# Teacher’s Manual for 3B:
Effective Written Communication at Work

## Module Key Learning Target:
- I can demonstrate my understanding of professional communication by using effective nonverbal and verbal techniques.

## Learning Targets for 3B:
- I can demonstrate my understanding of professional communication by using effective nonverbal and verbal techniques.
- I can communicate professionally in writing.

## Activities

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*This lesson runs longer than an hour. We advise you to choose one of the two comparable, highlighted activities to best serve your students in the timeframe available.*
What Do You Think: Written Communication

Suggested Timing: 10 Minutes

Facilitation Steps:
1. Go over the instructions with the students and make sure that they understand that they should put a check by all of the different ways that they have used written communication.
2. Walk around as students complete the survey and ask individuals to share some specific examples of their different usage.
3. After a few minutes, instruct students to move to the questions and encourage them to compare specific instances of use across personal and professional domains.
4. As time allows, have students share their responses with a partner, and invite volunteers to share with the entire class.

Tips for Successful Implementation:

Accommodation:
- If students struggle to draw comparisons between personal and professional use, have them write a brief description of a specific instance of each. Then prompt them to consider how much effort they put into the communication, if they chose different words, and what kind response they expected.
- There is a version containing a few visual supports in the resources.

Organization/Class Management:
- For students who may not have an example of professional use, help them think about how their personal examples might look different if they needed to communicate with a teacher or employer.
**WHAT DO YOU THINK: Written Communication**

**DIRECTIONS** Place a check on the line next to each type of written communication that you have used. Then, answer the questions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Written Communication</th>
<th>Examples of Personal Use</th>
<th>Examples of Professional Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text or Direct Message</td>
<td>to check in with a friend</td>
<td>to provide a quick project update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to invite someone to an event or party</td>
<td>to clarify a small question about a project or assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to find out information</td>
<td>to find out information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to let someone know you are thinking of them</td>
<td>to provide information about a meeting or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Post</td>
<td>to share details about your day or evening</td>
<td>to promote a product, event or organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to let people know your opinion of music, movie, food, etc.</td>
<td>to share information about work or learning that you are doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to express feelings, emotions or general beliefs</td>
<td>to inform people about an organization, a job or school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email or Letter</td>
<td>to tell someone about important events in your life</td>
<td>to provide detailed information about a project or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to send detailed information about plans, event, or products</td>
<td>to learn more about a job, school or scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to ask someone to help you with something</td>
<td>to apply for a job or scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to ask for a reference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What other ways have you used written communication?

2. Think about a method of written communication that you have used for both personal and professional use. How was your usage of this method different in each case?

**Assessment:**

- Circulate to see if students are completing the work.
- Ask yourself, does it sound like they understand the question and choices based on their comments?
Presentation: Strategies for Written Communication

Suggested Timing: 5 Minutes

Facilitation Steps:
1. Go over the difference between communicating in writing and in conversation.
2. If possible, offer a personal example of misunderstandings that can occur when people read false emotional intent in written communication or discuss a time when you hit “send” and then wished you had revised the email further.
3. Check for understanding by asking students to share their own experiences with written communication.
4. Go over the information about texts, emails and letters.
5. Further check for understanding by asking students to provide additional relevant examples.

Tips for Successful Implementation:

Time Management
- This segment is too short to try to make up time if running behind, but it is important to remember that this is just an introduction to written communication. The activities that follow will allow room for additional discussion and learning.

Organization/Class Management:
- You may decide to concentrate on one particular area that students struggle with instead of reviewing all of the slides for this presentation.

Accommodation:
- When giving your presentation, have written and visual cues about what you are saying in order to engage as many students as possible.
- Allow students to draw pictures in lieu of traditional notes.
- Decide ahead of time what key points you want students to record and write them on the board or chart paper as you present.
- You may choose to use the cloze version of this presentation included in the resources.
Assessment:

- Are students able to generate relevant examples for the presented concepts?
- Are they recording key information for reference later?
Group Activity: Make it More Professional

Suggested Timing: 20 Minutes

Materials: Sample Unprofessional Emails

Facilitation Steps:
1. Go over the tips for writing professional emails and then do the “Make it More Professional” sample email as a whole group.
2. Ask volunteers to give suggestions, and as a group come up with an alternate email.
3. Divide students into groups of 2 to 4 and go over the instructions for the activity.
4. Ask each group to be ready to share their improvements to the unprofessional email.

