# Assignment #1: Business Correspondence

For your first assignment, you will prepare two documents, a **business letter** and a **memo**. Review *PSTC* pp. 241-254 for a thorough explanation of the major aspects of form regarding letters and memos. See *HTW* “Memos,” pp. 343-345, and “Letters,” pp. 316-321 to further review the formal specifics of these types of documents.

### Business Letter

First, conduct some research about your department’s freshman orientation. Then, write a business letter to the chair of your department regarding the orientation. You may write an “Inquiry Letter,” asking for more information about a certain aspect of orientation; a “Claim Letter,” making a polite complaint or suggestion about the orientation; or an “Adjustment Letter,” explaining how one aspect of orientation might be improved (see *PSTC* p. 247-254). You will also need to do some research to find the name of your department chair and the mailing address for your letter. In addition to chapter 9 from *PSTC*, review *HTW* pp. 316-321 on the formal specifics of business letters.

### Memo

Next, draft a memo to your instructor explaining the rhetorical choices you made while writing your business letter. Discuss the tone, content, audience, and purpose of the letter. To draft your memo, you will need to follow the formatting guidelines discussed in class. In addition to reviewing your rhetorical choices, you should provide some background, describe briefly your research methods, and summarize the findings that prompted you to write the letter.

**Note:** Be careful that you are not simply listing what you did. You need to fully explain the choices behind your writing.

### Formatting, Revision, and Editing

Format your letter and memo in the “full-block” style as discussed in your textbook and in class. Remember, you are addressing your department chair. You want to demonstrate your respect for his or her position and your dedication as a student in your department and field. Carefully revise and then proofread both documents for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

### Minimum page length

* The business letter should be roughly one page in length.
* The memo should be one to two pages in length.

## Due Dates

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** First Draft **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Peer Review **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Final Draft

## Cover Letter

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 4, you must include a cover letter at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your cover letter must summarize and **explain** the revisions you made to your original draft.

## Let’s Reach for an A!

The default grade for this assignment (and this course) is a B. If you would like to earn a grade of “A” for this assignment, you must do the following:

In addition to the assignment's main purpose, you will compose an additional business letter on the same topic, but of a different purpose. You will also address the differences in rhetorical situation (purposes, audience, tone, etc.) between the two letters in your memo.

For example, if you choose to write an inquiry letter about orientation, your second letter could be a claim or an adjustment letter about orientation. In your memo, you need to discuss the different choices you made when writing the two letters. For example, you might address why your tone was different in the inquiry letter in comparison to your adjustment letter, and you would use the rhetorical situation to help explain your choices.

It does not have to be perfect, but it must demonstrate a good faith attempt to develop nuance in your argument by truly exploring what genre means. **In other words, by doing this, you are practicing making an argument that is more in-depth (as opposed to quick and superficial). You will also demonstrate that you understand how business correspondence and the rhetorical situation are intricately connected.**

*Note: If you want to earn an “A” in this course, you must make good faith attempts to complete the “Let’s Reach for an A!” sections in 2 of the 3 major assignments.*

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have included a cover letter as the first page of my assignment where I summarize and explain what revisions I made to my draft.
* I have chosen to write either an inquiry, claim, or adjustment letter.
* I have written a memo that discusses my rationale in writing the business letter.
* I have used full block style for both the letter and the memo.
* If I want to earn an “A,” I have made a good faith attempt to fulfill the requirements in the “Let’s Reach for an A!” section.
* I have formatted my paper [as my instructor has described.]
* I have saved the document as a .pdf or .docx file for submission.

# Assignment 2: Extended Definition

For your second assignment, you will write an **extended definition**. An extended definition is a detailed clarification of an object, mechanism, process, or concept. As discussed in your text, there is no one way to extend a definition. The analysis of both the purpose of the larger document to which the definition belongs and the audience to whom it is addressed will determine the direction you take in elaboration.

### Planning

To begin, you will need to select the subject to be defined. Try to select a subject with which you have some interest or familiarity. Some examples might be anti-lock brakes, pliers, banjo, chop sticks (food utensils), food pyramid, radiation therapy (cancer treatment), Montessori method, yoga, integrated circuit, YouTube, sustainable farming, or Amendment IV to the United States Constitution. There are of course other options available. The primary consideration is how to define your chosen object or process to suit your intended audience (review *PSTC* chapter 4 to help conceive your audience).

Next, you will need to identify a context for your definition, which will involve a bit of creative thinking. You should imagine a larger document that needs a definition of the term you have selected. For example, if you select “anti-lock brakes,” you might imagine that your definition will appear in the operator’s manual for a new car. The targeted audience member would be a new car owner, who is potentially unfamiliar with what an anti-lock braking system is, how it operates, and what it is designed to protect against.

### Drafting

After you have identified the larger document and the audience, you will be ready to decide how to extend your definition. Consult your notes from class and the readings from your text to decide which techniques (examples, partition, process description, analogy, etc.) you will employ in your definition (see *PSTC* pp. 390-394).

