

BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Choose the correct verb for each subject

economics (is, are) John's major field of study.

either Jim nor his friends (want, wants) to help on the washing.

people (arrive, arrives) early for the lectures.

most of your grades (is, are) in the office.

the artist (is, are) going abroad.

together with the articles in it (belong, belongs) to this lady.

books (is, are) on reserve in the library for this course.

of Plato (is, are) a teat classic.

and colleague, William (is, are) in town.

ears, wear) a white suit.

as, have) agreed on a plan.

es) money.

helps, help) the poor.

some money.

re) left on the table.

me.

e history class (is, are) li

) in the classroom

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Developed for Oxbridge Academy - 2015

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CHAPTER 1:

GENERAL LANGUAGE TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

This chapter focuses on the importance of language skills in the workplace, and covers basic tips for how you can improve your command of the English language.



*“The English language is nobody’s special property.
It is the property of the imagination.
It is the property of the language itself”*

Derek Walcott

When we think about our careers, and what we need to do to establish them, we often forget about the need to develop an essential skill: **communication**. If you start reading through the job descriptions in a industry, you will find that the vast majority of jobs require one or more of the following:

- Effective communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Negotiation skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Report writing skills

What all of these skills have in common is that they involve the use of language to achieve a particular purpose. And for this reason, having good language skills is essential in any working environment.

In a career context, good language skills can also:

- **Affect your credibility.** Poor grammar indicates to a prospective employer that you are sloppy, while flawless grammar indicates that you pay attention to detail.
- **Improve your relationships with your co-workers.** If you are able to express yourself clearly, you can eliminate the confusion and misunderstanding that often leads to conflict.
- **Increase your chances of being promoted.**
- **Help you to create a good impression.**
- **Improve your ability to persuade others** (which is a valuable skill in the working world).

IN THIS E-BOOK, WE'LL BE HELPING YOU TO:

- Develop your basic English language skills.
- Improve your English grammar.

Apply your language and communication skills in a business context.
(www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/find-a-course/business-administration-courses/)

“Grammar is a litmus test. If job hopefuls can’t distinguish between ‘to’ and too’, their applications go into the bin”

Kyle Wiens, CEO of iFixit



“Grammar often seems to be a low priority in education. Are school undervaluing grammar, given that employers may rule out applications with sloppy writing?”

The New York Times

To start off with, here are a few tips for improving your general language and communication skills:

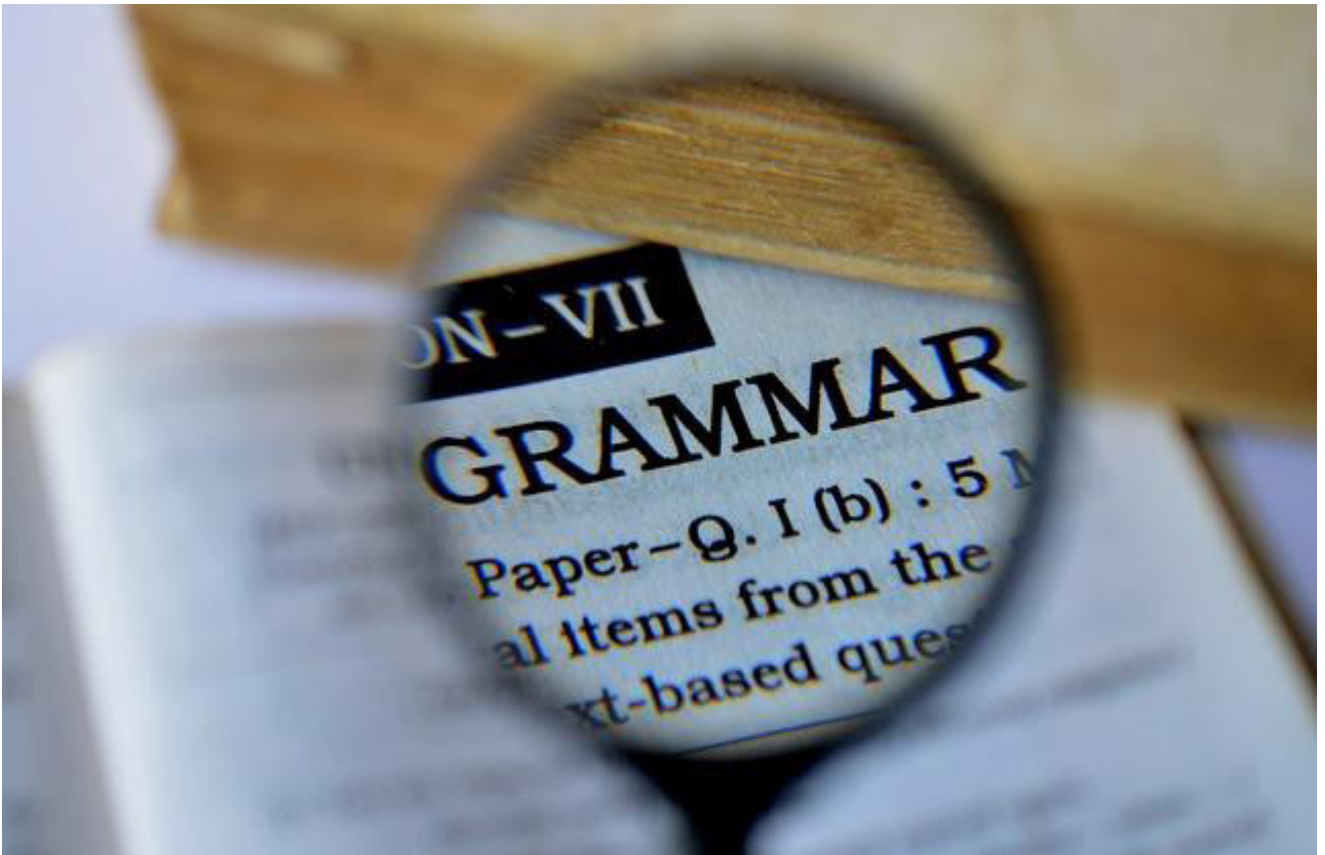
1. Read as much as possible. Reading improves your vocabulary, and helps you to become familiar with sentence structure, word order, and the correct use of punctuation.
2. Invest in a good dictionary. When you are unsure of the meaning of a word, or when you come across an unfamiliar word, make sure to look it up in your dictionary.
3. Keep a journal. This will give you an opportunity to practice your writing skills on a regular basis.



CHAPTER 2:

PARTS OF SPEECH

Parts of speech are used to construct meaningful sentences.



Language is made up of many different combinations of words and sentences that we use to communicate with one another.

