

What is Professional Writing?

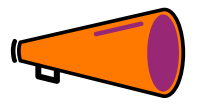
Professional writing is a style of writing that is clear, concise, and seeks to convey information and ideas quickly in a professional setting. Professional writing is geared towards informing or persuading an audience in the world of work and commerce.

Purpose



To persuade and/or to clearly convey information and ideas

Tone



Professional, objective, respectful (not emotional), formal (not conversational)

Audience



Colleagues, employers, employees, and/or clients

Examples



Resumes, cover letters, reports, grants, emails, presentations, proposals

Why Professional Writing?

A professional writing style is used because it communicates need-to-know information quickly. Professionals expect to receive the information they need right away. Time is of the essence and professional communications are often read quickly, or even skimmed, rather than read in depth. This type 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.

How is the Format of Professional Writing different than Academic Writing?



Academic Writing

- Academic style guide is used (such as MLA or APA)
- Conventional paragraph structure with minimal use of bullet points
- Consistent font used throughout with no use of bold or italics other than section headings
- In-text citations and list of resources always included
- Double-spaced



Professional Writing

- Typically no title page
- Bulleted lists are often used
- Use of bold font or italics for emphasis
- Tables or charts commonly used
- List of resources not typically included
- Often single-spaced (e.g. memos, PowerPoints, reports, emails)

How is the Style of Professional Writing different than Academic Writing?



Academic Writing

- Discipline-specific jargon is used
- Scholarly sources are always included
- Uses third person point of view
- Avoids "I" statements
- Uses active voice
- Sentence structure and length varies
- Paragraphs are well-developed (using P.I.E. structure)
- Fully developed introduction and conclusion



Professional Writing

- Avoids discipline-specific jargon
- Seldom use of research
- Uses first person point of view
- The purpose is stated directly (e.g. "I am writing to...")
- Uses active voice
- Sentences are direct and concise
- Paragraphs are brief and focused
- Brief introduction and conclusion

Active Voice

Email Etiquette

First Person vs. Third Person

Creating Effective PowerPoints

Ashford Writing Center Website