

PART III

Applications

PART III puts the skills and techniques you have learned in Parts I and II to work. It demonstrates job hunting strategies and covers the major report forms of technical communication, explaining how to organize and write them in both correspondence and report formats. Chapter 15 shows you how to propose work to be done and how to report progress in that work. Chapter 16 discusses how to analyze data and report your conclusions and recommendations in such formats as feasibility reports. Chapter 17 deals with how to turn your research into a report suitable for publication, and Chapter 18 describes how to plan, organize, and write a set of instructions. In Chapter 19, you learn how to plan and deliver an oral report. Chapter 19 also emphasizes the visual elements so important in technical reporting of any kind.

SCENARIO

You've just hung up after a telephone conversation with a client who called you to complain about a delayed shipment. You promised to investigate. And she promised to give you 48 hours.

The wise thing to do at this point is to create a written trail of your oral conversation. You write your client a brief e-mail message summarizing your understanding of the conversation and print out a copy for your file. You want a written record of your promise to the client and your client's promise to you. This written memo will confirm your expectations of each other. And if you or she has misunderstood the telephone conversation, your message will immediately identify that misunderstanding and create the opportunity to clarify it. For example, she might have said "within 48 hours," clearly expecting your call before that deadline, but if all you heard was "48 hours," you might have thought that you had 48 hours to investigate and could call in your report shortly thereafter. While a difference of only minutes might be involved, such a misunderstanding could jeopardize the business relations between your two organizations. A timely exchange of written messages could avoid later confusion and disappointment.

In this situation, you don't have a lot of time, so e-mail is the quick and inexpensive choice to communicate your message, but you could also write a letter and either fax it to your client or use overnight delivery service.

chapter 13

Correspondence

- ▶ Determining Your Purpose

- ▶ Analyzing the Audience
- ▶ Composing Letters, Memos, and E-Mail
- ▶ Finding the Appropriate Style
 - Direct versus Indirect Style
 - Conversational Style
- ▶ Special Considerations for E-Mail
- ▶ Special Considerations for International Correspondence
- ▶ Keeping Copies of Correspondence

On the job you will face a wide variety of situations that require you to write e-mail messages, letters, or memos. Oral communication—in person or by telephone—will dominate your day-to-day interactions, but much of your communication will also be written.

You will meet face-to-face to emphasize the importance or urgency of your message and to personalize the communication. A face-to-face conversation offers the greatest opportunity to establish a close human relationship: The parties see each other, offer greetings, and occupy the same space at the same time. A full exchange of verbal and visual information is possible, with ability to ask and answer questions.

You will telephone if a face-to-face conversation is impractical or if, having established a close human relationship, you nevertheless wish to emphasize the importance or urgency of your communication. Telephone conversations offer a limited opportunity to personalize the communication because only the voices of the individuals are available (unless the call allows video as well as audio transmission). You do, however, retain the ability to ask and answer questions. Again, neither caller receives a written copy of the information communicated.

You will write to create a record of decisions or promises. You will write to offer details that people might misinterpret or misunderstand if received orally. You will write because your audience expects certain information to be delivered in writing. And you will write whenever you would like to receive a written reply.

DETERMINING YOUR PURPOSE

On the job you will compose correspondence for a variety of purposes, such as to report, inquire, or complain. In determining your purpose, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I want to have happen as a result of my letter, memo, or e-mail?

- What do I want my reader to think or do after reading my message?
- Given the result that I want (and guided by ethical considerations), what must I do in my letter to achieve that result?

Table 13–1 displays several purposes of correspondence, the desired result, and common strategies used for achieving the desired result.

Consider, for example, the following situation. Maria Montez is a second-year engineering student at Florida Technological Institute. She is enrolled this semester in a technical writing course. A major project for the course is a presentation to the class on a critical issue in her major field of study. Maria is aware of the difficulties that engineers encounter because Americans continue to use the traditional “pounds and inches” system of weights and measures instead of adopting the metric system, which is the international standard. She believes the American rejection of the metric system arises from a failure to educate people effectively. Her research leads her to Professor Nicholas Hanson at the University of Cleveland, whose name is cited in the professional literature as a leading advocate of the metric system. He has also himself written a journal article on the economic benefits that would arise from implementation of a single international standard for weights and measures. But none of the articles available really address the question of how to teach Americans to understand the metric system.