Different types of words have different roles to play within sentences, and different types of sentences perform different functions.

In this chapter, we'll be showing you how different types of words (called parts of speech) are used to construct meaningful sentences.

NOUNS

The job of a noun is to name something. It might be an object, a person, a place, or even a thought or idea. There are different types of nouns:

Common nouns: Refer to an object that you can see or touch.

Example: table, chair, dog

Proper nouns: Indicate the name of a person or place. Proper nouns always start with a capital letter.

Example: South Africa, Oxbridge Academy, Desmond Tutu, Toyota

Abstract nouns: Refer to concepts, rather than to things that you can detect with your senses.

Example: love, courage, hope, innovation

Collective nouns: Are used to name a group or collection of people or things.

Example: “board” of directors, “litter” of puppies, “herd” of cattle

**BASIC ENGLISH
LANGUAGE SKILLS**

PRONOUNS

A pronoun is a word that can be used to replace a noun, and is usually used to avoid repetition of the noun.

Example: love, courage, hope, innovation

VERBS

Verbs are “doing” words. They express actions

Example: reading, speaking, walking, swimming

Verbs can be used in the past, present, or future tense.

Example:

Past tense:	Mr Smith drove to work.
Present tense:	Mr Smith is driving to work.
Future tense:	Mr Smith will drive to work.

Subject-verb agreement: In English, there is a rule that verbs must agree with their subjects in number and person

Example: He drives to work. He is driving to work. (in singular form)
They drive to work. They are driving to work. (in plural form)

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that are used to describe nouns. They usually give more information about the nouns, and answer questions such as: “What kind?” “Which one?” “How many?” “How much?”

Example:

- the red bus
- the unscheduled meeting
- an inaccurate report
- a hard-working employee

ADVERBS

Adverbs are words that give more information about verbs. They answer questions such as: "How?" "Where?" "When?" "To what extent?"

Example: The meeting was promptly adjourned. (How?)
She saw the dire

PREPOSITIONS

A preposition is used to describe the relationship between a noun (or pronoun) and another word or phrase in a sentence

Example: She found the report on her desk.
The door is behind him.
He walked around the office.

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are joining words.
They are used to join words, phrases and clauses in a sentence.
The most frequently-used conjunctions include:
and, but, for, nor, or, yet.

Example: She works in sales and marketing.
He wanted to attend the conference, but he could not find the venue.
I can't remember whether he is studying bookkeeping or accounting.
He missed his bus, yet he still made it to work on time



To read more about parts of speech, you can go to the following links:

- www.5minuteenglish.com/grammar.htm
- www.englishclub.com/grammar/parts-of-speech-table.htm
- www.english-grammar-revolution.com/parts-of-speech.html

CHAPTER 3:

PUNCTUATION

Parts of speech are used to construct meaningful sentences.



Punctuation refers to the various signs and symbols that are used in written language to:

- Clarify meaning
- Show emphasis
- Break passages of text into separate parts, making them easier to read

Punctuation rules are there to make sure that we all use punctuation marks consistently. If we all used punctuation according to our own preferences, it would become incredibly confusing, and it would no longer help to clarify the meaning of our text.

Have a look at the table below to see the most important punctuation rules:

PUNCTUATION			
		RULES:	EXAMPLES:
.	Full stop	A full stop is used to end a sentence.	Mary is writing an exam on Monday. If she passes the exam, she will be able to apply for her dream job.
?	Question mark	A question mark replaces a full stop at the end of a sentence if the sentence is phrased as a question.	Will you please close the door?
!	Exclamation mark	An exclamation mark is used instead of a full stop to indicate strong emotion in a sentence. Exclamation marks should be used sparingly, especially in academic work.	He made me so angry! Hurry up!
;	Semicolon	A semicolon is used to link two related clauses, or to separate items in a list (where the list already contains commas).	Linking related clauses: Your report was helpful; it explained the reasons for the committee's decision. Separating items in a list: Switzerland, Germany, and Austria are in Europe; Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina are in America; and Japan, Korea, and China are in Asia.
,	Comma	Commas are used: To separate items in a list.	She bought bread, milk, and eggs at the shop.
		To separate clauses in a sentence.	My friend, who is also an athlete, gave me a pair of running shoes for my birthday.
		To separate quotations from the rest of a sentence.	He asked, "How far do we still have to go?"
		Before co-ordinating conjunctions when they join two independent clauses.	It was raining outside, but they decided to go swimming anyway.
		After a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence	When I arrived at work, I realised that I had left my office key at home.
		When addressing someone or something directly.	"John, will you please print this document before the meeting?"
:	Colon	A colon is used to introduce the second part of a sentence when the second part explains or expands upon the first part.	There is only one way to fix this: we have to start over. The following items must be included with your CV: a cover letter, a copy of your ID, and a copy of your Matric certificate
'	Apostrophe	An apostrophe is used to indicate possession, or to indicate that letters have been omitted from a word.	Possession: The director's office was locked. Omission: He wasn't there. ("was not" becomes "wasn't")
"	Inverted commas	Inverted commas, or quotation marks, are used to indicate direct speech, or to indicate that text is being quoted from another source.	"Where have you been?" he asked.
-	Hyphen	A hyphen is used to join words, or to join words and letters/numbers.	Forming compound adjectives: rose-coloured, prize-winner, hand-picked Adding prefixes: pre-release, pre-production, pre-qualify, non-verbal Joining words with letters/numbers: pre-2014, X-ray, C-section.
-	En dash	En dashes are used to replace the words "to" or "through".	The company's financial year runs from March – February.
—	Em dash	An em dash is used to emphasise the clause that follows it, to separate a phrase from the rest of a sentence, or to indicate an interruption or change in thought.	Emphasising a clause: I'm the serious one — you have all the fun. Separating a phrase: He was the one — the only one — who was brave enough to enter the building. Indicating a change/interruption: "I really need a new — oh, never mind, I found the old one."

CHAPTER 4:

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS AND PHRASES



Words are the building blocks of our language, and choosing the correct words is vital for communicating effectively. Choosing the correct word in a given situation can make the difference between getting your point across clearly and offending your audience unintentionally.

Unfortunately, English is a tricky language, filled with many confusing words and phrases. And as a result, it's often difficult to remember which words you need to use in a particular context.

USING THE WRONG WORD CAN SOMETIMES HAVE AMUSING (AND EMBARRASSING) RESULTS.



As you can probably tell from the image above, using the wrong word can sometimes have amusing (and embarrassing) results. In some situations, however, the effect of using incorrect words may be more serious.

In academic or business writing, for example, the words that you choose will influence the reader's opinion of you.

