

Understanding Documentation and Draft Writing for Business English





Poll Question Review



- Which of the following skills are important for business writers?
- Which forms of business writing are you familiar with?



Objectives



- Understand qualities of effective business writing
- Address documents business writers often require
- Consider how context, content, and tone can help target writing effectively and appropriately
- Engage with planning tools, such as outlines and preparatory questions



Why document?



- **Keeps a record of important communication**
 - Meeting minutes
 - Circular Emails
 - Proposals
- **Can be used for further discussion later**
- **Helps involve others in the discussion**





What is draft writing?



- **A version of your writing that can be revised and edited later**
 - “Rough” drafts
 - “Final” drafts

- **Used to improve our arguments and appeal to our audience**
 - Develop ideas
 - Explain ideas
 - Organize thoughts



Business Document Types



- Circular e-mails
- Meeting minutes
- Proposals



Meeting Minutes



- Provide key points from a meeting
- Summarize for those who missed the meeting
- Inform other interested groups of our activities
- Provide a process for other groups to repeat





Example: Meeting Minutes



Meeting called by: Ben Taylor 18.10.2017, 2:30 P.M.

Subject: Use of Conference Room for Webinars

Attendees: Lauren, Kate, Tim

- Ben brings the meeting to order. Topic: how can we convince the school supervisor that webinars are beneficial for teachers?
- Lauren: Webinars are fun, and can be used many times.
- Kate: What will the cost of this webinar be?
- Tim will research the cost and report back at our next meeting

For next meeting (25.10.17, 2:30 P.M.):

- Determine which teachers will attend the webinar
- Make a list of benefits of the webinar
- Begin writing an email to the school supervisor



Circular Letters and E-mails



- Written for a large audience, or shared publicly
 - A letter to all teachers, students, or parents
 - An email to the Board of Education in your country
- Good for promoting new events or changes
- Should be short, polite, and personal (“you”)





Example: Circular E-mail



Dear Teacher,

The American English Teachers' Association is happy to offer you a professional development webinar at 8 P.M. on November 1st. The topic will be "Understanding Documentation and Draft Writing for Business English." This webinar will be free of charge and your attendance would be appreciated. **Please respond to this email by October 25th** so that we can prepare a certificate for you after the webinar.

Sincerely,

Ben Taylor
English Language Fellow



Proposals



- Persuade a reader of something
- Require careful consideration of audience and tone
- Benefit from research and effective use of content





Example: Proposal



Director Collins:

I hope that you are well. I would like to request use of the school's conference room for a screening of the educational webinar “Understanding Documentation and Draft Writing for Business English” on November 1st. Allow me to share the many benefits of webinars as teacher-training resources. Webinars are free to use, accessible from anywhere, and fun for our teachers. I hope you will agree that the conference room is a great space to hold our training.

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Qualities of Effective Business Writing



- Persuasive
- Clear
- Active
- Concise



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Persuasive



- **Convince your audience**
 - What are you “selling”?
 - Training Workshops
 - Technology
 - Offer a timeline
 - Set realistic goals
 - Focus on benefits





Example: Persuasive writing



Director Collins:

18.10.2017

I hope that you are well. I would like to request **use of the school's conference room** for a screening of the educational webinar “Understanding Documentation and Draft Writing for Business English” **on November 1st**. Allow me to share the many benefits of webinars as teacher-training resources. I am sure you will agree that **this webinar is a fantastic resource for our colleagues in the department.**



Clear



- Include all relevant information (dates, costs, benefits) in a way that is easy for the reader to understand.
- Avoid vague phrasing

Unclear: *Please come to the webinar we will host so that you can learn more about teaching.*

Clear: *Teachers are invited to attend the American English webinar hosted on November 1st in the school conference room at 8 P.M. to improve their business writing skills.*



Active



- Apply the active voice to focus on the “doer” and encourage concise writing
- Good for persuasive writing assignments

Active: *Teachers all over the world are learning new, innovative methods for classroom instruction through the use of online webinars.*

Passive: *New, innovative methods for classroom instruction are being learned through webinars by teachers all over the world.*



Concise



- Get to the point!
- Provide information in the shortest, clearest way possible.