Maria decides that she will write a letter to Professor Hanson to solicit his advice. She is a little pressed for time: It’s February 1 and the presentation is scheduled for April 3. Professor Hanson’s journal article gives his e-mail address at the University of Cleveland. But Maria decides a formal letter would be better, chiefly because she wants Professor Hanson to know that she has taken the time to compose her request and hasn’t just hurried off a quick e-mail message to him. She’s asking him to take the time to answer her questions and believes he will take her more seriously and give her more cooperation if he sees that she has invested some time of her own in this request.

Since Professor Hanson is a busy man, fully occupied with his teaching and research duties, Maria gets right to the point and immediately states her purpose for writing. She also decides to use short paragraphs to make the letter easy for the reader to skim through quickly. She proceeds to explain who she is. To give herself credibility, she specifically mentions that she has been reading journal articles on this subject. And she explains to Professor Hanson why she has chosen to contact him for information, slipping in a nice compliment while doing so. She then concisely asks her questions. Finally, she expresses her appreciation and, by including her e-mail address, tries to make it as easy as possible for Professor Hanson to reply. And Maria knows he is likely to reply a lot sooner by e-mail (see Figure 13-1).

Professor Hanson is impressed with Maria's letter. She seems like a serious student and he is pleased to offer his advice. He also appreciates being able to reply to Maria's letter by e-mail because it saves him time. And Maria will immediately receive the information she requested.

Because Maria is a student, Professor Hanson isn't sure how much she already knows about the metric system. He chooses to avoid technical language, but he includes a lot of examples, listing them to make them easier to read. Although he is pleased to answer Maria's letter, he doesn't want to be bothered by additional questions, especially if answers are readily available from other sources. He has a looming deadline on a research project and just doesn't have time to answer questions from students who aren't enrolled in his courses. He doesn't offer to provide additional information, therefore, referring Maria instead to a pertinent source (see Figure 13-2).

Maria is grateful for the information that Professor Hanson has provided. It gives her oral presentation a good sense of direction: she will compare the two methods of teaching the metric system and demonstrate the superiority of learning to think in metric weights and measures. She is also surprised that her earlier search on the World Wide Web using the keywords "metric system" didn't identify the U.S. Metric Association. She will visit its Web site to see if it has teaching materials available.

Maria composes a quick e-mail message to Professor Hanson. She wants him to know she appreciates his assistance so that he'll be willing to help again the next time a student writes to him with a question (see Figure 13-3).

ANALYZING THE AUDIENCE

In composing correspondence, consider your readers: Who are they? What do they know already? What is their purpose in reading your letter or memo? How receptive will they be to your message?

On the job, you will write to individuals and groups of people. And even if you are chiefly addressing a single reader, you may also be directing copies of your message to others. In such cases, you must think about the knowledge and experience of both your primary reader and your secondary readers. If, for example, those receiving copies are unfamiliar with the topic under discussion, you will have to provide background information.

In another common situation, you may be explaining a technical problem and its solution to a colleague with technical knowledge equal to yours.

If, however, you are sending a copy of your message to your boss, who lacks that technical expertise, you would be wise to start your discussion with a

summary (see pages 618–622). Fill the boss in quickly on the key points and tell him or her the implications of your message.

In addition, consider your reader's purpose in reading your message. You have a purpose in writing your letter, memo, or e-mail message, but your reader has a purpose as well. For example, your reader may be reading to evaluate your recommendation and accept or reject it. Your purpose then must be to provide enough information to make that evaluation and decision possible. Or your purpose may be to explain why you missed a deadline. Your reader will be reading to determine whether your reasons are valid and acceptable. You will then need to provide enough information to justify your position.

You also need to determine your audience's attitude toward you, your subject, and your purpose. Do you have a good relationship with your audience? Do they ordinarily accept or reject your explanations and recommendations? Is your audience positively or negatively disposed to your subject and purpose? If you are registering a complaint about poor customer service, for example, you need to know how receptive your audience is to such complaints. If the audience is typically unsympathetic or doesn't know you or trust you, you will have to provide substantial evidence to build a persuasive case. A sympathetic audience who trusts your judgment will probably require less evidence of you.

Consider the following situation. Morad Atif, the manager of Building Services at Accell, Inc. would like to purchase new reversible power drills for a crew of twenty-five technicians. He has examined the options available and decided on a drill that he believes is suitable, but he still must receive approval from the company's financial officer, Tamika Williams. He has discussed the subject with Williams but a written request is still required. Williams likes to have good records.

Morad knows that buying the drills isn't as much the issue as the choice of drills. The previous manager was fired for accepting gifts from equipment suppliers. Morad is new on the job and he believes that suspicion still lingers: he'll have to prove that he is trustworthy and that his recommendations are credible.

Morad adopts a direct style, getting right to the point of the memo in the opening sentence. He knows that he has to come across as straightforward. He mentions the price and briefly justifies the new equipment. In the paragraphs that follow, he'll focus on the choice of drills, using a bulleted list to give the evidence visual emphasis. He'll also start the list with a reason that might be especially persuasive to the financial officer: cost. And he'll close the list with a reason that might also be pertinent: prevention of loss of equipment. He also decides to list the price information for the convenience of his reader, since Williams will later need to retrieve cost information from this memo for the company's financial records.

To prompt a quick decision, Morad closes the memo with a question and a tentative deadline (see Figure 13-4). Otherwise, he worries, his request might not be given priority.

COMPOSING LETTERS, MEMOS, AND E-MAIL

How do you decide among letters, memos, and e-mail? Consider the following factors:

- **What is the usual practice of your organization?**

For example, day-to-day business updates might be communicated by e-mail, but policy changes are distributed through memos, and the only letters are messages to and from the district supervisor. Ordinarily, you will adopt the usual practices of your organization.

- **What is the relative efficiency or practicality of each communication medium?**

E-mail is rapidly replacing a substantial portion of traditional paper correspondence. The reasons for this change are e-mail's higher speed and lower cost.

First, e-mail is quicker than conventional mail. E-mail allows you to send the message you type without the intermediate step of transferring it to paper. Your message goes from your computer to your reader's computer within minutes instead of a day or days. And you could receive the answer to your letter within the half-hour. Potentially, e-mail has the immediacy of oral conversation.

Second, e-mail is a less expensive medium for correspondence: it eliminates the costs of paper, print cartridges, envelopes, and postage as well as the costs associated with the distribution, filing, and storage of paper messages. E-mail messages are composed, distributed, received, filed, and stored electronically. For a typical organization, the savings are substantial: for example, the rising costs of paper and postage are minimized and fewer file folders and file cabinets are required for sorting and storing correspondence.

E-mail communication, however, has its risks. In the rapid exchange of ideas that e-mail encourages, you might fail to be as careful in choosing your words and phrases as you ordinarily would be. You might write something that isn't quite what you intended, leading to a message that is incorrect, ambiguous, or impolite. Such a message could damage your credibility and your relationship with your audience. E-mail might be as quick as oral conversation, but your readers can't hear your voice or see your face: they have only your written words with which to judge the accuracy, civility, and sincerity of your message.

In addition, because e-mail is a newer medium of communication, existing as bits instead of atoms, people often think of it as less important or official. Keep in mind, however, that e-mail is written communication: it has the potential permanence and legal significance of paper correspondence. E-mail requires thoughtful composing, editing, and proofreading.

Finally, though e-mail is *potentially* as quick as oral conversation, it isn't *necessarily* as quick. For example, the message you send today may not elicit a response today. It may be read tomorrow, next week, next month, or never. The absence of a guaranteed timely response to e-mail messages could leave you impatient or irate when some people are slower to reply.

