PLAIN ENGLISH

English is not an easy language, with complex rules for grammar and style. We show how to write it plainly by using:

- **Simple English**. Unfamiliar words lead to confusion. We discuss when to use technical language and abbreviations, and when to avoid them.

- **Accountable English**. Plain English is the language of action and accountability. It avoids weak words and phrases that muddy the message. We show how using active voice can transform a document.

- **Productive English**. Plain English is easy to read. This involves controlling sentence and word length using the tools in Microsoft Word.

- **Engaging English**. Good writing uses appropriate style and tone. We examine the effect of tone and style on reader engagement.

- **Inclusive English**. Workplace writing must use modern style conventions regarding sex, gender, accessibility, age and culture.

EDITING

Our editing course helps learners to review the work of other writers, and explains how to give them productive feedback. The course comprises:

- **Overview of editing**. Editing is the quality assurance process for writing, but it is often rushed or overlooked. We introduce learners to a structured editing process.

- **Substance editing**. Before fixing grammar and punctuation, editors should check for logic and flow. The substance edit ensures that the content of the document supports its purpose.

- **Style editing**. After the substance edit, a document can be edited for style. This ensures the document is readable. It includes checking grammar, spelling, punctuation and accessibility.
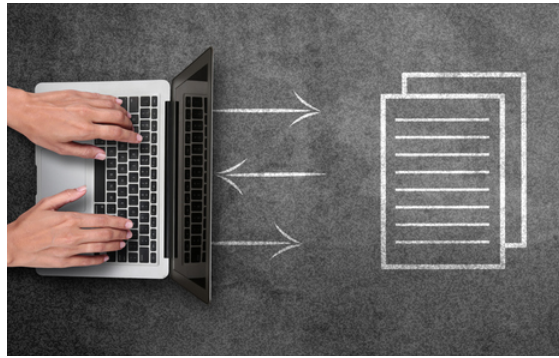
ENGAGING US

Please call or email us for a quote to deliver these courses, or to discuss your training needs.

You can also engage us through the Defence Support Services Panel.

All our courses can be adapted and contextualized. We are happy to use example documents from your own organisation, and to workshop these during training.

We also offer writing coaching. We have trained and experienced coaches who can work one-to-one with your people.

CONTACT US

Call or email us to discuss our training, our prices, and how to engage us.

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WRITING | EDITING | COACHING

COURSE OUTLINES

ABOUT US

Petersen Ink is a Canberra-based business specialising in government writing. We write and edit for government, and we train others how to do the same.

We are government writing specialists.

Our reputation is based on many years working for and with government. We understand the needs of government, and how good writing supports those needs.

We are capable, trusted and reliable

Our writing courses were chosen by the Australian Public Service Commission for their national training calendar. We can also deliver these courses direct to your organisation.

We deliver engaging and pragmatic training

All courses are one-day face-to-face programs led by expert and experienced facilitators. We use case studies, group discussion and activities to reinforce the learning messages.

We encourage learners to bring examples of their workplace writing to the courses. They use these to identify problems and to workshop improvements.

Our courses focus on government style preferences, but can be easily adapted to suit business writing styles.

ESSENTIAL WRITING SKILLS
GOVERNMENT EMAILS AND LETTERS

This is our foundation course, designed for people who write correspondence.

The course comprises five modules.

- **Expectations**. Good writing is important, and bad writing frustrates and annoys its readers. We analyse examples of writing to identify what makes a document easy to read.

- **Plan**. The writer is not the only person who has a stake in a document. We emphasise managing time and resources so that documents are produced quickly and to a high standard.

- **Think**. Good writers think about what they want to say before they start writing. We discuss techniques to identify reader needs and develop content. We then practise crafting a document's purpose, key messages and call to action.

- **Write**. Good style and tone engage a reader and communicate messages clearly. Plain English, good grammar, careful word choice and logical sentence construction achieve this. We show how tools in Microsoft Word can improve readability and reader understanding.

- **Review**. Every document should be reviewed before it is sent. We provide editing checklists to ensure the writing is relevant, clear, concise and free of errors.

ESSENTIAL WRITING SKILLS
SUPPORTING ACTION AND DECISIONS

This is our most popular course and is designed for people who write documents that support action and decision-making. It comprises five modules.

- **Expectations**. Good writing is focussed on the needs of the reader. We examine common problems in workplace writing. Learners analyse an example document to identify ways it could be improved to better meet its reader's needs.

- **Plan**. Documents must be written in enough time to allow their readers to absorb information and act upon it. We explain how to manage time, research and resources to produce a document.

- **Think**. Writers should think about their topic before they start writing. We introduce participants to thinking tools that help them identify a document's purpose, key messages and call to action.

- **Write**. The principles of good writing are well known but can be hard to apply. In this module, we examine readability, clarity, plain English, active voice, and document flow. We learn practical techniques about how to apply these principles.

- **Review**. Every document should be reviewed twice before it is sent: once for substance and once for style. We show how to productively review a document by checking content and not just spelling and punctuation.

ESSENTIAL WRITING SKILLS
MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES

This is our top-level program and it is suitable for executives and managers who are either undertaking writing tasks themselves or managing a collaborative writing task.

The course comprises four modules.

- **Planning**. Document production is a task like any other management activity. In this module, we discuss how to initiate a document, and how to manage writing like a project.

- **Relevance.** Workplace writing must be relevant to its reader. This involves identifying a document's purpose, its key messages and its call to action. We also examine the principles of document structure.

- **Persuasion**. Simplicity is the key to writing clearly. But what if the message is complex? We examine accountability and how to move messages from the abstract to the concrete. We show how to avoid burying a message, and how to use an assertive tone.

- **Surviving scrutiny**. Executive level documents must survive more scrutiny than routine correspondence. This is not just about quality control; it is also about feedback. We show executives how to make document review a productive process of checking substance as well as style.