Tips for Successful Implementation:

Organization/Class Management:
- You may decide to have specific groups concentrate on different aspects of the emails.

Accommodation:
- The sample unprofessional emails can be cut into smaller parts to help groups focus on one improvement at a time.

Tips for Writing a Professional Email:
- Start with a descriptive subject line.
- Address the person you are writing by the appropriate name.
- Begin the email with a friendly “hello.”
- Be specific and concise.
- Avoid demanding language, and be sure to thank the recipient.
- Use a professional closing (signature).
- Re-read it twice.
Tips for Writing a Professional Email

1. Use descriptive subject lines.
   - For example, avoid subject lines like: “Hi,” “Hey,” or “Monday.”
   - Instead try these types of subject lines: “Request for feedback,” “Update on research project,” or “Monday’s schedule and tasks.”

2. Be sure to address the person you are writing to by the appropriate name.
   - If you work closely with the person, “Dear Tom” is fine, but if you only know them vaguely or are actually introducing yourself it needs to be, “Dear Mr. Cruise.”

3. Begin the email with a friendly greeting.
   - For example: “I hope that you are having a good week.”

4. Get right to the important items in the second sentence.

5. If you need something, phrase it as a request rather than a demand.

6. Thank the person for help or information.

7. Include a professional closing.
   - For example: “Best Wishes,” “Best,” “Sincerely,” or “Regards.”

8. Consider using a signature to help people know who you are.
   - For example: Jane Smith, ABC High School student, email: jsmith@abchs.edu, Phone number: 617 xxx-xxxx.
   - Warning! If you include your cell phone, remember to set up your voice mail in a professional way. For example: “Hi, you have reached Jane Smith. I can’t come to the phone right now, but if you leave a message with your contact information, I will be sure to get back to you soon.”

9. Re-read the email at least twice before sending it and be sure to fix grammar. Look for ways to make the email easier to read, like breaking different ideas into smaller paragraphs or using bulleted lists.

10. Ask your supervisor for additional tips on how email communication works best within the organization.
Make it More Professional

DIRECTIONS Work together as a group to come up with ideas on how best to improve the email below.

Dear Ms. Snyder
Hello from Auburn, Massachusetts! My name is [Name] and I am a senior at [School]. I wanted to let you know that I am really interested in working at Mass Parks Department and it is definitely a nice looking place. I have always thought that I am interested in biology and I am glad to c i will c animals. Pls let me know when I can apply!

Thanks,
[Signature]

Sent from my iPhone

Assessment:

- Are students able to make effective changes to the sample emails?
- Do the changes reflect the information discussed earlier in the lesson?
Small Group Activity: Write a Professional Email

Suggested Timing: 20 Minutes

Materials: Tips sheet in student manual and “Write a Professional Email Rubric in resources.

Facilitation Steps:
1. Divide students into groups or partners.
2. Have them draft their own professional email using one of the prompts on their student manual page. Or, if possible, consider having them write an email about a real situation with the plan to actually send and receive a response.
3. Tell them to use the tips and the rubric as they write. Go over the rubric with them before they begin.
4. Ask the class to share-out some of the emails.

Tips for Successful Implementation:

Organization/Class Management:
- When sharing with class, you may ask each pair/group to provide one tip that they used. Ask them to try to share one that has not already been mentioned.

Accommodation:
- Some students may benefit from a sample email with sentence-starters on the board.
Small Group Activity: Write a Professional Email

**DIRECTIONS** Choose from the prompts below. Work with your partner/group to complete the email on a separate piece of paper or a computer or tablet. Use the tip sheet in this section to help you complete this task.

- Ask a teacher/professor/supervisor for an extension on a paper or assignment.
- Ask your supervisor for advice on how you can improve your skills.
- Ask a supervisor for time off for an upcoming vacation.