Letters and memos address subjects of sufficient importance to justify the extra time, effort, and cost involved in preparing and transmitting a paper version of your message. That is, a letter or memo requires paper, ink, envelope, and your attention to the printing process. Once printed, the letter or memo must be delivered to its recipient. It passes through your organization's internal mail delivery system: it is picked up, sorted, and distributed—a labor-intensive process. If the recipient is outside your organization, postage will add again to the cost of your message. Or you could fax your letter or memo. This process isn't especially efficient, but it does enable you to send simple drawings and marked-up copies of paper documents.

Choose e-mail to exchange messages on day-to-day business and subjects of limited importance. Typical e-mail messages are brief, but you could attach a file to your e-mail message—like sending a cover letter with a report attached to it. Special software compresses the file and translates it to binary code for transmission. To reverse the process and access the file, your reader must have similar software.

- **What is your rhetorical situation?**

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If your organization has no consistent practices regarding correspondence or if your communication situation is extraordinary, you will need to consider your audience, your subject, and your purpose in writing:

- **What is your purpose?** Are you writing to inquire, to complain, to thank? Is your message informative or persuasive? A letter or memo often seems more careful and deliberative, more official and authoritative, than e-mail, and thus usually more credible and persuasive.
- **Who is your audience?** Ordinarily, letters and e-mail go to people outside the company or organization, while memos and e-mail go to people within it. Within organizations, letters are usually restricted to

special circumstances that require formal communication, such as a letter of resignation. In addition, the more important your audience is or the less familiar you are to your audience, the more likely it is you will choose the formality of a letter to communicate.

FINDING THE APPROPRIATE STYLE

After analyzing your audience and considering your purpose, you have to decide on a suitable writing style.

Direct versus Indirect Style

In the United States, the preferred style of correspondence is direct communication: news, explanation, and closing. Americans consider this style candid and efficient: getting to the point immediately with the critical information, offering explanation or clarification, and ending politely. If the audience will be pleased with the news, the direct style is appropriate. Direct communication is also the right choice for situations of urgency, offering the earliest and easiest access to critical information.

In two rhetorical situations, however, the indirect style is usually the better choice: when you anticipate a negative reaction to your news and when you are writing to an international audience. If the news will disappoint or irritate your audience or if your message is of little or no urgency, the indirect style will cushion the negative impact of the news. And international audiences often prefer the indirect style, considering it more civilized and courteous. In the indirect style, you establish a human relationship with the audience before you discuss the news. Ordinarily, you start with a gracious opening, provide whatever background information or reasonable arguments are necessary to help the audience understand and accept the news, report the news itself, and offer a polite closing.

Consider the following situation. Nicholas Cooper is the president of Cooper & Cooper, a hog processing corporation. Laura Pauley the president of Red River Farming, a major hog supplier, has called to request that the contract price on hogs be raised. Because of increased labor costs, rising feed prices, and new environmental and agricultural regulations, Red River Farming is losing money on its hog operations at the existing price.

Nicholas explains that he would like to consider this request and fax a reply as soon as possible. While he is sympathetic to the plight of Red River Farming, Cooper & Cooper has also experienced a couple of rough years because the public consumption of hog products—bacon, ham, sausage—seems to be dropping. He'd like to be candid with Pauley, but he would also like to avoid antagonizing a major supplier. He tries a direct style (see Figure 13-5).

After reviewing the letter, Nicholas decides to try being indirect. He starts by thanking Pauley for her letter without mentioning its subject. He emphasizes the good relationship of the two companies and specifically compliments Red River Farming. It isn't until the second paragraph that he addresses Pauley's request, using sympathetic language such as "I understand." He offers the same justification for not raising the price that he used in the direct version, but here he takes two sentences, thus making his point more emphatic. In the third paragraph, he solicits Pauley's understanding of his position by using expressions such as "As you know" and "I'm sure you understand." In the fourth paragraph, he raises the subject of contract negotiations, as in the direct letter, but without the pessimistic warning that could leave Pauley dispirited. Nicholas decides to be positive: There's always a chance that things could change. He closes by once again emphasizing the relationship of the two companies. The message of this indirect letter is the same as in the direct version, but the refusal is implied instead of explicitly stated. That is, Nicholas hasn't exactly said "no" but he has offered all the reasons why he may have to (see Figure 13-6).

