increased if the tutor shows the learner how the task can be made more realisable and effective by planning and structuring the piece carefully, and by adopting careful checking mechanisms.

The choice of language will of course depend upon the purpose of the writing task. If someone other than the author is going to read the output, then emphasis must be placed on correct grammar, adequate pronunciation, on variety of structure, on appropriate vocabulary and on clarity of presentation. These choices will in turn be informed by the level of formality or informality of the text. The minutes of a branch meeting would not be written in the same style or format as a thank-you letter to a trade union officer who has organised a visit for your members, or a short newsletter item for the union journal or website describing the visit.



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Example activities

WRITING

Level 1

An application form

You are applying to attend an English course organised by ETUI-REHS-E for trade unionists.

Fill in your details on the form below:



ENROLMENT FORM

PLEASE TYPE OR WRITE CLEARLY

PLEASE RETURN TO ETUI-REHS Education* by 19/06/06

Course:	
Date	
Course reference:	
First name:	Function:
Family name: <u>Ms</u> /Mr	
Organisation (in your own language) and in abbreviation:	
Telephone:	Placement test score: please indicate here
Fax:	
E-mail:	
Organisation's web site:	



Level 2

e-mails

E-mails are usually short and informal messages. The format is already established on the computer.

For the subject you only need to put one or two key words, for example, Report, Meeting, Proposal, English Course.

In your first message to someone it is usual to address them as **Dear...** (Manolo, Ute) and to finish with a greeting: **Best wishes** (or **Regards**),.... (Lionel, Truus). On the other hand if messages are going backwards and forwards quickly, then these opening and closing phrases can be omitted.

Now write a short e-mail to a colleague in your workplace to reply to the following message:

From: Karolina To: Erika
Subject: Course

Dear Erika,
Hope the course is OK. What did you do yesterday?

Regards

Karolina



Level 3

PREPARING A LEAFLET

Plan and prepare an information leaflet

1. In your group, plan and prepare a union information leaflet based on union organisation in your industry/workplace.
2. Decide who the leaflet is aimed at and what message you want to get over. Then do a rough draft, or sketch, of the leaflet, working out:
 - ❑ page size
 - ❑ words for the heading(s)
 - ❑ ideas for a picture
 - ❑ the main points of the text
 - ❑ how many copies you would need and how it can be run off in quantity.
3. Produce enough copies of the leaflet for everyone on the course. Every group will be given a chance to talk about their leaflet to the rest of the group. Choose someone to explain what your group did, and why.



Level 4

WRITING A MESSAGE

Union Solidarity

Read this letter which your union has just received:

International Clothing Workers Federation
Boulevard Emile Jacqmain 155
B-1210 Bruxelles
Telephone: +32 2 224 30 05
Fax: +32 2 224 33 05

Dear Colleague

Second Hand Clothing in Africa

The Federation has received disturbing communications from its affiliates in the developing nations concerning the impact of charitable donations of second hand clothing on local employment. The details of their concern are explained in the enclosed article "Without Charity" from Free Labour World.

I am writing to ask you to picket your local branch of the "Right Way Development" charity shop which is heavily involved in the events the article describes. Please ask donors to give their clothing to reputable charities and to support our trade union colleagues in Africa.

Yours sincerely

Monica Shaw

Secretary General

Write a fax or e-mail to the Federation telling them of your action in response to the letter and ask them to send a delegate to come and address a Union meeting.

[➤ Contents](#)