**Assessment:**
- Are students able to write effective emails?
- How are students deciding what is appropriate?
Session Wrap-Up

Suggested Timing: 5 to 10 Minutes

Facilitation Steps:
1. Review the unit Learning Targets, then ask students to assess themselves with the Target Check-In.
2. Remind students that this reflection is private and that no one will be asked to share their responses, and that there is no best answer. Rather, this is an opportunity for a genuine assessment of where they are with these skills.
3. Finally, encourage them to be specific in their reason(s) for rating their skill level as they did.

Tips for Successful Implementation:

Dig Deeper/Extension:
- Discuss the value and use of reflection in terms of workplace learning, personal relationships, schoolwork and goal-setting.
- Invite students to share their experience with reflection and its effect on their performance or mastery of a new skill.

SEL/ Non-Cognitive Connection:
- Have students think about applying this learning will help with their own self-awareness.
**Session Wrap-Up**

**Target Check-In**

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure...</td>
<td>Working on it...</td>
<td>Almost there...</td>
<td>I can do it!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read each learning target and check the ratings that best match how you feel:

- I can demonstrate my understanding of professional communication by using effective nonverbal and verbal techniques.
- I can communicate professionally in writing.

I feel this way because ...

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**Assessment:**

- Circulate around the room, checking for understanding and clarifying what the ratings might feel like.
- At this point, students should be able to explain their rating.
# Resources in Teacher’s Manual

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategies for Written Communication (Cloze)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Make It More Professional” Emails

A payroll question sent by an employee to their boss...

Subject: My money

Dear Mrs. Mahoney

I want to know why I only got half my pay on this last paycheck. I know I missed some days, but I thought that was ok ’cause I texted you to say I wasn’t coming in. I really need all my pay for my car payment. I’m already behind and they want to take it back. So please let me know when you can pay me the rest.

Thanks!

A request sent by a student to their teacher/adviser...

Subject: Hey!

Hey Mr. Smith,

So, I’m sick today you could go around to all my other teachers and find out what I am missing in class and what the homework is for each of them. can you get all my books from my locker, too, and have it all for my mom by 10:00 she wants me not to fall behind in my classes... And I’m sorry I didn’t email you my homework lol.but you know ill do it now.

Thanks!
A letter sent by a student to apply for a college scholarship...

Subject: me

To Whom it may Concern:

I am applying for the scholarship your company or organization offers students at my high school. I am graduating this June, and I plan to attend Florida State University in the fall. I'm good at math. I am an honor roll student, and a member of the student government. I hope that your company or organization will consider awarding me the scholarship you offer. I really appreciate it.

Best Regards,

A thank you note sent by a student who was awarded a scholarship...

Subject: hi

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you so much for giving me the $500 scholarship to help me pay for my books next fall at college. It is really helpful and I appreciate it very much. I am excited to start school in September and I have heard that books can cost like $1000 a year. So, anyway, thanks a bunch for the money. Have a great day!

thanks,
An application request by a student sent to a summer immersion program

Subject:

Hey,

I want to go to Europe. spots are still available for summer, and Id really like to go if possible. My first choice would be spain, bc I know Spanish but Im good with just about anywhere. Im pretty tired of being home right now, my friends have jobs abd I hear you give a stipend so I can go and make money and I think studying in another country would be a lot of fun. Can you let me know in the next couple of days,? Thanks for you’re help.

An employee asking their boss for a raise in pay

Subject: wtf

Dear Mr. Thompson,

I was wondering why it seems like everyone else got a raise in my department, except for me. I have been here for a long time now, I work harder than most of these people. I didn’t even complain when I got stuck doing Joe’s job and mine when he was out sick last month. I really think this is unfair, and I hope that you will agree to fix the situation.

Thanks,
An email sent by an employee to their boss asking to leave work early for a legitimate family medical emergency

Subject: yo!!

Dear Ms. Greene:

I am emailing to let you know that I will be leaving work at 1:00 today for an appointment. I know that we have meetings scheduled with customers, but maybe you can reschedule them. I may also be out tomorrow, but I won't know until 8 today. I hope that you are okay with this, and I'm sorry for the short notice.

Sorry,

A letter from an employee to their boss saying they will be late

Subject:

Dear Ms. Rivera.