Keep in mind, however, that direct and indirect are opposite points on a continuum of correspondence, and the letters, memos and e-mail messages you write will usually be more or less direct, more or less indirect, according to the rhetorical situation. For example, your audience might be both American and international. Or your information might be of various levels of urgency, requiring both immediate decisions and a series of later actions from your audience. And your message may please some of your readers but disappoint others. Your job as a writer will be to analyze carefully your entire rhetorical environment.

Conversational Style

In your correspondence, aim for a simple conversational style.

Everything we said about style in Chapter 5, *Achieving a Readable Style*, applies especially to letters, memos, and e-mail. Professionals on the job receive so much correspondence every week that they truly can't afford to be paralyzed by messages that are difficult to read or difficult to understand. They don't have time. They need messages with short paragraphs, lists, simple sentence structure, and common words. Above all, avoid fancy language and the formality of the passive voice.

And avoid clichés. They'll make your letter seem formulaic, filled with canned expressions instead of specifically suited to your audience, subject, and purpose. And clichés will make you sound like a pompous official instead of a caring and articulate human being.

Instead of

We beg to advise you that . . .
We are in receipt of your letter

Write

I'd like you to know that . . .
I received your letter that . . .

that . . .

It is requested that you send a copy of the specified document to our office.

Please send me a copy of your latest progress report.

In short, ask yourself whether you would or could say in conversation what you have written. If you know you never would say it, don't write it. Restate it in simpler language for a more readable style.

Finally, always focus on the human being reading your letter, memo, or e-mail. Develop a you-attitude, using the word "you" more often and "I" less often. Try to see things from the reader's point of view. Suppose, for example, you were writing a letter of job application to a prospective employer. You might write:

I believe that my employment with XYZ Corporation will be a great learning experience for me and allow me to develop my skills as a mechanical engineer.

Here you are seeing the subject of employment from your point of view, emphasizing the benefits to you. Your reader, however, is more interested in learning how XYZ Corporation will profit by hiring you, how you will contribute to XYZ's objectives and operations. Adopting the you-attitude, you might write:

My training as a mechanical engineer will support your mission at XYZ Corporation to design environmentally friendly automotive products. Specifically, my recent studies in high-temperature superconductivity will help you to develop state-of-the-art motors and generators.

Here, you are seeing the subject from XYZ's perspective, offering details that demonstrate your understanding of the organization.

Finally, keep your correspondence concise. Avoid overwhelming or intimidating readers with more information than they want or need. Remember that your readers don't get paid to read your letters, memos, and e-mail messages. Their job is to take actions and make decisions based on the information you have provided. The longer you keep your readers reading, the longer you keep them from making a decision or taking an action. The longer you keep your readers reading, the less productive they are. And the less productive your organization is.

While brevity in letters, memos, and e-mail is good, always avoid seeming brusque or impatient. Occasionally, a longer message gives a better impression, especially if your news is disappointing. In such situations, people appreciate your taking the extra time to explain in detail.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR E-MAIL

Because e-mail has characteristics of both oral and written communication, of both informal and formal communication, writers adopt a variety of styles for their e-mail messages. While e-mail has the structure of a memo (with its designations of FROM, TO, and SUBJECT), it is usually written as a business or personal letter, with a salutation at the beginning of the message and the writer's "signature" at the end.

If your relationship with the reader is strictly professional, you might compose e-mail as though it were a business letter, starting with a greeting such as "Dear Dr. Smith:" or "Dr. Smith:" and closing with a "Sincerely," and your e-mail signature (i.e., name, title, and e-mail address). If your relationship is both professional and personal (e.g., if you've talked face to face or by telephone), you might adopt a friendlier greeting such as "Dear Bill," or "Bill," omit the "Sincerely," and close with your e-mail signature. Or if your message is strictly business, you might omit the salutation altogether and proceed directly to the news of your message.