Attached to the front of your completed definition paper you will need to write **a brief memo to your instructor** indicating the document to which the definition belongs, the audience for the definition, and how your assessment of the audience affected your definition strategy.

If your definition will be improved by the use of a graphic or photo, include one. Be sure to cite the source of the graphic directly below its insertion in the text with a simple “Courtesy of (web address).”

### Documentation

You will need to consult at least three sources to write a good definition. See *PSTC* Appendix A, “Documenting Your Sources,” pp. 405-484. Choose one documentation style and apply it to your definition. IEEE is the most conventional documentation style for technical writing; however, you may use MLA or APA style if you choose.

### Minimum page length

1-2 pages

## Due Dates

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** First Draft **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Peer Review **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Final Draft

## Cover Letter

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 9, you must include a cover letter at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your cover letter must summarize and **explain** the revisions you made to your original draft.

## Let’s Reach for an A!

The default grade for this assignment (and this course) is a B. If you would like to earn a grade of “A” for this assignment, you must do the following:

In addition to the assignment's main purpose, you will extend the definition using at least two more techniques.

For example, if you chose to define and describe how GPS works using partition, process descriptions, and analogies, you might also want to include examples and cause and effect. In your memo, you must address who your audience is and why these extra techniques provide an even better clarification of what you are trying to define.

It does not have to be perfect, but it must demonstrate a good faith attempt to develop nuance in your argument by truly exploring what genre means. **In other words, by doing this, you are demonstrating that you can explain a concept using a variety of different strategies. Also, you are demonstrating in your memo why you chose those strategies, given your intended audience and purpose.**

*Note: If you want to earn an “A” in this course, you must make good faith attempts to complete the “Let’s Reach for an A!” sections in 2 of the 3 major assignments.*

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have included a cover letter as the first page of my assignment where I summarize and explain what revisions I made to my draft.
* I have chosen to define and describe what something is and how it works.
* I have **not** provided a how-to guide on how to do something. I understand these are considered instructions, which are covered in the next unit.
* I have used a variety of techniques to define my concept.
* I have included a memo that justifies my rationale for extending the definition.
* If I want to earn an “A,” I have made a good faith attempt to fulfill the requirements in the “Let’s Reach for an A!” section.
* I have included in-text citations and a Works Cited/Reference page.
* I have formatted my paper [as my instructor has described.]

# Assignment 3: Process Instructions

For your third assignment, you will write **process instructions**. Process instructions tell a reader how to perform a task. As discussed in Chapter 14 of *PSTC*, writing good process instructions requires careful consideration of your audience and a clearly organized set of steps to be performed.

### Planning

To begin this assignment, you will need to identify some process or task here on the university campus that would benefit from instructions. For example, you might identify an appliance in the chemistry lab or a machine in the fitness center that needs good instructions. You will need to clear your topic with me via a properly formatted email before proceeding (this e-mail will count for part of your assignment grade; see *PSTC* pp. 255-258 for guidance in formatting your e-mail). If the process you choose already has instructions, you will need to submit the existing instructions along with your rewrite.

### Drafting

To write your process instructions, you will need to follow the format discussed in class and outlined in your text (see *PSTC* pp. 402-415, and *HTW* pp. 266-271). Make sure your introduction identifies the purpose of the task, the tools and materials needed, and the safety warnings or precautions to be observed. Your steps should be written in the imperative mood and should each clearly identify what portion of the larger task is to be performed. Remember to number your steps. If needed, include feedback statements as part of each step. Your conclusion should provide the reader with any necessary troubleshooting, follow-up, or maintenance required.

If your instructions include any technical terms potentially unfamiliar to your audience, take care to include sentence or parenthetical definitions.

### Visuals

Clear instructions often contain visuals to aid your reader. Consider the process or task your instructions describe, and whether visuals would aid your reader in completing them. Review *PSTC* chapter 8, pp. 224-235, to consider how best to use visuals to suit your audience and purpose.

To complete the assignment, you will need to prepare one more document. Write a brief description (1-2 pages) of a **proposed usability test** for your process instructions. Describe how you would test the instructions, and how your findings might lead to changes in your instructions. Review *HTW* pp. 558-560 for this portion of the assignment.

### Formatting

You are free to select the font and point size for your **instructions**. All decisions should be based upon organization and readability. If graphics will improve your document, include them. If bold-faced type is needed for headings or safety instructions, use it.

For your **usability test proposal**, please refer to the Assignment Submission policy.

### Minimum page length

2 pages

## Due Dates

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** First Draft **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Peer Review **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** Final Draft

## Cover Letter

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 9, you must include a cover letter at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your cover letter must summarize and **explain** the revisions you made to your original draft.

## Let’s Reach for an A!

The default grade for this assignment (and this course) is a B. If you would like to earn a grade of “A” for this assignment, you must do the following:

In addition to the assignment's main purpose, you must carry out the proposed usability test. This will require some planning ahead on your part – not only will you need extra time to complete this, you will also need to have instructions that are doable by the people and resources around you. You might have more success asking someone to test out instructions on changing the strings on a guitar as opposed to installing solar panels on a house.

Here’s an example. If you’ve chosen to write instructions on how to change the oil in your car, you will also have to write a proposed usability test to see if these instructions work. If you want to earn that A, ask someone (a friend, family member, roommate, etc.) will help you test out the instructions.

If they agree, document what happens. Did you follow the usability test you proposed? Did they find the instructions easy to follow? Were they successful? What recommendations would they make to improve the instructions? This should be about a page long.

It does not have to be perfect, but it must demonstrate a good faith attempt to develop nuance in your argument by analyzing how different genres can affect the audiences your purpose can reach. **In other words, by doing this, you are demonstrating that you know how to revise your instructions for better clarification. Furthermore, you are developing skills in note-taking and observation.**

*Note: If you want to earn an “A” in this course, you must make good faith attempts to complete the “Let’s Reach for an A!” sections in 2 of the 3 major assignments.*

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have included a cover letter as the first page of my assignment where we summarize and explain what revisions we made to our draft.
* I have included an introduction that identifies the context for these instructions.
* I have included a clear and concise language for instructions.
* I have used the imperative mood in instructions.
* I have included visuals as needed.
* I have included a proposed usability test.
* If I want to earn an “A,” we have made a good faith attempt to fulfill the requirements in the “Let’s Reach for an A!” section.
* I have included in-text citations and a Works Cited/Reference page.
* I have formatted my paper [as our instructor has described.]

# Assignment #4: Formal Unsolicited Proposal

Your final assignment requires you to select a topic for which you will identify a problem, opportunity, or need for which you will offer a solution. You can investigate a topic in your discourse community (i.e. major/ field of study), but are also free to research a university or hometown problem, or other topic. You are to treat this proposal as **unsolicited** (*PSTC* pp. 276-278). For a fuller discussion of proposals, see *PSTC* pp. 274-297.

### Front Matter

You are free to use a cover page; however, your title page should include all pertinent information (indicated purpose, suggested audience, and date). You should also include a brief summary page located at the front of the proposal. This summary should cover the proposal’s major elements, identify and define the problem, and then describe the proposed program and briefly provide your qualifications and experience (see *PSTC* pp. 282-283).

### Body

This portion should contain an informative Introduction and a detailed Proposed Program section. The Introduction will provide a detailed discussion of the problem and its background, the purpose of the proposal, your sources of information, and the purpose, scope, and organization of the proposal. From the introduction, you should shift to the Proposed Program section that provides detailed descriptions of the processes, materials, etc. This portion may contain necessary graphics for your audience (*PSTC* pp. 283-286).

### Back Matter

This portion should include pertinent information such as the budget, schedule, qualifications/experience, references, appendices, and any works referenced. The schedule should be organized into the same tasks described in the body; the budget will list the requested funds, and how they will be spent; the qualifications will highlight the writer’s ability and experience. You may use graphics in this portion.

### Criteria

You may use the structure presented in *PSTC*, Ch. 11: “The Structure of the Proposal” (pp. 282-289); if you find a different format that you wish to use, see your instructor for approval. Follow all submission requirements set forth in the “Policies and Procedures” handout. You will be held accountable for proper focus, development, organization, syntax and grammar, and correctness.

### Minimum page length

4-5 pages

## Due Dates

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ First Draft \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Peer Review \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Final Draft

## Cover Letter

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 16, you must include a cover letter at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your cover letter must summarize and **explain** the revisions you made to your original draft.

## Let’s Reach for an A!

The default grade for this assignment (and this course) is a B. If you would like to earn a grade of “A” for this assignment, you must do the following:

In addition to the assignment's main purpose, you must include at least 4 extra sources in your research, and you must cite at least 2 of these extra sources in your unsolicited proposal.

It does not have to be perfect, but it must demonstrate a good faith attempt to develop nuance in your argument by analyzing how different genres can affect the audiences your purpose can reach. **In other words, by doing this, you are demonstrating that you know how to be innovative, generate an idea, and use research to uncover evidence that will support your arguments for your idea.**

*Note: If you want to earn an “A” in this course, you must make good faith attempts to complete the “Let’s Reach for an A!” sections in 2 of the 3 major assignments.*

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have written an unsolicited proposal.
* I have included a detailed context with all the pertinent information in the front matter of my unsolicited proposal.
* I have included organized all the elements in the body of proposal so that they make sense to the reader.
* I have included relevant information in the back matter that will help my readers gain a more in-depth understanding of the ideas in my proposal.
* If I want to earn an “A,” we have made a good faith attempt to fulfill the requirements in the “Let’s Reach for an A!” section.
* I have included in-text citations and a Works Cited/Reference page.
* I have formatted my paper [as my instructor has described.]
* I have saved the document as a .pdf or .docx file for submission.