Incorrect word choice in an exam or assignment may cause you to lose marks, while using the wrong word in a business letter may create a bad first impression.

[\(www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/find-a-course/business-administration-courses/\)](http://www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/find-a-course/business-administration-courses/)

To help you choose the right words in various situations, we've compiled a list of commonly confused words in the English language, along with examples of how to use them correctly:

Accept/Except

To "accept" something means to receive or approve of it.
E.g. Jane accepted the apple gratefully.

"Except" means that something is being excluded.
E.g. She would eat any fruit except oranges.

Advice/Advise

"Advice" is a noun.
E.g. John gave him advice regarding his bank loan.

"Advise" is a verb.
E.g. John advised him that it was a bad idea to take out a third bank loan.

Affect/Effect

To "affect" something is to make some change to it.
E.g. The power cuts affect the company's ability to manufacture goods.

To "effect" something is to bring it about, to put it into effect.
E.g. He effected the change in schedule when he realised that production was too slow.

An "effect" is a change that occurs as a consequence of something else.
E.g. The power cuts had a negative effect on the company's ability to manufacture goods.



Approve/Approve of

To “approve” something is to give consent.

E.g. The director approved the budget.

To “approve of” something is to express a favourable opinion about it.

E.g. The mother did not approve of the way her daughter was dressed for the school dance.

Borrow/Lend

To “borrow” something is to take it with the intention of giving it back.

E.g. He borrowed the book from his colleague.

To “lend” something is to give it to someone with the expectation that they will give it back.

E.g. She is lending the car to him so that he can drive to work today.

Compliment/Complement

You “compliment” someone when you make a favourable comment about them.

E.g. He complimented her by telling her that she was a good writer.

You “complement” something (or someone) when you add something else to it that suits or fits it well.

E.g. That scarf complements her dress.



Continual/Continuous

If something happens frequently, it is “continual”.

E.g. The trains were continually late.

If something happens all the time without interruption, it is “continuous”.

E.g. It rained continuously for three days.

Its/It's

“Its” indicates possession.

E.g. The company improved its performance by hiring new staff members.

“It's” is a contraction of “it is”.

E.g. It's uncertain whether the company will meet the financial targets this year.

Principal/Principle

A “principal” is the head of a school or college.

E.g. The principal declared that the school term would be extended by a week.

A “principal” thing is a main or most important thing.

E.g. His commitment to the task was the principal reason for his success.

A “principle” is a fundamental rule or belief.

E.g. It goes against my principles to eat meat.

Stationary/Stationery

“Stationary” means not moving.

E.g. The stationary truck held up the traffic.

“Stationery” refers to writing materials.

E.g. She needed new stationery for school.

There/Their/They're

“There” is a preposition that refers to a place.

E.g. He will be there in ten minutes.

“Their” is a possessive pronoun. It indicates that something belongs to them.

E.g. Due to unforeseen circumstances, their meeting was cancelled.

“They're” is a contraction of “they are”.

E.g. They're not going to be pleased when they find out that he lost the report.

To/Too/Two

“To” is a preposition, and indicates the relationship between one thing and another.

E.g. I gave the letter to him.

“Too” means “also”, “additional” or “more than what is necessary or desirable”.

E.g. He is going on holiday too. As a result, there are too few people available to work over December.

“Two” is a number.

E.g. There are only two staff members in the office.

Uninterested/Disinterested

“Uninterested” means not interested.

E.g. The spectator was uninterested in the outcome of the game, as he did not support either of the teams on the field.

“Disinterested” means impartial or unbiased.

E.g. The judge was disinterested in the matter.

Your/You're

“Your” is a possessive pronoun.

E.g. Your assignment was due two days ago.

“You're” is a contraction of “you are”.

E.g. You're supposed to be at work today.



CHAPTER 5:

TIPS FOR FILLING IN YOUR COLLEGE REGISTRATION FORM

Applying for college (www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/enrol-now/) can be a daunting experience. Not only do you need to choose a course, but you also need to make sure that you:

- meet the entry requirements
- meet the deadlines
- fill in the forms correctly
- send the forms to the right address
- include all the necessary attachments

To make the college registration process easier for you, we've compiled a comprehensive guide on how to register at Oxbridge Academy (www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/enrol-now/). The guide also includes general tips that will be relevant to the application and registration processes at other colleges.

There are 4 steps you need to follow when you want to register as a student at Oxbridge Academy:

1. Select Your Course
2. Fill in Your Student Details
3. Select Your Delivery Option
4. Pay Your Registration Fee and Send in Your Form



STEP 1 – SELECT YOUR COURSE

STEP 1 - Course Selection

Course name:

Course Code:

I declare that I am fully aware of the accreditation status of the selected course, the certification agent/party and the nature of the course.

Before you start filling in the registration form, you need to choose your course. Once you've identified the course that you would like to study, remember to check that you meet the entry requirements.

You can find the course name and course code for your chosen course on the relevant detailed course information page on our website. Have a look at the example in the screenshot below (the course name and course code are circled in red):

The screenshot shows the Oxbridge Academy website. The header includes the logo 'Oxbridge Academy Private College' with the tagline 'effortless excellence in education' and the phone number '021 110 0200'. Navigation links for 'HOME', 'ABOUT US', and 'COURSES' are visible. The main content area features the course title 'Oxbridge Academy Short Course: Marketing Management' circled in red. Below the title is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home / Oxbridge Academy Short Course: Marketing Management'. A descriptive paragraph follows: 'This short course is designed to introduce you to the field of marketing management. It will equip you with the knowledge and skills you need to define the marketing concept, apply marketing decision-making, and explain marketing opportunities.' Below this is a form with two sections: 'Course code:' with the value 'ADV101' circled in red, and 'Accreditation status:' with the text 'This is an Oxbridge Academy Skills Course.'

Please make sure to check the accreditation status of your chosen course. Some of our courses are non-credit bearing skills development courses, which are neither accredited by external bodies nor registered on the NQF. Please go to our website: oxbridgeacademy.co.za for more information about our skills development courses.

Important Note: If you don't fill in your correct address, we won't be able to deliver your study material. You therefore need to take special care when filling in your address.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO ATTACH THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO YOUR REGISTRATION FORM:

A copy of your ID

Proof of your highest grade passed

Proof of any other relevant qualifications you have obtained



If you are unsure whether you live or work in an area that is accessible to our couriers, please give us a call on 021 1100 200, and our Student Advisors will assist you.

