

Tutorial Letter 201/1/2018

Practising Workplace English

ENN1504

Semester 1

Department of English Studies

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Feedback Tutorial Letter for Assignment 01

BARCODE

Dear Student

In this tutorial letter, we provide information relating to Assignment 01 and guidelines relating to the May/June examination. Some of your responses to Assignment 01 were creative and meaningful, with particular emphasis on relevant content, correct structure, appropriate style, register and language usage. However, there were many responses that did not meet these criteria.

We believe that you will find the following comments and sample answers useful in preparing for the forthcoming examinations. Please note that the sample answers are by no means definitive solutions to the assignment questions. Furthermore, each response was marked on its own merit, provided it consistently fulfilled the required criteria for workplace writing correspondence.

SECTION A: QUESTION 1

WRITING SKILLS IN WORKPLACE CORRESPONDENCE

The purpose of this question is to assess your ability to write an enquiry. This requires you to do the necessary preparatory reading so that you can answer the question convincingly and adequately. Ask yourself, “Would the intended reader of this document answer this enquiry favourably?”

Work through unit 1 in the study guide and learning unit 1 in the workbook before attempting to answer this question.

BACKGROUND

You are the Sales Manager of a **boutique** named Tropos Fashions, which sells clothing and accessories. A new South African designer, Bongiwe Khumalo, is quickly making a name for her brand and will be showcasing her new collection at London Fashion Week. You would like Tropos Fashions to be the **sole stockist** of her new fashion line and would like to host an event to promote her line locally.

You have drafted an email that you will send to **her assistant, Mr Amos Mashaba**.

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the draft email critically and improve on it by revising, editing and proofreading. This means that you should write an improved version of the email, and may add or leave out information.

In your revised version, you should have grammatically correct English, appropriate style and well-structured paragraphs.

Your answer should not exceed ONE page in length.

DRAFT EMAIL

To: khumalo1designer@gmail.com

Subject: Congratulations!

Congratulations and well done! I am so excited to hear about your new venture, and I wanted to be the first to congratulate Bongzi about showcasing your new collection at the London Fashion Week. Please let her know about my well wishes. I am holding thumbs for her.

I would like to stock her designs at my boutique. Let me know what you think and if this is possible.

Warmest wishes!

SUB-TOTAL: 50 MARKS

ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK

For this question, you were assessed in terms of content, context, structure, style, register, language accuracy, editing and proofreading. The ability to write to enquire about something was considered in assessing the merits of each of the criteria mentioned, in relation to a specific audience and purpose (refer to pages 20-21 of your Study Guide). You needed to be assertive and polite to prompt a positive response from Mr Mashaba. Refer to pages 6-8 of your Study Guide, which provide general guidelines on the use of appropriate language (grammar), style and register.

Due consideration was also given to responses that adopted a persuasive style with well-structured paragraphs, correct grammar and sentence structures with a formal register. Students who researched the topic would have noticed that a boutique serves wealthy clientele

and would have used this exclusivity to tempt the designer to accept this business opportunity. In addition, requesting to be a sole stockist (as opposed to selling her garments through a large retailer) should have been included to emphasise status as a persuasive strategy. Hosting the event to promote her line locally could have been used as a further attention seeking strategy. Finally, some students did not notice that the email should have been addressed to the designer's assistant. The email should be interesting enough for him to read or be referred to Ms Khumalo and not to be automatically deleted.

The draft email was fundamentally flawed because:

- The subject of the email needed to relate to its purpose (an enquiry relating to stocking her clothing line).
- The language was too informal (familiarity breeds contempt).
- The writer conflates Ms Khumalo and Mr Mashaba.
- There are spelling errors in the document.
- While the second paragraph is concise, it is not persuasive.
- As this is a business enquiry, conclude the email with your name and position.

In the possible answer outlined below, the structure of a text follows the outline provided in your study guide (pages 5-6):

- Begin by stating your request, objective, need or problem. (paragraph 1)
- Describe the context or background. (paragraph 2)
- Give accurate information in support of your reasoning, and motivate your request or suggestion. (paragraph 3)
- Suggest the response that you need from the reader, but be careful not to dictate or instruct. (paragraph 4)

POSSIBLE ANSWER

From: lordd@tropos.co.za

To: mashaba@gmail.com

Subject: Amazing business opportunity for Ms Khumalo

Dear Mr Mashaba

I am the Sales Manager for Tropos Fashions. We would like to enquire whether Ms Khumalo would consider stocking her latest clothing line at our exclusive boutique.

We are located in the heart of Sandton. Our clientele is comprised of celebrities and other wealthy private individuals who are always interested in purchasing the most exclusive designer wear in the country.

We wish to congratulate Ms Khumalo on her forthcoming venture to showcase her latest collection at the London Fashion Week. To celebrate Ms Khumalo's achievements locally, would be honoured to be the sole stockist of her latest range of clothing. We are also keen on hosting an exclusive event to promote the new designs locally. We will make all of the arrangements including invitations to the media, celebrities and any individuals or designers that Ms Khumalo would prefer to attend the event.

Please let us know whether Ms Khumalo is interested in this mutually beneficial business opportunity.

Yours faithfully

Diana Lord

Sales Manager

Tropos Boutique

QUESTION 2

MINUTES OF A MEETING

The purpose of this question is to assess your ability to record minutes accurately and objectively, using formal language. This requires you to do the necessary preparatory reading so that you can answer the question adequately.

Work through unit 2 in the study guide and learning unit 2 in the workbook before attempting to answer this question.

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the transcript below (exact word written down) of what was said under agenda item 2.1 of this meeting, presented in the form of a dialogue. Write the minutes of this discussion, which covers only **one agenda item**, and not the whole meeting. This means that the complete format for minutes is not required. Minute the discussion under the following subheading:

2.1 Sales improvement in rural market areas

Remember that in taking minutes we **carefully select and summarise information**, and make **the necessary changes to style and grammar**. Note that it is usually not necessary to record what each person has said in turn.

Your answer should not exceed ONE page in length.

(Please refer to tutorial letter 101 for the transcript.)

SUB-TOTAL: 50 MARKS

TOTAL: 100 MARKS

ASSIGNMENT FEEDBACK

We have highlighted the key aspects of the instructions. Hence, in Question 2, you were expected to record the minutes of only one of the items discussed at the meeting. Therefore, your competencies in the following were assessed:

- selection of relevant factual information (Content);
- correct and consistent formatting (Structure);
- use of strictly formal business language, reported speech (Style and Register);
- correct grammatical structures (correct tenses, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure).

Whilst we received many responses that reflected a sound understanding of the key criteria in recording minutes accurately, we would like to draw your attention to the following challenges a few of you experienced:

- inability to follow the specific instructions given in the question;
- inability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information regarding;
- misconception that the use of reported speech in the actual transcript constitutes the minutes;
- inclusion of other items of the minutes such as Welcome, Attendance, Apologies;
- inability to record the minutes in past tense;
- inconsistencies in the structure of the minutes;
- inaccurate recording of the resolution taken in this segment of the meeting;
- poor presentation - lack of correctness , completeness, coherence, conciseness and clarity (the 5 C's in business writing).

Once again, there should be evidence that the process of editing and proofreading of your revised version of the single minutes of the item of the meeting (answer) was carried before the final submission.

POSSIBLE ANSWER

2.1 Sales improvement in rural market areas

2.1.1 The Chairman requested the item on sales improvement in rural market areas to be reported by Jack Peterson. Jack Peterson suggested a round table discussion. The following main points were tabled:

- Alice Linnes suggested that rural customers needed special help to feel more valued.
- She indicated that sales teams needed more accurate information on customers. Jennifer Miles concurred with these suggestions.

2.1.2 Jack Peterson reported that:

- A survey would be completed to collect data on spending habits in the rural areas.
- The results of that survey would be distributed to their sales teams.

2.1.3 Jack Peterson proposed that Aby Wilson (the Chairman) should visit the teams once in a month to monitor the work progress. This was seconded by Alice Linnes, with the proviso that Jack Peterson accompanied Abby Wilson.

2.1.4 Jack Peterson was to remind the Chairman to send e-mails to team leaders in the areas, informing them of their planned visits.

SECTION B EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of your answers to examination questions will be carried out in much the same way as for assignments. