



ASHFORD UNIVERSITY™

Writing Center

Professional Voice and Writing

Professional Writing is a style of writing that is clear and concise and seeks to convey information and ideas in a professional setting, such as the work environment.

This style of writing is expected when applying for a job; when giving presentations at work; and when communicating with colleagues via email, to name a few situations.

Other examples of Professional Writing include resumes, cover letters, reports, and presentations.

Purpose, Audience, and Tone of Professional Writing

Purpose: To persuade and/or to clearly convey information and ideas.

Audience: Colleagues, employers, employees, and/or clients.

Tone: Professional, objective, respectful (not emotional).

How is Professional Writing different from Academic Writing?

Professional Writing avoids academic and discipline-specific jargon in favor of clear, concise, and communicative language. Professional Writing should be easily understood by educated non-experts and non-scholars.

Generally, Professional Writing includes a clear statement of purpose. For example, when you write a cover letter for a resume, you are expected to say something like, “I am writing to apply for the position of XYZ.” Similarly, at the beginning of a business report, you will write something along the lines of, “This report has been compiled for the purpose of XYZ.”

How to structure sentences in Professional Writing

In general, the preferred way to structure sentences in Professional Writing is as follows: Subject – verb – object

Example of professional sentence: Sara (subject) hired (verb) me (object) in 2004.

Tip: The subject (the person or thing that is *doing* the action in the sentence) should be placed first, followed by the verb (the action that the subject is doing), followed by what is receiving the action. In the example above, “Sara” is the subject (she did the *hiring*); whereas, *being hired* is a passive action; so, because “Sara” is actively doing something, it is placed first, followed by what it did (“hired”), and then by who/what it hired (“me”).

It is important to keep in mind that though Academic and Professional Writing differ in terms of some of their specifics, the two styles share essential expectations such as presenting a claim, supporting it with evidence and details, and including a helpful conclusion. Professional Writing is geared more towards informing or persuading an audience in the world of work and commerce.