

# Assessment Plan

## Technical Communication 315: Plain English

Shannon Mendez

### Description of Course

This Assessment Plan covers the following course. Please note that I revised the college's course outline description based on peer and instructor feedback. I also added a quote to further help clarify the meaning of "Plan English."

This course emphasizes the use of clear, concise English in professional writing. The course covers grammar, style, and common business documents.

*"A plain English document uses words economically and at a level the audience can understand. Its sentence structure is tight. Its tone is welcoming and direct. Its design is visually appealing. A plain English document is easy to read and looks like it's meant to be read." – A Plain English Handbook*

### Student Learning Outcomes

I took the Student Learning Outcomes provided in the college's course outline and revised them myself and then also revised them after peer and instructor feedback. I'm addressing the three SLOs that are in bold for this document.

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- 1. Identify different writing styles in business and academic documents.**
- 2. Identify grammar errors.**
3. Revise business documents for conciseness and correctness.
4. Construct clear, concise, and grammatically correct sentences.
- 5. Compose a business document using the principles of Plain Language.**
6. Apply principles of technical editing.
7. Revise assignments based on reviewer feedback.

### Road Map of SLO/Assessments/Scoring Criteria/Timing

The following table provides information about how and when I will assess how the students are meeting the SLOs.

SLO	Assessment	Scoring Dimensions	Timing
#1 Identify different writing styles in business and	<u>Traditional Assessment</u> Writing Style Quiz	The quiz will be online in our LMS and	Students will take this quiz during Week 1 after they

<p>academic documents.</p>	<p>This quiz will include 10 paragraphs that are written in low, middle, and high style. In a closed question format, the quiz will ask learners to analyze the writing styles and indicate the style of each example.</p> <p><u>Non-Traditional Assessment</u> Writing Style Exercise</p> <p>To provide for a non-traditional type of assessment, I will give students a passage that includes a variety of styles all mixed into one paragraph: low, middle, and high. They will need to revise the passage to make the tone all middle style, eliminating the low and high styles.</p>	<p>include 10 closed questions. The questions will provide immediate feedback to further reinforce the concepts.</p> <p>The exercise will include an online rubric of criteria to meet. When I grade the assignment, I will mark the scores and provide my feedback for each category.</p>	<p>have studied the concept of Plain English. Students will need to understand the difference among various writing styles right in the beginning of the course.</p> <p>Students will complete the exercise in Week 2 to further reinforce that they can identify the concept of Plain English, specially the middle style of writing.</p>
<p>#2 Identify grammar errors.</p>	<p><u>Traditional Assessment</u> Grammar Quiz</p> <p>This quiz includes 7 questions that assess whether or not students can identify common grammar errors.</p> <p>(See the example at the end of this document.)</p>	<p>The quiz will be online in our LMS and include six closed questions and one open question. The closed questions will provide immediate feedback to further help students learn the concepts. I</p>	<p>Students will take this quiz during Week 4 after they have studied grammar and writing style.</p>

		will provide one-to-one feedback on the last open question.	
#5 Compose a business document using the principles of Plain Language.	<p><u>Non-Traditional Assessment</u> Writing Project</p> <p>This writing assignment asks students to first analyze a memo for grammar and style issues and then revise the memo to meet the criteria for effective Plain English (accurate, concise, middle style, and so forth).</p> <p>(See the example at the end of this document.)</p>	The writing project includes an online rubric of criteria to meet. When I grade the assignment, I will mark the scores and provide my feedback for each category.	Students will complete this assignment during Week 6 after they have studied all the concepts of Plain Language and in preparation for writing their own document.

### Formative Evaluation

I will evaluate the course as it progresses using the following methods:

- Monitoring our Google Community, LMS Discussion Board, and emails (daily during the work week)
- Results from the weekly quizzes that address each week’s topics (weekly)
- Performance on writing projects that allow the students to apply and demonstrate their writing skills (weekly during the last four weeks of the course)
- Feedback from the course evaluations (twice, during the middle of the course and at the end of the course)

### Summative Evaluation

I will evaluate the course after it is over using the following methods:

- Analyzing the number of students who dropped the course and when they dropped.

- Analyzing the results of the writing projects during the last couple weeks of the course. How did the students do? What topics in the course need to be revised?
- Reviewing student feedback. Did the students themselves feel that they met the SLOs and got what they needed from the course? Can the students go out into the work place and complete high-quality business documents?

## Revisions

I will make revisions during the course after each week based on the following conditions:

- Time. Did studying the resources and completing the activities take about 10 hours? Do some things need to be removed? Some things added?
- Quizzes. How did the students do on the quizzes? Does information need to be added to the content? Do quiz questions need to be revised?
- Writing Projects. How do students do on the writing projects? Anything need to be added to the content? Do the writing project assignments need to be revised?
- Student Questions and Survey Feedback. What do the students need to be changed?
- Industry. What has been recently occurring in the industry? What up-to-date examples and discussions should be added?
- Broken Links. Any website, video, or other content resources change?

## Examples of Assessments

I developed two assessments to assess student learning: a Quiz (traditional assessment) and a Writing Project Rubric (nontraditional performance assessment).

