



Writing: General Tips

ESSENTIAL SKILLS TIP SHEET

Use these practical tips to help you improve your **writing** skills:

- ✓ Determine why you are writing before you start (e.g. to inform, to persuade or to explain).
- ✓ Write down a list of ideas (i.e., brainstorm) before you begin to write.
- ✓ Keep your writing short and to the point by setting a length or word limit.
- ✓ Write neatly so that others can read your writing.
- ✓ When writing numbers, spell-out the numbers from zero to nine, and use digits for numbers that are higher than nine (e.g. 15).
- ✓ Use words that are simple and easy to understand.
- ✓ Avoid using too many punctuation marks (e.g. exclamation points).
- ✓ Use a comma to indicate a break, a pause, or to separate ideas within a sentence (e.g.: Workers at the mine site live, work, sleep and eat in close quarters with their co-workers).
- ✓ Use a dictionary or spell-checker to verify the correct spelling of words.
- ✓ Proofread your writing several times to make sure that there are no grammar or spelling errors.
- ✓ Use formatting techniques to draw attention to important information (e.g. bold, underline, and/or italicize text where appropriate).
- ✓ Use headings to organize your writing into key sections.
- ✓ Avoid using the same word too often. Use a thesaurus to help you identify alternate words that have similar meanings.
- ✓ Only introduce one main idea in each paragraph.
- ✓ If you use someone else's words or ideas, make sure to reference the original author or source.
- ✓ Review your work to make sure that important information is not missing.
- ✓ Read your work out loud and listen for anything that sounds awkward or unclear.
- ✓ Ask a colleague, friend or family member to proofread your work and to provide feedback.