

## Professional Writing Checklist

In school, you may have felt your grades depended on whether your teacher liked your style. At work, the criterion for good writing is much simpler: Does it get the job done?

Professional writing must meet the reader's expectations for

- clarity
- usability
- credibility

You can use the checklist below to be sure your writing meets professional standards.

<b>Task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My reader needs to know or do this:</li> </ul>
<b>Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My reader already knows this:</li> <li>• My reader is likely to need answers to these questions:</li> <li>• What I'm sharing (is, is not) confidential.</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have adapted to my reader's culture in my             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ date format</li> <li>○ direct vs. indirect request</li> <li>○ level of formality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• My writing style is appropriate for             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ writing to someone <input type="checkbox"/> above me <input type="checkbox"/> peer <input type="checkbox"/> below me <input type="checkbox"/> outside</li> <li>○ mixed audience</li> <li>○ hostile audience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have made my writing easier to understand by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using simple words</li> <li>○ Using short, straightforward sentences</li> <li>○ Preferring active to passive verbs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I follow conventions of spelling, grammar, and usage</li> </ul>
<b>Ease of reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I present information in the order the reader needs it.</li> <li>• My format is convenient for the reader.</li> <li>• My writing is reader-centric because.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I have created a logical flow.</li> <li>○ The most important information is easy to find.</li> <li>○ I have avoided errors that confuse or distort meaning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Result</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If I'm not sure my writing will get the intended result, I have asked a colleague to review my draft.</li> <li>• My mails and memos begin with the bottom line: what readers need to know or do.</li> </ul>