STEP 3 – SELECT YOUR DELIVERY OPTION

STEP 3 - Delivery Options *(tick your preference)*

Delivery Option	Delivery Time	Fees	X
Registered Post (PO Box address)	7 - 14 working days	Included in course price	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
* Courier (Work address) Preferred	5 working days	Included in course price	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural areas courier (street address must be supplied)	7 - 14 working days	Included in course price	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Our courier service provider does cover a wide area but if not available in your area, Registered Post will apply

Courier fee for International students will be levied separately on a cost basis.

In this section, you need to place a cross in the box next to the method by which you would like to receive your study material. In the example above, the student has indicated that they would like to receive their study material via registered post.



STEP 4 – PAY YOUR REGISTRATION FEE AND SEND IN YOUR FORM

STEP 4 - Registration Fee

Registration fee payable upon registration either by cheque, postal order, bank deposit, electronic transfer or ATM deposit. Enclose the registration fee when submitting this form and we will send you a Welcome Pack that includes your 1st Study Unit, Success Study Guide and Student card. International students will be required to pay a deposit of R2400.

**Attach proof of payment*

IF YOU ARE: (A) YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OR (B) UNEMPLOYED

Parent/Guarantor Details

I approve and confirm this application.

Name:	<input type="text"/>	Relation to student:	<input type="text"/>
ID No:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Cell No:	<input type="text"/>		
Home No:	<input type="text"/>		
		Parent/Guardian/Guarantor Signature:	

Different courses have different registration fees. Please check the course fees list (www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/Documents/Price-list-2015.pdf) to find out how much you need to pay to register for your chosen course, and pay this amount using the banking details provided at the bottom of the registration form. Remember to attach your proof of payment.

If you are under the age of 18, your parent or guardian will need to sign this section of the form to state that they are aware of your registration with Oxbridge Academy, and that they do not have any objections. If you are unemployed, you will need a guarantor to sign this section of the form. Your parent or guarantor will be held responsible if you miss any of your payments in relation to your course fees.

**If you need help
with your studies,
read our blog post:**

[blog.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/
how-to-finance-your-studies-ebook](http://blog.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/how-to-finance-your-studies-ebook)

A SUMMARY OF THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AT OXBRIDGE ACADEMY



1 CHOOSE YOUR COURSE

2 FILL IN THE REGISTRATION FORM

The registration form follows an easy-to-complete four step layout.

2

As soon as your details have been captured on our system you will receive confirmation of your registration via e-mail or SMS

3 IF YOU ARE REGISTERING FOR an ICB, or NATED COURSE

make sure to indicate your preferred exam centre.

3

4 IF YOU ARE UNDER 18, OR IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED

make sure that your parent/guardian/guarantor signs the form.

4

5 PAY YOUR REGISTRATION FEE

5

SEND YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Send your registration form to the registrations office at Oxbridge Academy via one of the following channels:

Fax: 086 262 5550

Post: PO Box 12723, Die Boord, 7613

E-mail: registrar@oxbridgeacademy.co.za

ATTACH THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS

1. Copy of your ID
2. Proof of highest grade passed
3. Proof of other qualifications
4. Proof of payment

6

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS A SUMMARY?

A summary is more than just a condensed or shortened version of your work. A summary requires you to analyse your study material, to identify the key concepts, and to explain it in your own words.

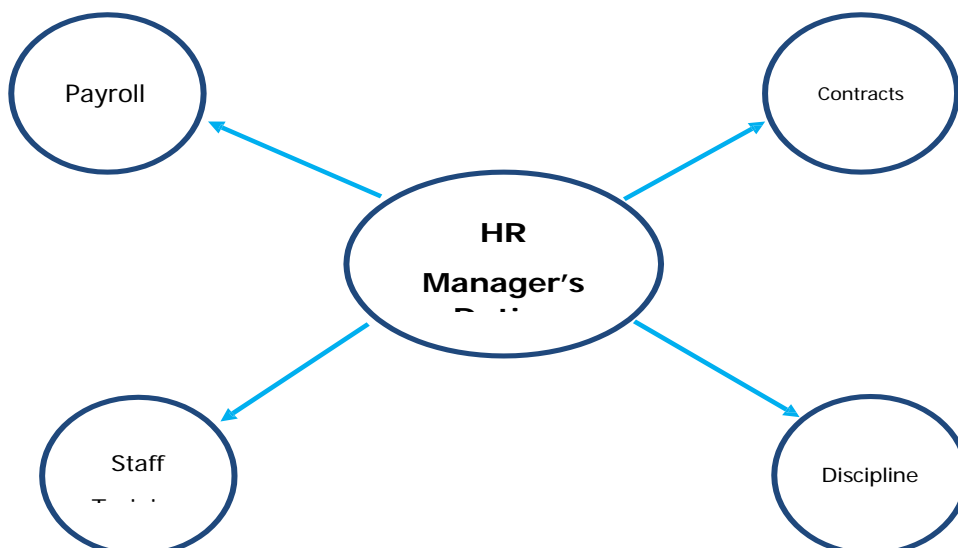
To make a good summary, you need to:

- Keep it brief.
- Make sure to use main headings and keywords.
- Focus on the main ideas.
- Classify and organise the information in a logical manner.
- Use your own words where possible.
- Include examples.
- Remember that your summaries are there to help you.

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR SUMMARIES IN DIFFERENT FORMATS. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

Mind Maps (Spider Diagrams)

A mind map is a visual expression of thoughts, ideas and concepts. It usually takes the form of a diagram, with the main concept in the centre, and the related concepts branching out from there. Here is an example:



The benefits of using mind maps include the following:

- They help you to see how the different bits of information fit into the bigger picture.
- They help you to understand the relationships between concepts.
- They help you to memorise information more quickly (by engaging both hemispheres of your brain).

Tips for making mind maps:

- Use different colours to distinguish between concepts.
- Use key words and phrases, instead of writing in full sentences.
- Include images/drawings that are relevant to the topic(s).
- Use arrows to show how different concepts are related.

BULLET POINTS OR LISTS

If you find that you memorise things more easily when they are in list form, then it might be a good idea to use bullet points when summarising your work.

Using bullet points can help you to understand (and memorise) your work more easily, as it requires you to:

- Identify the key points that you want to include in your lists.
- Come up with a logical structure for your lists.
- Categorise information into relevant lists.

Here is an example:

HR Manager's Duties

Payroll	Contracts	Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay salaries on time• Make necessary deductions• Calculate overtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft employment contracts• Ensure safekeeping of employment contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish staff training needs• Establish skills gaps• Take responsibility for succession planning

FLASH CARDS

Flash cards are pieces of paper (or card) with questions on the one side, and corresponding answers on the other side.