Whichever opening or closing you choose, consider also the etiquette of your e-mail message.

- **Be polite.** Never compose and send e-mail when you're feeling irritated or discouraged; you might put on record something you'll later regret. Consider also your reader's feelings, and be sensitive to the power of the written word. Without the cushion of your smile or the delicacy of your voice, certain words may be perceived as insulting or offensive. To minimize misunderstandings, especially avoid satiric, ironic, or sarcastic comments. If you believe your words might be misinterpreted, you might incorporate emoticons to signal your attitude: for example, :-) for a smile, ;-) for a wink, or :- (for a frown. Keep in mind, however, that emoticons are often perceived as frivolous or trivial and would diminish the professional quality of an e-mail message intended for a supervisor or a high-level business contact.
- **Never write a message you wouldn't want others to see.** Any recipient can copy and distribute your message to others without your permission. Your message also may be monitored by your organization, which pays for your e-mail access, and hence, owns the messages handled by its Internet service provider. In addition, like the paper correspondence of your organization, your e-mail messages could be subject to subpoena and legal review.
- **Respect the privacy of e-mail messages.** Exercise discretion before copying and distributing an e-mail message without the sender's permission. The sender might have intended portions of his or her message for your eyes only.
- **Keep your messages brief.** Don't ask your reader to scroll through paragraphs of unnecessary information to locate the news of your message. If you are replying to a previous message, copy only the pertinent passages of the original message.

- **Answer your e-mail promptly, especially requests for information.** Your reader may be unable to take action or make a decision until he or she has received your reply.
- **Keep your paragraphs short.** Short paragraphs organize your message visually and simplify reading.
- **Edit and proofread carefully.** While typographical errors are characteristic of e-mail messages, numerous typos may diminish your credibility and distract from your message. Audience analysis is important here: Some readers will tolerate such errors, but others won't. If your relationship with your audience is strictly professional, apply strict standards to your grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

In Chapter 7, Writing for International Readers, we discuss the importance of understanding the culture of your readers. We advise you to adjust your communication style for the differences between American and other cultures:

- Use indirect style. Establish or reinforce your personal relationship with the reader before discussing your purpose for writing.
- Use a formal style.
- Avoid criticizing individuals or groups. Such criticism is often perceived as bringing disgrace both to the people criticized and to you for being rude enough to express criticism. Instead of identifying problems, focus on solutions. Emphasize easier, quicker, and cheaper ways of achieving superior results.
- Address business issues from a wider human, social, and organizational perspective.
- Avoid rushing people to make decisions. Allow time for group consensus to build.
- Keep your language common and simple. Your message may need to be translated for your intended readers, and unusual words or idiomatic expressions could prove difficult to interpret.

Consider the following situation. Theresa Ricco is a sales representative of Wild Computers. She is back in the office after a sales trip to the People's Republic of China, writing a letter to a potential client. Using direct style, she writes a letter that is clear and to the point. The language is simple and the paragraphs brief. It is a crisp and efficient piece of correspondence and typical of the letters she usually writes. While this letter might be ideal for American audiences, however, a Chinese audience might consider it discourteous—possibly thinking that Theresa didn't care enough to write a longer or personal letter (see Figure 13-7).

A careful analysis of the audience inspires Theresa to try a different kind of letter. Choosing the indirect style, Theresa starts the letter with good wishes,

shows familiarity with Chinese culture, and offers personal information about herself, such as that she is married. In the second paragraph, she proceeds to thank and compliment the reader. In the third paragraph, she describes her company, reminding the reader of matters that she no doubt covered orally during their meeting—information that establishes her company’s credibility (important to the Chinese). In the fourth paragraph, she finally arrives at the point of this letter, the offer of information about her company’s products. Finally, she adopts the kind of formal closing that a Chinese writer might use.

This letter, while considerably longer, is more likely to be positively received. Like all effective correspondence, it is tailored to its audience (see Figure 13-8).

KEEPING COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE

Keep a file—paper or electronic—of every substantive letter, memo, and e-mail message that you write or receive. By controlling this correspondence, you have more control over the subjects discussed in that correspondence. And you will establish a reputation among your clients and colleagues for being organized, efficient, and indispensable.

