Who is this for?
This leaflet is for anyone who needs to write letters, memos, reports etc. within a business setting.

The aim of this leaflet
To introduce you to some learning materials and tips related to business writing.

Materials in the Language Commons

Books
You’ll find books on the Writing Shelf and Grammar Practice Shelf. If you have difficulties getting the book you want, please ask for help from the reception desk.

Specially for Hong Kong people

♦ Business Writing for Hong Kong [Writing Shelf]
This book introduces you to a wide range of business writing. There are exercises throughout all chapters, with an answer key at the back of the book. It also contains a useful reference guide discussing common weaknesses in Hong Kong people’s written English.

♦ The Complete Book of Contemporary Business Letters
This book provides sample letters for almost every category of business letters and documents. There are also comments and explanations for each of the sample letters.

♦ A Handbook of Commercial Correspondence [Writing Shelf]
It takes you through different stages of business transactions. It contains excellent explanation of styles and a wide range of business correspondence.

Something quick and effective

♦ How English Works (2) [Grammar Practice Shelf]
Looking for a ‘crash’ course in business English? This might be the one. It comes with a Students’ Book and a Workbook. While the Students’ Book integrates core business functions and grammar with vocabulary (and pronunciation!), the workbook offers writing exercises for you to consolidate the language covered in the Students’ book. There is also an answer key for the workbook.

♦ Business English: Homework [Grammar Practice Shelf]
The writing practice is designed in such a way that there are complementary oral practice — suitable for you if you are looking for contextualised writing exercises. There is a key at the back of the book giving answers and suggesting alternatives.

♦ Technical Writing & Professional Communication [Writing Shelf]
Part 4 of this book consists of units concentrating on different types of technical and business reports. Topics include: long reports, informal reports, proposals, memos and so on.

Materials on the Web

General and comprehensive

♦ Professional Writing [Purdue University]
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/4/16
From this website you can get very useful and comprehensive information on business writing.

  Recommended links include:
  ▪ Revision in business writing
Prioritizing your concerns for Effective Business Writing
Tones in Business Writing
Sales letters: four point action closing

Specific writing needs

♦ How to Write an Effective Admission Letter [University of Toronto]
   http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/admission-letters
An admission letter is a letter or personal statement as part of applying for graduate or professional school. Visit this website if you need to write one.

Writing Style

♦ Wordiness: Danger Signals and Ways to React [University of Toronto]
   http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/style-and-editing/wordiness
Visit this website to learn how to write in a concise manner.

♦ Unbiased Language [University of Toronto]
   http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/style-and-editing/unbiased-language
Recent changes in social awareness have made people think about the ways language tends to downgrade certain groups. Common sense and some specific strategies can help you avoid unintended implications.

♦ Correct spelling [University of Ottawa]
   http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writingcenter/hypergrammar/spelling.html
If spelling worries you, visit this website.

♦ Grammar [Purdue University]
   http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/
One of the best sites for grammar — almost all aspects of grammar are covered.

Something light

♦ A letter from the MIT’s Admission Department
“MIT certainly has a proud reputation, but its admissions department went a little overboard in this case.” The two letters in the website are hilarious. Have fun!

MORE tips

Getting started

♦ Read the Advice Sheet entitled Developing your own Writing

Program (W2) for information on writing strategies and tips for creating writing opportunities.

♦ For an introduction to the styles and basic structures of business writing, read Chapters 1 and 2 of A Handbook of Commercial Correspondence, or Part 1 of Business Writing for Hong Kong.

Where to look for sample business documents?

♦ Looking for samples of different types of business letter? Try this: The complete book of contemporary business letters. There are explanations to go with the samples. Highly recommended.

What do you want to improve in your business writing?

♦ If you want to learn business report-writing from a course book, we recommend Chapter 14 of Business Writing for Hong Kong.

♦ In writing, do you often feel that you lack the vocabulary you need? If this is the case, read the Advice Sheet Learning Vocabulary for Speaking and Writing (V8).

♦ Do you feel that you want to improve the grammar and sentence structures in your writing? If so, read the Advice Sheets
Grammar For Writing (G4) and Sentence Structure and Style (G5).

How can you evaluate your writing?

Do a diagnostic test (please read Writing Advice Sheet W2 and Grammar Advice Sheet G3 for information on this), find out your weaknesses in writing and then decide what practice you need to improve your writing skills. You need to identify the areas that need improvement — simply writing more won’t necessarily improve your writing.

Another effective way to evaluate your writing skills is to make an appointment with a Writing Adviser and ask him/her to comment on your writing.

What else can you do?

Browse the many physical (https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources) and online materials (https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-academic-writing/) for Writing.

Join a Writing activity or short course (http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/writing/).

And now…

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch - we are here to support your independent learning! To contact us:

- E-mail your questions to iLANG (lcilang@ust.hk).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

- Make an appointment to see an adviser. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/.

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