Here is an example:

front



back



Tips for using flash cards:

- Include images/visual cues on your flash cards, as this will help you to memorise the contents.
- When studying, shuffle your deck of flash cards regularly (to make sure that you aren't simply memorising the order of the answers).
- Add new flash cards to your deck as you cover new topics or learn new concepts.

SUMMARIES

General Tips for Making Summaries

- Underline or highlight key points as you work through your study material, and make notes.
- When you come across a word or concept you don't understand, look it up in a dictionary, or do some research on the concept, and add your own definition to your summary.

Mrs. Caramagno
World Studies
9/1/2012

Social: ●
Political: ●
Economic: ●
Topic: Weimar Republic

Problems After WWI	After WWI (Germany) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human losses: Millions dead - Economic losses: Ger. owes \$ to allies and has lost resources and colonies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • massive unemployment for citizens
Democracy Trial	Germany and Europe try Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New gov'ts are unstable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no experience - can't compromise so decisions don't get made.
Weimar Republic	Def Germany's new democratic gov't. Weimar Republic faces economic and social problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prints \$ to pay war debt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This causes massive inflation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Germans lose savings. \$ becomes worthless (Example) Children play w/ blocks made of bills tied together.
How does printing money cause problems?	
v. Dawes Plan	Def Economic recovery plan created by Charles Dawes (USA) to loan \$200m to Ger. It works! Economy stabilizes.
Summary	After WWI, Germany is having a hard time w/ a weak government, \$ and no clear solutions. USA tries to help out with loans - Dawes Plan.

CHAPTER 7:

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP FROM YOUR TUTOR

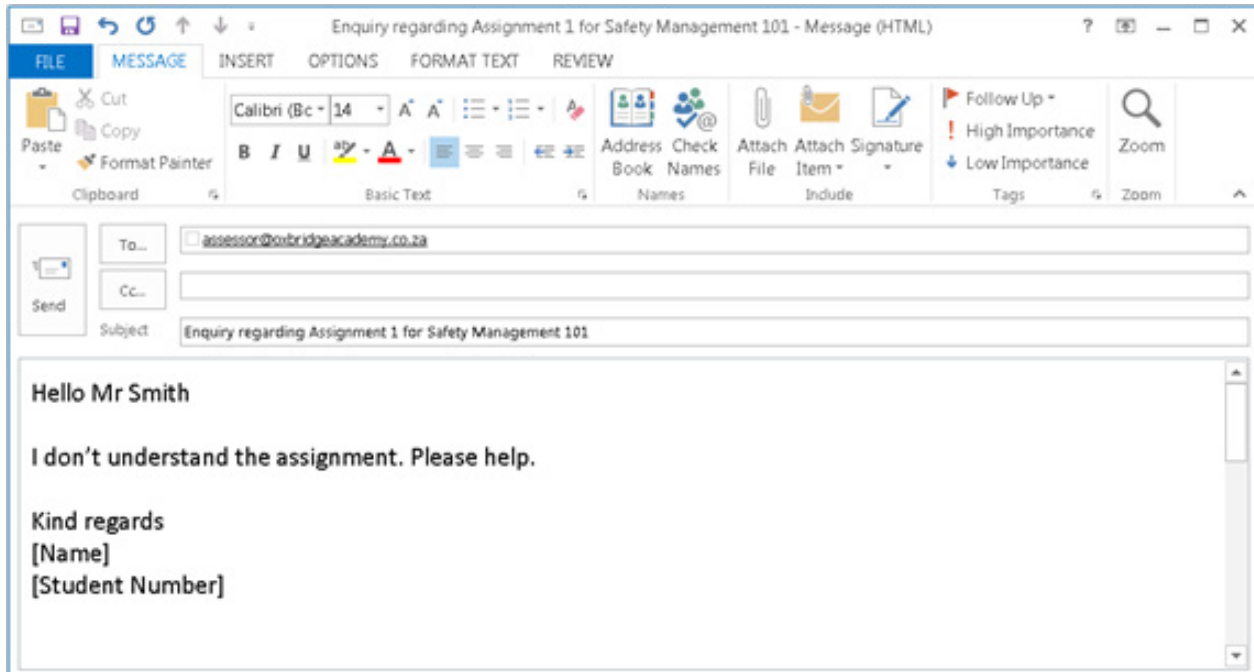


As a student, you are going to experience times when you need help with your studies. You might be unsure about an assignment question, you might be confused by a particular concept, or you might be stressed about the upcoming exams.

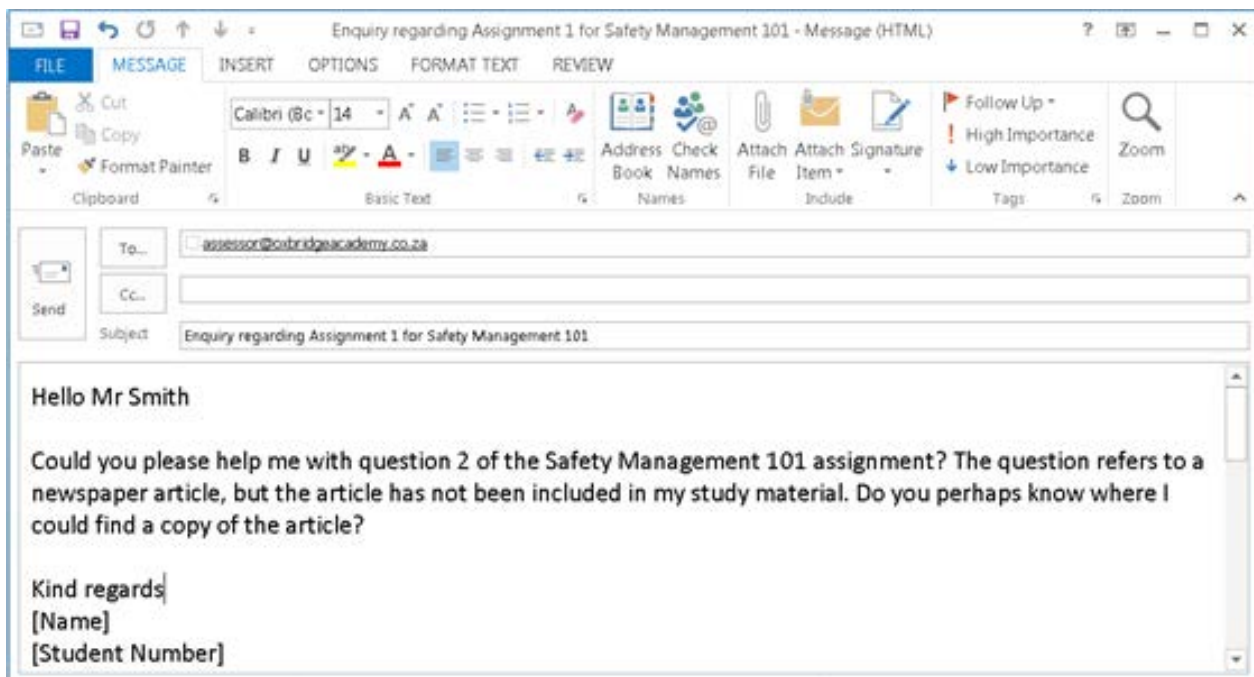
And if you are studying via distance learning (www.oxbridgeacademy.co.za/distance-learning/), where you don't have any face-to-face interaction with lecturers, you will need to rely on your tutors for the necessary academic support.

