

# Planning and Writing Reports and Papers

This course shows you how to plan and write clear reports and papers that will be persuasive and make an impact.

The course provides a tried-and-tested approach to writing – the Process Method – based on the themes of Purpose, Content, Structure, Style, and Revision of Everything. It also explains the skills of writing plain English (which may include using technical language if this is likely to be understood by your readers).

The course is designed by Martin Cutts, author of the *Oxford Guide to Plain English* (OUP, 2020), and is usually run by Ruth Thornton, author of the *Adult Learners' Writing Guide* (Chambers, 2006).

We ask each author to send the tutor up to three pages of their own work-related written work for individual comment (if they wish). This means they get valuable individual feedback and it also helps the tutor to pitch the course at the right level.

## Topics

- Criteria for good reports and papers: what do readers like?
- How to use the core statement and horizontal plan to organize and structure your work
- Three easy-to-use structures
- How to write a good summary
- Style: clarity and brevity for maximum impact – sentence length – conciseness – active- and passive-voice verbs – avoiding unnecessary negatives – preferring single-word prepositions – easy vocabulary – good punctuation, eg how to punctuate vertical lists
- Practical exercises based on real examples
- Tips on checking your work before it goes

**Preparation** We ask you to do a small amount of pre-course reading and to send the tutor up to three pages of your own work-related written work for individual comment (if you wish). Please anonymize what you send, removing anything personal or confidential.

**Duration** Half-day or one-day F2F (3–12 authors) at the client's own venue; or half-day virtual using Teams (3–9 authors). In a half-day course, topics will be covered more briefly and with less practical work.

**Course tutor** Ruth Thornton or a suitable replacement.

**Prices on application** – please fill in our contact form.

# Writing to the Public using Plain English

This course gives you the skills to write a wide range of clear and well-focused material, such as emails, letters, reports and web copy. It builds on your existing know-how, giving you crucial tips that will help make your written work stand out for all the right reasons.

The course explains the skills of writing plain English (which may include using technical language if it's likely to be understood by the readers).

The course also offers you a tried-and-tested approach to writing – the Process Method – based on the themes of Purpose, Content, Structure, Style, and Revision of Everything.

The course is designed by Martin Cutts, author of the *Oxford Guide to Plain English* (OUP, 2020), and usually run by Ruth Thornton, author of the *Adult Learners' Writing Guide* (Chambers, 2006).

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## Topics

- Criteria for good documents: what do readers like?
- Applying the criteria to some short examples of writing
- Examples examined and discussed: how would you make them 'fit to go'?
- Ways of helping the busy reader
- How to use the bubble diagram, core statement and horizontal plan to organize and structure your work
- How to focus the reader's attention on your main points
- Easy-to-use structures
- Style: clarity and brevity for maximum impact – sentence length – conciseness – active- and passive-voice verbs – avoiding unnecessary negatives – preferring single-word prepositions – easy vocabulary – good punctuation, eg how to punctuate vertical lists
- Practical exercises based on real examples
- Tips on checking your work before it goes
- Wordpower quiz

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