For example, a dispute might arise on the job about details in a letter or memo or e-mail message written several weeks ago. If you have a copy of that correspondence, you are the person who can resolve that dispute. You don’t have to trust your incomplete recollection of the message or rely on the incomplete recollection of others. You have the facts in a file at your fingertips.

By keeping copies of your correspondence, you will also protect yourself from being misrepresented, misquoted, or misinterpreted. If colleagues claim you never answered their request, you can present a copy of your response. If others forget what you wrote, you have copies to remind them. If clients claim you promised x and y, you have copies to prove you promised y and z. Controlling your on-the-job correspondence thus gives you more control of your working environment.

PLANNING AND REVISION CHECKLISTS

You will find the planning and revision checklists that follow Chapter 2, Composing, and Chapter 4, Writing for Your Readers, valuable in planning and revising any presentation of technical information. See also Letter and Memorandum Format in Appendix B. The following questions specifically apply to correspondence. They summarize the key points in this chapter and provide a checklist for planning and revising.

Planning

- What is your subject and purpose?
- What do you want to have happen as a result of your correspondence? What will you do to achieve your objective?
- Who are your primary readers? Secondary readers? Do your primary and secondary readers have different needs? How will you satisfy all your readers?
- Why will your readers read your correspondence?
- What is the attitude of your readers toward you? Toward your subject? Toward your purpose?
- If you are addressing international readers, do you understand their cultural practices? What adjustments in your correspondence will their cultural practices require?
- Will you write a letter, memo, or e-mail message?
- Will you choose a direct or indirect style?

Revision

- Is your topic and purpose clearly identified?
- Have you satisfied your reader's purpose in reading?
- Have you adopted a style suitable to your reader's culture?
- Have you avoided jargon and clichés?
- Does your correspondence demonstrate a you-attitude?
- Is your message clear, concise, complete, and courteous?

EXERCISES

1. Write an unsolicited inquiry to a company that manufactures a product you wish to know more about. Request sample materials or information. If the company has a home page on the World Wide Web, you probably can make your request by e-mail from the "Contact Us" link on the site. Otherwise, write a letter.
2. Identify a service or product that has recently caused you dissatisfaction. Find out the appropriate person or organization to address, and send your complaint to that person or organization—by letter or by e-mail.
3. Exchange the letter of complaint you wrote for Exercise 2 for a classmate's letter of complaint. Write two different answers to your classmate's letter. In one letter, offer the adjustment requested. In the other letter, refuse the adjustment requested.
4. Compose the memo called for in the following situation.

Civil Engineering Associates of Purvis, Ohio, was established in 1990 by Robert B. Davidson and Walter F. Posey, both graduates of the University of Ohio. Business for the company was good, and CEA took on six

additional partners between 1991 and 1999: Alvin T. Bennett, Wayne S. Cook, Frank G. Reynolds, John W. Castrop, George P. Ramirez, and Richard M. Burke—all graduates of the University of Ohio.

For the last five years, the partners of CEA have met every Friday for a working lunch at Coasters, a local restaurant and bar that features attractive young waitresses wearing provocative swimsuits. The customers are almost exclusively men, and the interaction between customers and waitresses is often flirtatious.

This year CEA hired Elizabeth P. Grider, a Texas State University graduate, as a new partner in the firm. She has attended two of the working lunches at Coasters and is uncomfortable in this environment. She does not feel, however, that she can just skip the events, which are the only regular occasions on which all the partners gather. Projects and work assignments are often discussed and decided at these Friday meetings. In addition, the lunches offer the opportunity for her, as the new kid on the block, to try to establish a comfortable working relationship with her partners. She realizes that “Friday at Coasters” is a long-standing tradition at the firm and she is reluctant to upset the status quo, but she wishes another venue, acceptable to everyone, could be found.

As Elizabeth P. Grider, write a memo to the senior partner, Robert B. Davidson, explaining your problem and recommending one or more solutions. You would like to speak to Davidson directly, but you think that writing a memo allows you to organize your thoughts. And after the meeting, you could leave the memo with Davidson as a written record of your position.