Compare the following examples:

Example A



Example B



By stating the problem clearly, and by asking a specific question that you would like your tutor to answer, such as in example B, you are much more likely to get a meaningful response from your tutor.

Don't use text-speak (such as "ur" and "pls") in your e-mail.

Not only does this look unprofessional, but your tutor may have a hard time understanding what it is that you are trying to say. You should also avoid using emoticons (;-) , as these don't belong in formal communication.

Proofread your e-mail.

Read through your e-mail to make sure you have:

- Stated your question/problem clearly.
- Used a suitable tone.
- Used correct grammar.

Also use spellcheck to make sure that there are no spelling mistakes. If you make spelling mistakes, you will give your tutors a bad impression, as it makes your writing look sloppy.

Check that you have typed in the correct e-mail address.

It's easy to type in the wrong address by mistake.

Take care when sending attachments.

If you need to send an attachment, make sure that it is in an accessible file format, and that the size doesn't exceed the maximum limit. Many e-mail clients limit the size of attachments to 5 MB -- and if your attachment exceeds this size, your e-mail might not be delivered.

Say "thank you".

If you receive a reply from your tutor, it is good manners to acknowledge receipt of the response by sending a "thank you" e-mail.

By following these tips, you are more likely to establish good relationships with your tutors, as well as to get the type of academic support that you need.

Remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. And asking for help early on in your studies will increase your chances of success.

CHAPTER 8:

TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS



Depending on which course you study, you will either be assessed by means of written assignments, or through a combination of written assignments and exams. Assignments not only help to deepen your understanding of the work, but they often also count toward your final mark.

It is therefore important that you put effort into your assignments, and that you complete them to the best of your ability.

We realise that, like many other students, you might be unsure of how to go about completing your assignments, or that you might be afraid of failure.

If you are an Oxbridge Academy student, we'd like you to know that we are here to help you every step of the way, and that we will give you the opportunity to resubmit your assignments if you don't achieve a pass mark the first time around.

HERE ARE 10 TIPS FOR HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE HIGHER MARKS FOR YOUR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Read (and follow) the instructions carefully.

If you are an Oxbridge Academy student, the general assignment guidelines will be provided in your "Success" Study Guide. Specific instructions will also be included at the beginning of each of your assignments.

2. Read the questions carefully.

Make sure you understand what is being asked of you, so that you focus on answering the right questions, instead of providing irrelevant information.

3. Remember that presentation is important.

Neatness, spelling, and the structure of your assignment will all count toward the mark that you receive for your assignment.

4. Use your course material and other external sources to find answers to the assignment questions.

But make sure to use your own words – don't just copy. You need to show the person marking your assignment that you have developed a sound understanding of the subject.

5. When you use external resources, remember to reference them properly, and to include them in a bibliography.

If you don't, you may be guilty of plagiarism (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/plagiarism), which is a serious offence.

6. Always hand in your own work, and make sure that you use your own words when you formulate your answers.

7. When it comes to essay questions:

- Plan/outline your answer before doing the final draft.
- Remember that essays have titles, introductions, bodies, and conclusions.
- Use headings and paragraphs to structure your answer.

- Each paragraph should contain one main thought or idea, and there should be a logical link between each paragraph and the next.
- Make sure that you focus on answering the question – only include relevant information, and remember to present logical arguments in support of your answer.

8. Proofread your assignment before handing it in. Tip: read your answers out loud to make sure that they sound logical.

9. Always keep a copy or electronic backup of your assignment.

This way, you won't have to start over if your computer crashes, or redo the whole assignment if the original goes missing.

10. When you get your assignment back from your tutor:

Read through the feedback, and learn from your mistakes. This will help you to prepare for your exams (if you have to write them), as well as to help you achieve better marks in future assignments.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS THAT YOU WILL FREQUENTLY COME ACROSS IN ASSIGNMENTS

In your assignments, you will often be asked to write short paragraphs or longer essays in which you have to “explain” a particular concept, “identify” certain features, or “prove” a certain point.

It's sometimes difficult to figure out exactly what these questions mean -- which is why we are providing you with the following explanations:

Analyse:

Break the material into separate parts or elements and discuss their main features.

Argue:

Present a logical, precise argument based on reason and supported with evidence.

Assess:

State both the positive and the negative aspects.

Evaluate:

State both the positive and the negative aspects.

Compare:

Highlight or point out differences and similarities between things or ideas.

Consider:

Carefully examine something and give a judgement or opinion.

Criticise:

Analyse, identify and evaluate good and bad characteristics, and give your opinion based on the evidence you present

Contrast:

Point out the differences between certain facts, ideas or views.

Describe:

Show what something is like by noting important features.

Define:

Give the meaning of a word or concept

Discuss:

Consider the topic from various points of view.

Distinguish:

Clearly identify the differences between ideas, facts or views.

Identify:

Name or list the most important features or characteristics.

Interpret:

Clarify or explain something in a more easily understood form, usually in a practical way.

Illustrate:

Use a picture, diagram, chart, or concrete example to clarify a point.

Consider:

Carefully examine something and give a judgement or opinion.

Prove:

Establish the truth/accuracy of something by giving factual evidence or logical reasons.

Justify:

Give good reasons for something

Outline:

Present information in a brief, clear and logical manner.

Summarise:

Give the main points



CHAPTER 9:

TIPS FOR ANSWERING EXAM QUESTIONS



You're sitting at a table in a room full of students, hunched over your exam paper, with your pen in hand. Your brain feels fried, and your hand is starting to cramp. You look at the clock, and you realise that you have only ten minutes left to answer Question 5b – which counts for 50 marks.

Exams can be a stressful experience. To help reduce the stress and anxiety surrounding exams, and to help you achieve the best possible marks, we've compiled a list of exam-writing tips for you.

IMPROVE YOUR MARKS!