I will be late. I want to be on time but the bus is always slow.
Email from a student who has questions about their final exam grade to their teacher

Subject: I studied

The grade u gave me on the final exam is fair. I studied for for this test, and I think that the questions u asked were unfair. U didn’t talk about the ?’s in class so I didn’t think we needed to know them. I think that some of ur answers on the multiple choice are wrong and I should get credit for those. Change my grade so that this one test doesn’t hurt my average for the year.

Thanks,

Email from an employee to their boss making their case to be added to a sales trip to Hawaii

Subject: opportunity

Dear Mr. Walsh,

How are you? I would like to apply for the sales trip to Hawaii that you mentioned at the staff meeting today. I think that it is a great opportunity and I would really love to go to Hawaii. I have family there and it would be the best to see them I am a way better salesman than most of the others. I would totally take advantage of the opportunity to show you how good I am. I hope that you will consider me for this trip.

Best,
### Strategies for Written Communication

**Directions:** Use the space below to take notes about what you learn during the lecture on communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written vs. Oral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Written communication is used for</strong> ________________ ________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Written communication can be saved</strong> ________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Use it, when you want to have a ________________of what has been said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Written communication should be</strong> <strong>professional.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o <strong>Re-read</strong> your writing and check for errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Name <strong>feelings</strong> and sentiments. For example, “I really enjoyed our meeting.” or “I hope you are doing well.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Use text for shorter information that needs an immediate reply.</em></td>
<td><em>Don’t text a supervisor, colleague or professional contact without asking first.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Include your name at the end if you are texting a professional contact.</em></td>
<td><em>Don’t send texts outside a professional schedule, like 11 p.m. on a Tuesday.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reply in a professional and timely manner</em></td>
<td><em>Don’t use abbreviations or emoticons.</em> (ex. btw, lol, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emails &amp; Letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most college and career settings require people to be able to write ________________-emails (and letters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure your emails are polite and _____________ (well-structured short paragraphs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check that your writing is accurate and ___________ (check dates, details and grammar twice before sending).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One question I have is: _______________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
## Small Group Activity: Write a Professional Email RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of the task</strong></td>
<td>Shows little or no understanding of the task. No prompt is selected.</td>
<td>Shows a weak understanding of the task. More than one prompt has been selected (author did not understand directions). Question is not clear.</td>
<td>Shows a developing understanding of the task. One prompt selected. Question is asked but is vague or unprofessional.</td>
<td>Shows an adequate understanding of the task. One prompt selected with the question asked in a professional manner. Email lacks details necessary to the recipient (e.g., the author asks a teacher for an extension on an assignment, but does not include the title of the assignment).</td>
<td>Shows a clear understanding of the task. One prompt is clearly selected. The question selected is clearly and professionally asked. Any pertinent details are included in the email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idea Development</strong></td>
<td>Development of ideas is minimal. Ideas may be repeated and/or lack details.</td>
<td>Idea development is weak. The author has attempted to explain ideas but additional detail is needed.</td>
<td>Idea development is in progress. Some of the ideas have good explanations.</td>
<td>Development of ideas is adequate. Most of the ideas have good explanations and supporting details.</td>
<td>Development of ideas is specific and logical. All ideas are supported and explained appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The writing lacks clear organization and flow, and it is confusing to the reader.</td>
<td>The writing has some organization and structure, but it may be inconsistent.</td>
<td>The organization of the writing is predictable. Ideas are grouped logically but simply.</td>
<td>Flow and organization of the writing is clear and logical to the reader.</td>
<td>Flow and organization enhance the writing, resulting in a clearer and more compelling experience for the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary and Language</strong></td>
<td>The language and vocabulary is inappropriate and not specific to the task.</td>
<td>The overall writing may not suit the task well, but some task-appropriate vocabulary is used.</td>
<td>The writing is in an acceptable format for the task and some task-appropriate vocabulary is used well.</td>
<td>The writing is in an appropriate format for the task and task-appropriate vocabulary is used consistently.</td>
<td>The writing is in an appropriate and effective format for the task. Vocabulary is task-appropriate and impactful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>