5. Robert Braxton, 1296 Sycamore Avenue, Idaho Falls, ID 83401, is disappointed with the color laser printer he purchased from your company, INK.com, 4307 88th Street, St. Louis, MO 65407. He has written a letter to you to complain.

Braxton is a freelance technical editor. Earlier this year Braxton ordered one of your Horizon 9900 color laser printers. Braxton paid \$5,870, including taxes, for the 9900, which is your top-of-the-line printer. He says he had no trouble setting it up and that initially it worked fine. But today, the printer jammed while printing flyers for Braxton’s technical editing service. To clear the jam, he had to remove the print cartridge. In the process, the cartridge cracked and dumped ink all over the inside of the printer. And as he removed the jammed sheet of paper, two of the guide rollers loosened. Braxton has enclosed the mangled flyer and photographs of the damage. The photographs display the damage clearly but also show that he was using a refilled print cartridge instead of a new cartridge, as clearly specified on page 9 of the user’s manual. In addition, the paper that jammed the printer was a

heavy weight (60-lb) cotton bond paper instead of the light to medium weight (16-lb to 24-lb) paper recommended on page 33 of the user's manual.

Braxton has a \$283 estimate for cleaning and repairs from his local computer store and wants you to agree to pay the bill. You are concerned about the situation because Braxton has recommended the Horizon 9900 to several of his business clients, who have written you asking for more information. The possible additional sales would be important to your new company. However, you know that Braxton should have read the user's manual more carefully and obviously bears much of the blame for the damage to his printer.

You decide to offer to send him a new print cartridge without charge, but no more. You will also instruct Braxton to refer to page 9 and 33 in the user's manual and you will emphasize as politely as possible that the instructions clearly specify using new print cartridges and 16-lb to 24-lb paper.

Write the letter to Braxton. Determine what additional actions are required to avoid similar complaints. Write the letters, memos, or e-mail messages necessary to direct such additional actions.

6. Compose the letter called for in the following situation.

You are a member of the permissions department at Educational Books, Inc., 25 Astoria Avenue, New York, NY 10027. One of your responsibilities is to be sure that books published by your company are not unfairly copied for classroom use. One of your company's textbook authors, Maria Lynn Davalos, is a visiting professor at Guixin University. According to Professor Davalos, one of the professors at Guixin University, a Chinese national, is copying several chapters of one of your company's textbooks for distribution to his students. The book, *Communicating in Technology and Business*, by Jane Fisher, is available for worldwide sale. Such extensive copying clearly violates international copyright law, as covered by the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. However, you also have heard from several sources that instructors in China often ignore the law chiefly because textbooks are expensive for their relatively poor students.

You learn from your informant that the Chinese professor, Li Kua-fan, teaches English. He is a senior and respected member of the faculty. You wish to persuade the professor that requiring students to buy the book would be fairer to your company and the book's author and also in the best interest of his students. You will need to write a letter to the professor to accomplish that objective.

Before writing your letter, however, you will need to familiarize yourself with the Berne Convention so that in your letter you may refer to specific clauses. Also find out what you can about Chinese society and the Chinese school system today that might lead a respected professor to engage in the extensive copying of copyrighted material. What might be the arguments he would use to justify such copying? To be fully persuasive, you will need to anticipate and address such arguments.

FIGURE 13-1 • Maria's Letter of Inquiry

FIGURE 13-2 • Professor Hanson's E-Mail Reply to Maria's Letter of Inquiry

FIGURE 13-3 • Maria's E-Mail Thank You

FIGURE 13-4 • Morad's Memo Requesting Approval

FIGURE 13-5 • Nicholas's Letter Using a Direct Style

FIGURE 13-6 • Nicholas's Letter Using an Indirect Style

FIGURE 13-7 • Theresa's Letter Using a Direct Style

FIGURE 13-8 • Theresa's Letter Using an Indirect Style

TABLE 13-1 Purpose of Correspondence