HERE ARE 15 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR RESULTS IN YOUR NEXT EXAM:

- 1. Check that you have received the correct exam paper.**

You don't want to waste precious time (and energy) by starting with the wrong paper.
- 2. Read the instructions.**

You don't want to answer all the questions, only to realise halfway through the last essay that you were supposed to choose only one out of the three topics for Question 3.
- 3. Read through the whole question paper before you start writing, and work out how much time you will have to answer each question.**

As you read through the paper, highlight key words and phrases, so that you know what to focus on in each of your answers.
- 4. Read the questions carefully, to make sure that you understand what is being asked of you.**

You won't get marks for providing information that, despite being correct, is irrelevant to the question.
- 5. Remember that you don't have to answer the questions in numerical order.**

Just make sure that you number your answers clearly.
- 6. If you get stuck on a particular question, leave it and move on.**

You can always go back to it later if you have time left over at the end of the exam.
- 7. Be clear and concise in your answers.**

Look at the mark allocation to gauge how detailed your answers should be. Make sure that you focus on answering the question, instead of simply writing down everything that you know about the topic.
- 8. Write neatly.**

The person marking your paper won't have time to sit and decipher untidy handwriting.

9. **Use correct grammar and spelling.**

This will contribute to the clarity of your answers, and will prevent the person marking your paper from having to guess what you mean.

10. **For longer questions and essay-style questions: plan your answers before you start writing.**

This will help you to formulate logical arguments, as well as to structure your answers clearly. In essay questions, you will get marks for using the correct format, which includes making sure that you have an introduction, sub-headings and paragraphs, and a conclusion.

11. **Where relevant, give examples.**

This will help to demonstrate that you understand the topic.

12. **If you are writing an open-book exam, keep in mind that you won't have enough time to look up all the answers.**

Make sure that you know your work, and that you know where to look for key information. These types of exams are more focused on testing your understanding than on testing your knowledge, which means that you need to have a thorough grasp of the work.

13. **If you have to answer multiple-choice questions, make sure that you read the questions very carefully.**

Try to think of the correct answer before you read through the options, as you are less likely to become confused. When in doubt, go with your first instinct. If there is more than one correct answer, go with the answer that appears to be most correct.

14. **If you start running out of time towards the end of the exam, write short notes as answers to each of the remaining questions, instead of trying to answer each question perfectly.**

This way, you should still earn some marks for writing down the most important points.

15. **If you have time left at the end of the exam, go back and read through your answers to make sure that you are happy with them.**

TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS

CHAPTER 10:

LANGUAGE SKILLS AT WORK HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER



If you've ever applied for a job, you'll know that writing the cover letter is the most difficult part of almost any job application. Your cover letter creates the first impression, and often determines whether an employer will even look at your CV.

You need to use this opportunity to introduce yourself and your skills, and to set yourself apart from all the other candidates. You can also use this opportunity to explain any gaps in your CV, and to motivate why you are the right person for the job.

TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS TIPS

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT: THE FORMAT OF YOUR COVER LETTER:

- Your cover letter should be clear and concise. Keep it short –
- ideally, your letter should fit onto one side of an A4 page.
- Use a standard font, such as Arial or Times New Roman, to type your e-mail.
- If you are sending a hard copy of your cover letter: use the standard letter format, with your address at the top right, and the recipient's address below that, on the left.
- If you are sending your cover letter via e-mail: write the letter in the body of the e-mail, and start with the salutation (instead of your address).
- If you are responding to a job advertisement via e-mail, use the subject line provided in the advertisement. If no subject line was provided, use a relevant subject line that refers to the position being advertised. E.g. "Application for Project Management Assistant position (ref. no. 4231)".

Salutation

If you know the name of the person to whom you are writing:

- Start your letter by addressing the recipient by name: e.g. "Dear Mr John Smith/Dear Ms Joanne Smith"

If you don't know the name of the person to whom you are writing (and only if you have no way of establishing the recipient's name):

- Start your letter by addressing the recipient in one of the following ways: "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Sir/Madam"

In an e-mail, you can also leave out the salutation entirely (and replace it with a subject line) if you don't know the name of the intended recipient, and you feel uncomfortable using an impersonal salutation such as "Dear Sir/Madam".

First Paragraph

Introduce yourself, and explain why you are writing the letter.

If you are responding to a job advertisement, state which advertisement you are responding to, and indicate where you found it.

For example:

"I would like to apply for the position of Graphic Designer, as advertised in the Career Times on 1 March 2015."

If possible, mention a mutual contact or acquaintance.

For example:

"Samantha Stevens mentioned that you are looking for an experienced Graphic Designer with a keen interest in the fashion industry."

Second Paragraph

Mention your qualifications, skills and experience, and relate them to the needs of the company. Give relevant examples of how you have used your skills in the past to perform similar tasks and responsibilities to those set out in the job description.

Third Paragraph

Explain why you want to work for this organisation in particular. Where relevant, explain any gaps in your CV. If you don't have the required academic qualifications, for example, you can explain how your practical work experience makes up for it.

Fourth paragraph

Mention any documents or attachments that you have included with your cover letter, and state your availability for an interview.

Close

Thank the recipient for taking the time to read your letter, and sign off with a professional greeting, such as "Yours sincerely" or "Kind regards", followed by your full name, telephone number and e-mail address.

CHAPTER 11:

LANGUAGE SKILLS AT WORK HOW TO WRITE A RESIGNATION LETTER



No matter what the reason, resigning from your job is likely to be an uncomfortable experience.

If you are leaving for personal reasons (such as moving away, starting a family, or retiring), you may feel sad about leaving. But if you are leaving for a better opportunity, or you've simply had enough of your current job, you may be glad to be moving on.

Either way, it's always going to be in your best interests to leave on a positive note, and to resign in a professional manner.

THE PURPOSE OF A RESIGNATION LETTER:

The purpose of a resignation letter is to give your employer official notice that you will be leaving the organisation. However, it is usually appropriate to inform your manager of your intention to resign in person, and then to follow up your conversation with the formal resignation letter.

What to include:

Your resignation letter should be short and to the point. Keep it positive and professional – this is not the place to voice your dissatisfaction with your job.

In your letter, you should make sure that you include the following:

1.

A clear statement of your intention to resign.

Example:

“Please accept this letter as formal notice of my resignation from my post as Assistant IT Manager at XYZ.”

2.

Reference to your notice period (where applicable), as well as your last working day with the organisation.

Example:

“My last working day will be in two weeks’ time, on 31 August 2015.”

3.

Your reason for leaving.

You don’t need to elaborate on this if you don’t want to. Remember to keep it positive, and not to make any rude, offensive or insulting remarks about the organisation or your co-workers, no matter how tempting it might be.

Example:

"I have been offered an opportunity to work as an IT Manager abroad, and I have decided to accept the offer."

4.

A sentence or two in which you thank your employer for the opportunities you have been given during your time with the organisation.

Example:

"I would like to thank you for the wonderful opportunities you have given me, both to develop my skills, and to work with such knowledgeable and inspiring people."

5.

An offer to help with the transition.

Only include this if you are sincere, and don't make any promises that you won't be able to keep. You could, for example, assure your employer that you will finish your current projects or hand them over to a colleague. You could also offer to train the person who will be replacing you.

Example:

"During the next two weeks, I will do everything I can to ensure a smooth transition for the company. If required, I am more than willing to assist with the hiring and training of the new Assistant IT Manager."

6.

A suitable closing.

It is important to use a closing that is appropriate in the circumstances. If you have a good relationship with your employer, you may want to wish him/her well for the future, and provide contact details that he/she can use to get in touch with you once you have left the organisation. You can then end your letter with a greeting such as "Kind regards," followed by your signature.

Remember that your resignation letter will be kept on file, as it forms part of your employment record. It is always best to keep it professional, as you may need a reference from your employer later on in your career.

It is also not worth burning bridges, and damaging potentially valuable relationships, just to have your say about the organisation and your feelings toward it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Click on the following links for more tips on how to write a resignation letter, as well as to find useful templates for different types of resignation letters:

- jobsearch.about.com
- www.totaljobs.com
- www.careerfaqs.com.au
- www.sample-resignation-letters.com

CHAPTER 12:

LANGUAGE SKILLS AT WORK SENDING E-MAILS TO YOUR COLLEAGUES



In today's working environment, it is almost guaranteed that you will be required to communicate with colleagues via e-mail on a regular basis. And due to the large number of e-mails we now send and receive each day, proper e-mail etiquette is more important than ever.

HERE ARE A FEW GUIDELINES TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN SENDING E-MAILS TO YOUR COLLEAGUES:

- **Always use a relevant and descriptive subject line.**
E-mails with blank subject lines may be marked as spam by the recipient's e-mail client, and e-mails with non-descriptive subject lines such as "Hello" or "Meeting" may be ignored.
- **Write your e-mail in clear and simple language.**
Don't try to sound too formal, and don't use complicated words when simple ones would work just fine. As far as possible, write in the active voice.
- **Structure your message clearly, and include only the necessary information.**
Take care not to confuse the message by including too many topics in one e-mail. Respect your colleagues' time, and try to keep your messages as short as possible.
- **Don't type your e-mail in ALL CAPS.**
This is regarded as the online equivalent of shouting.
- **Always proofread your e-mail before you hit 'send'.**
Grammar and spelling errors come across as unprofessional.
- **If you include a link in your e-mail, make sure that you provide some context.**
Your recipients are unlikely to click on a link if they don't have any idea as to what they are going to see when they open it.
- **Only mark an e-mail as 'urgent' when it really does require immediate attention.**
What's urgent to you may not always be urgent to your recipients.
- **Don't use the CC' or Reply All' functions unnecessarily.**
Only send your e-mails to the people who really need to see them.

- **Only include necessary attachments with your e-mails.**
Remember that many e-mail clients have a size limit on attachments, and that attachments over a certain size may cause your e-mail to be blocked.
- **Keep it professional.**
Don't pass on spam e-mails, chain letters, or inappropriate jokes, and don't spread gossip via e-mail.



ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify the verb in the following sentence:

The grey elephant drinks water from the largest lake in Africa.

2. Identify the collective noun in the following sentence:

The board of directors voted in favour of the decision.

3. Correct the punctuation in the following sentence:

Anthea will you please buy bread milk and eggs when you go to the shop.

4. Choose the correct word:

Charles was accepted/excepted into the engineering studies course at Oxbridge Academy.

5. Choose the correct word:

Its/It's time to go home now.

6. Choose the correct word:

They were late for work, because there/their train was delayed.

7. Choose the correct word:

You're/Your going to write your exam next week.

8. Choose the correct word:

He asked his manager for advice/advise regarding a problem at work.

9. Choose the correct word:

There/They're/Their going to watch a movie this weekend.

Choose the most correct answer for each of the following questions:

10. What is an adjective used for?

- A - To describe a noun
- B - To describe a verb
- C - To replace a pronoun
- D - None of the above

11. When should you use a comma?

- A - When you want to separate items in a list.
- B - When you want to separate a quotation from the rest of a sentence.
- C - When you are addressing someone or something directly.
- D - All of the above.

12. Your tutor is there to:

- A - Give you the right answers when you are doing your assignments.
- B - Help you when you get stuck with your course work.
- C - Assist you in completing your assignments.
- D - B and C

13. If, in an exam, you are asked to compare object A and object B, it means that you should:

- A - Carefully examine them both, and give a judgement or opinion.
- B - Highlight or point out the differences and similarities between them.
- C - Show what each object is like.
- D - Clearly identify the differences between the objects.

14. When sending an e-mail to a colleague, you should NOT:

- A - Proofread your e-mail before you hit 'send'.
- B - Structure your message clearly.
- C - Use a relevant and descriptive subject line.
- D - Type in ALL CAPS.

15. Punctuation is used to:

- A - Show emphasis
- B - Clarify meaning
- C - Make sentences look neat and tidy
- D - A and B

16. A good summary:

- A - Uses the same words as the ones used in the study material.
- B - Does not focus on specific keywords.
- C - Includes examples.
- D - Is very detailed.

True or false:

17. You do not need to study for an open-book exam.

18. Adding images to flash cards can help you to memorise your work.

19. You cannot use a dictionary when summarising your study material.
20. Plagiarism is not a serious offence.
21. When writing an exam, you should always answer the questions in numerical order.
22. E-mail etiquette is important in the workplace.
23. Mind maps help you to understand the relationships between concepts.
24. When you answer an essay question, you should try to include as much information as possible.

Do the following:

25. Create a mind map to summarise Chapter 7 (How to Ask for Help from Your Tutor). (5)
26. List 3 things you need to do if you want to earn good marks for your written assignments. (3)
27. List 5 important things to keep in mind when writing a cover letter. (5)
28. List 5 of the things that you should include in a resignation letter. (5)
29. List 3 methods you can use to summarise your study material. (3)
30. Give 2 examples of how good language skills can benefit your career. (2)
31. Complete the following sentence:

Summarising your study material gives you the opportunity to

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twitter.com/oxbridgeEdu

www.linkedin.com/company/oxbridge-academy

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