

Effective writing

E-learning course

This course gives you the tools to get your ideas across more clearly - no matter what you write.

"Excellent feedback; her confidence and writing skills have improved already. She found the course to be well presented, kept her focussed and Margaret was very easy to listen to. It offered great advice and all the points raised have been very useful."
Marketing manager, Altus

We take you step-by-step through POWER© writing, the proven method that we've used to help thousands of professional writers on our in-company courses. You learn how to plan your message and craft your sentences in the clearest and most compelling language, with useful and practical checks on grammar and punctuation along the way. And our interactive exercises throughout the course mean you put your new skills into practice instantly.

By the end of this 4-part course you will have all the core skills you need to produce writing that does the job you want it to do...every time. Both print and digital writing skills are covered and you have the option of getting invaluable one-to-one feedback on your actual writing from our expert tutor.

Who it's aimed at and course overview

This course is perfect for anyone new to feature writing, including writers, junior features editors, subs, production editors, PR executives and staff on internal publications.

The course comes in 4 parts:

Part 1: Thinking before you write

Part 2: Making sense of sentences

Part 3: Working with words

Part 4: How it looks and proofing

Detailed course content and duration

If you sat down and did the course in one sitting, it would take approximately 2-3 hours to complete. However, the exercises and quizzes we include mean it can take longer. You can work at your own pace, and dip in and out of the course as often as you want, and go back to sections to really make sure you've understood. If you have any queries at all, you are very welcome to get in touch with the trainer as often as you want.

We set a 4 week deadline from the point you receive your enrolment information. If you need longer though, you just need to let us know.

You will learn:

- How to plan and target your writing
- The importance of thinking before you write
- The POWER© method of writing
- How readers read whether on a screen or on paper, and why that matters to you
- Why you need to get information in the right order
- Which types of sentences work best
- How to make punctuation work for you
- The most common grammatical mistakes and how to avoid them
- The value of plain English: why it's good to be concise
- How to choose the best words for your ideas
- How long should a paragraph be?
- Why you need to think about how your document looks
- How to avoid the mistakes that make you look foolish
- ...and much more.

The course covers:

Thinking before you write

- Who are you writing for?
- How do they read?
- What does this mean for you?
- Why clear writing is about prioritising
- How to find your message

How to plan

- Get the most important information first
- Interactive exercises to help you plan

The POWER method of writing

- Prepare - who are you writing for; what are you trying to say
- Organise - plan: how should you order your points
- Write - get your ideas down as simply as possible
- Evaluate - look at your writing with fresh eyes
- Revise - correct the faults you've identified

Putting your thoughts into sentences

- Why it's important to keep it simple
- Why each sentence should contain one idea
- The optimum length for sentences
- Common problems with sentences and how to avoid them
- Understanding the basic parts of the sentence (enough grammar, but not too much)
- Start strong
- Check for sense
- Make parts agree
- Keep verbs consistent
- Creating paragraphs
- Interactive exercises on how to structure sentences

Punctuation with a purpose

- Marks that end a sentence
- How to use commas well
- The place for dashes
- When to use the colon
- Secrets of the semi colon
- Understanding the apostrophe
- Interactive exercise to check use of punctuation

Using words well

- What will work for your readers
- Why simpler is better
- The value of plain English
- How to be concise
- Keep control of adjectives
- Be specific
- Interactive exercises on how to be concise

Keep language fresh

- Avoid the jargon trap
- Be wary of clichés
- Watch for repetition
- Favour active verbs; remember passive
- Positive or negative?
- Interactive exercises on keeping language lively

Evaluating what you have written

- Look at it with a fresh eye
- Check for structure, sentences, words
- Check the appearance
- Does it look accessible?
- How long should a paragraph be?

Remember your audience

- Check for visual comfort
- How to break up copy
- Use headings to draw the eye
- Create bullet pointed lists
- Add images, graphs and charts
- Deciding how long your document should be
- How to trim excess length
- Catching mistakes
- What to look for
- Picking up typos and inconsistencies
- When to look for mistakes

Revise

- Leave time to make changes
- Find someone to exchange with

Effective writing is an ideal companion to our **Top 20 grammar mistakes** and how to fix them and **Proofreading** courses if you need more of the basics. Once you've done the Effective writing course, you might also want to go further into **Writing for the web** or **PR writing**.

If you would like to receive a Certificate when you have completed your e-learning course, please just let us know and we will arrange for one to be sent to you.

Your trainer and feedback



Margaret Coffey is a journalist, trainer and founding-director of ContentETC. As a trainer she works with major UK media owners and other organisations to design and deliver programmes to improve the performance of writers across all media channels. For 30 years she has written about business and technology for US and UK publications and websites, including BusinessWeek, The Independent, The Financial Times and many others. Margaret's recent clients include Bauer Media, Immediate Media, the University of Strathclyde, the Museum of London, Tekdata Interconnections and the National Bank of Kuwait Capital.

The beauty of e-learning is that you can do it at a time and place to suit you. But you won't be alone! **Margaret will talk you through the key points to improve your skills and knowledge, and at any time during your e-learning course, you can email her with any queries or comments.**

Margaret can also give you invaluable **one-to-one feedback on your own work**. If you buy the trainer feedback option with your course, she will ask you to email your work after you have completed the e-learning. She will supply you with individual guidance, comments and practical suggestions. Then, once you've improved your work, she will review your revised content and provide a second set of comments. This unique feedback really brings your e-learning to life and makes sure you have truly grasped - and applied - all of the key principles.

Discounts and prices

Effective writing is £19.99 + tax per user * which gives you full unlimited access to the course for one month. If you need longer though, you just need to let us know.

If you want to add personal one-to-one trainer feedback to the course, the price is £69.99 + tax.

Contact us

Please call us on

00 44(0)1428 722105

to speak to either Lucy, Rosemarie or Elaine about your particular training needs.

Or email us at

info@contentetc.com

and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Interactive quizzes, exercises, top tips and checklists

This course is packed with interactive exercises that put you in the writer's chair so you can practise what you learn as soon as you learn it. Know your punctuation? Answer the questions correctly and you can skip the theory. Or you can review particular pieces of punctuation – it's up to you. Check your understanding with quizzes based on common documents such as customer service letters, proposals and emails.

There are handy tips and checklists at key stages of the course. These cover vital topics including:

- If you're having trouble planning, try jotting down notes by hand
- Watch out for overloaded sentences
- Don't overuse the exclamation point
- Be wary of words of over 4 syllables
- White space is a great tool so use it to make your copy easy to read

and many more.