Lengthy: *The webinar, which is to be held in the conference room on the 1st of November, will focus on the benefits of effective business writing. All teachers are invited to attend.*

Concise: *All teachers are invited to the Business Writing webinar on November 1st, held in the school's conference room.*



Business Writing: The Basics



- Qualities that all draft writing should contain:
 - Purpose
 - Context
 - Research
 - Outline
 - Content



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Purposes in Business Writing

- Summary
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation





Purpose: Summary



■ Summary

- Contains the major points of a longer piece of information
- Shortens into several statements

■ Examples

- Providing the main details of a television episode
- Sharing the plot of a book with a friend
- Writing out the minutes from a business meeting



Example: Summary



The purpose of the meeting on October 18th was to discuss the benefits of webinars for the teaching staff. The committee will discuss these benefits with the school supervisor.

Lauren said that webinars are fun, and can be accessed more than once. Kate asked how much the webinar would cost. Tim agreed to research the cost before the next meeting.

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Purpose: Analysis

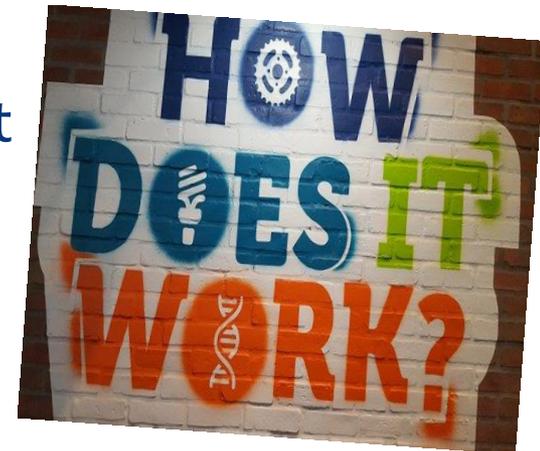


■ Analysis

- Examines a body of work closely, looking at the parts that make up the whole
- Explores connections between the parts

■ Example

- Explaining why webinars are practical for teachers with access to the internet





Example: Analysis



Webinars are available online. Many teachers have access to a reliable internet source, allowing for access to the content even after the training has taken place.

This is more possible with webinars than it is with an in-person training format, and will be beneficial to those who may have missed the training session.

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Purpose: Synthesis

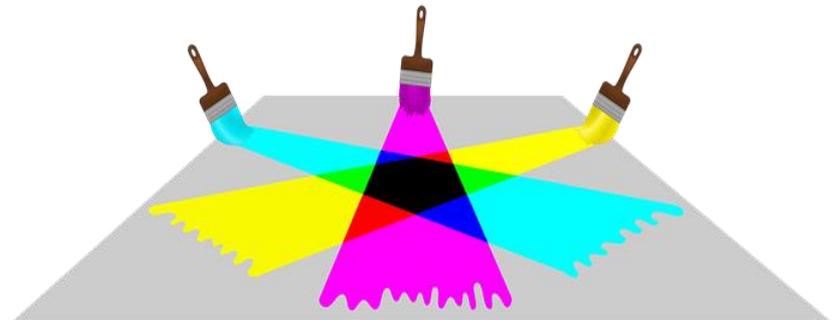


■ Synthesis

- Combines the main ideas of two or more other pieces of writing
- Creates a new, and unique, point

■ Example:

- Discussion of the benefits of webinars in two separate articles





Example: Synthesis



Webinars do often require reliable internet for viewing, and it is true that not all teachers have access to this.

However, a recent report from the Department of Technology claims that 75 % of households now have internet in our country, up from 50% just 10 years ago.

Furthermore, a quick search of our nation's library website reveals that there are places with WiFi access in every major city and many smaller towns.



Purpose: Evaluation



■ Evaluation

- Places value
- Offers opinions
- Offers reasons for those opinions

■ Examples:

- Review of a presentation
- Proposal for a project





Evaluation



Due to their low cost and ease of access, **the benefits of webinars** for professional development **are much greater** than any inconvenience our use of the conference room may cause our department.





Find your Purpose!



Assignment:

Write a proposal to your boss asking for permission to use the conference room to host an educational webinar. You believe it will be a great source for professional development, and will need to explain why they are effective tools.

Purpose:



Find your Purpose!



Purpose:

Evaluate the benefits of educational webinars

Develop an argument for the use of educational webinars in teacher-training

+ Context: Audience and Tone

- Once we know the purpose for our writing, we need to determine:
 - The **audience**
 - An appropriate **tone**



+ Audience: Important Considerations

- Demographics (age, religion, gender, ethnicity)
- Education
- Prior Knowledge
- Expectations (theirs and yours!)





Finding the Right Tone



- A writer's **tone** indicates his or her attitude towards the audience as well as the subject matter of the writing.
- Why am I writing this document?
- Who am I writing to and what do I want them to understand?
- What kind of tone should I use?

+ Your tone should be:

- Confident
- Polite
- Honest
- Non-discriminatory
- Focused
- Easy to read and understand





What's the Tone?



Assignment:

Explain the reasons why educational webinars are an effective tool for teacher training worldwide.

Purpose:

Evaluate the benefits of educational webinars, and make an argument for the use of educational webinars in teacher training around the world.

Audience:

Your supervisor, a second-language English teacher

Tone:



What's the Tone?



Tone:

***Focus** on language that can create an open and comfortable space for teacher training.*

***Avoid** using too many idioms or difficult English phrases.*

***Show** respect for your supervisor's position at the school.*



Research



- Once you know the purpose and context your writing, think about some questions to guide your research:
 - *What would someone who disagrees with me say?*
 - *How can I provide evidence to strengthen my claims?*
 - *What have experts said about this topic?*





Research Example

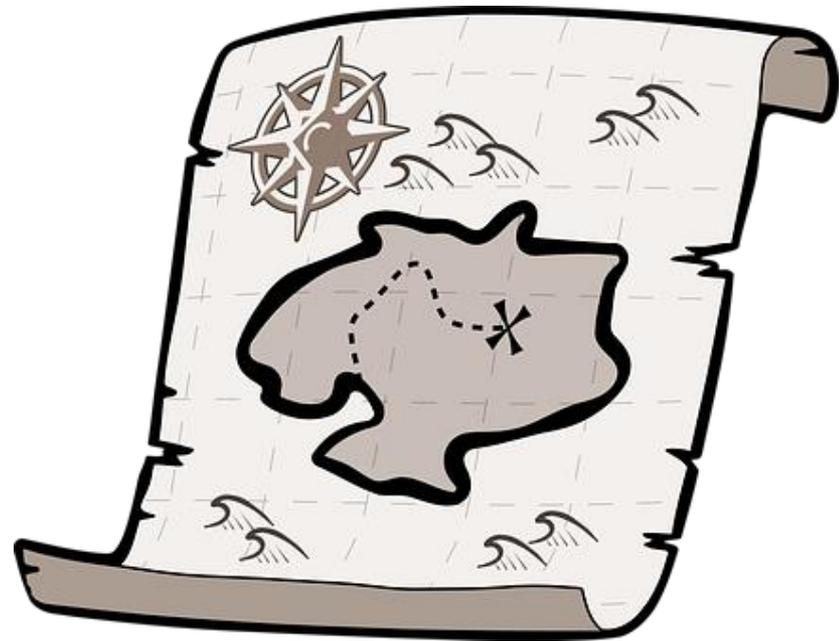
“English-language teachers should consider introducing their learners to these online resources because the enthusiasts can encourage greater learner autonomy, spark genuine student motivation, and facilitate collaborative learning.” (Odo 14)



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Outlining

Outlines can help us keep track of a large amount of information, and can show a relationship between information as well as logical ordering of information.



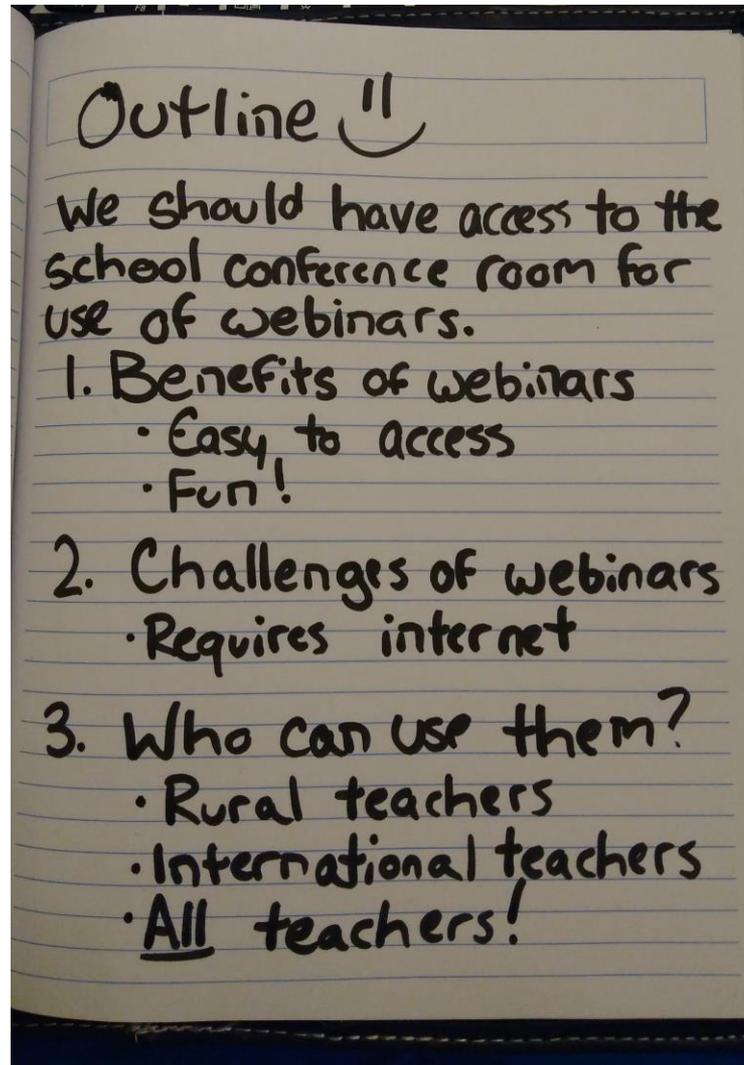


How do I create an outline?

- **Brainstorm:** List some ideas!
- **Organize:** Group related ideas
- **Order:** Arrange ideas from general to specific
- **Label:** Create main and sub headings



Outline Example



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Brainstorming



Brainstorming helps you prepare a list of key ideas you might want to use in your writing.

Webinars



Internet resources

Easy to share

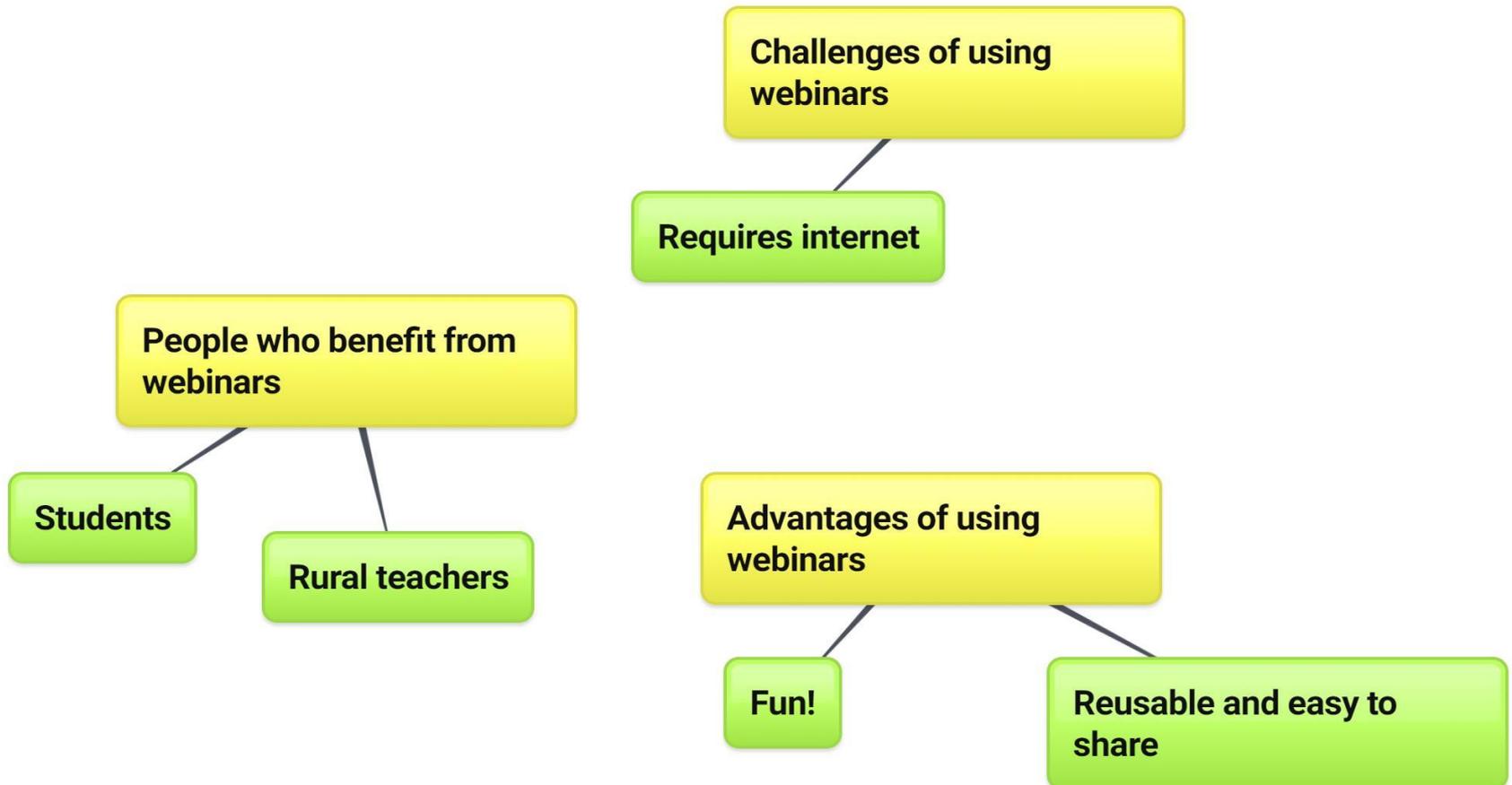
Free education



Organizing Your Ideas



Group ideas by topic or point.





Order Ideas



Order ideas in a way that will be best for the purpose of your writing.





Content



Now, you need to think about the **content** of your writing.

Content can include:

- Examples
- Facts
- Statistics
- Quotes





Example: Content



Audience: School supervisor

- **Purpose:** Evaluate the benefits of educational webinars, and develop an argument for the use of educational webinars in teacher-training.

Content: *One feature of webinars is that they can be accessed online, meaning that even teachers in remote or far-away areas can access training materials at any time.*



Let's review!



- **Documentation** is important in business writing because we should keep a record of our important communications.
- The written work we create to edit and revise later is called a **draft**.
- **Meeting minutes, circular emails, and proposals** are different types of business writing.
- Because business writing is **persuasive**, it is usually **clear** and **concise**, and uses **active** phrasing to engage the reader.





Ask yourself...



- What is the **purpose** of my writing?
- Who is my **audience**?
- What **content** would be appropriate for my audience, now that I know my purpose?
- What **research** can I do to strengthen my writing?
- Would an **outline** help me?

Questions? Comments?



Visit the AE Webinar 7.5 resource page to find pre-webinar readings and materials:

<http://americanenglishwebinars.com/AEWebinar7-5>

Join the post-webinar discussion on the Ning!

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