### Quiz

This traditional assessment is for SLO # 2: Identify grammar errors.

1. Which of the following sentences is grammatically correct?

a. Her and her father took he and I to lunch.

Feedback: Try again. Most pronouns change their form depending on what place they occupy a sentence. Make sure the Subject Pronouns and Object Pronouns are correct.

\*b. She and her father took him and me to lunch

Feedback: Correct!

c. She and her father took him and I to lunch

Feedback: Try again. Most pronouns change their form depending on what place they occupy a sentence. Make sure the Subject Pronouns and Object Pronouns are correct.

2. Which is the verb in this sentence? "She completed her exercise routine on her own terms."

\*a. completed

Feedback: Correct!

b. exercise

Feedback: In this sentence, the word "exercise" is an adjective to describe "routine."

c. own

Feedback: In this sentence, the word "own" is an adjective to describe "terms."

3. A noun is a word that names something.

\*a. true.

Feedback: Correct!

b. false.

Feedback: Try again. A noun is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea.

4. Which of these words is a pronoun?

a. very

Feedback: Try again. The word "very" is an adverb that modifies a verb.

\*b. old

Feedback: Correct!

c. London

Feedback: Try again. The word "London" is a proper noun.

5. Which of these sentences is written in the present tense?

a. I was really unhappy with their response.

Feedback: Try again. This sentence is written in the past tense.

b. I've written to them three times already.

Feedback: Try again. This sentence is in the past tense.

c. They should have sorted it out by now.

Feedback: Try again. This sentence is in the past tense.

\*d. I'm asking my doctor for her advice.

Feedback: Correct!

6. The word "flock" is a collective noun.

a. false

Feedback: Try again. A collective noun represents a group of individuals, animals, or things.

\*b. true

Feedback: Correct!

7. Apply the principles of Plain Language and correct grammar rules to revise the following paragraph: "Taking into consideration the large degree to which our quarterly sales are down; it is in our best interest to let some members of our sales team go. Should they require any assistance with the implementation of the latest directive. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me."

Feedback:

Your answer would correct the sentence fragments, point of view shifts, formal style, and wordiness to something like this: "Considering the steep decline in our quarterly sales, we should downsize our sales team. If you need assistance implementing the latest policy, please contact me."

#### Rubric

This performance assessment is for SLO # 5: "Compose a business document using the principles of Plain Language."

## Assignment

### Instructions

This assignment involves editing a memo for grammar--as well as for style. The types of errors pertain to rules that you've been studying the last three weeks of the course (Grammar, Clarity, and Middle Style). You'll find the memo at the end of this assignment sheet. Copy and paste the text into your document, provide your edits, and submit your document in the Dropbox using a .pdf, .doc, or .docx format.

### Evaluation Criteria

	<b>Criteria Met</b>	<b>Criteria Almost Met</b>	<b>Criteria Not Met</b>
<b>Directions</b>	<b>10 pts</b> Is submitted on time and follows the procedures.	<b>5 pts</b> Is submitted on time but does not follow the procedures.	<b>0 pts</b> Is not submitted on time.
<b>Format</b>	<b>10 pts</b> Uses the specified formatting and is in a readable file type (.doc, .docx, or .pdf).	<b>5 pt</b> Does not use the specified formatting but is in a readable file type (.doc, .docx, or .pdf).	<b>0 pts</b> Is not in a readable file type (.doc, .docx, or .pdf).
<b>Middle Style</b>	<b>10 pts</b> Demonstrates the Plain Language concept of middle style—does not contain language that is too casual or language that is too formal.	<b>5 pt</b> Misses some opportunities for the content to use middle style.	<b>0 pts</b> Does not demonstrate ability to apply the Plain Language concept of middle style.
<b>Clearness and Conciseness</b>	<b>10 pts</b> Demonstrates the Plain Language concept of simple and “pruned” sentences.	<b>5 pt</b> Misses some opportunities for the content to be more clear, lucid, or concise.	<b>0 pts</b> Does not demonstrate ability to apply the Plain Language concept of clearness and conciseness.
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>10 pts</b> Is free from distracting errors in grammar.	<b>5 pt</b> Has minor errors in grammar.	<b>0 pts</b> Has errors in grammar that distract the reader.
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>50</b>		

### MEMO

TO: Junior Associate

FROM: Elder Wiseman, Esq., Senior Partner

RE: Our Client/Park Plaza Property Management Inc. a Delaware Corp.

An agreement was made by Mr. Ned Powers of Park Plaza and Insurance Specialists Associates a general partnership to lease the office space at Suite D of Park Plaza Towers. Thus we need to formalize an office lease; and obtain the appropriate signatures. Complete the attached lease agreement template with the following information and return the contract to me by the end of this week. The address is 1111 Posh Avenue, Uptown, NM. The terms are three years \$3,000.00 a month to be paid monthly. A \$10,000.00 security deposit is required. They pay all maintenance and upkeep on the interior of the suite, we are responsible for upkeep of the building exterior. They pay all the utilities and related bills. Also ensure that we acquire a landlord's lien with regard to this agreement. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions that you may have.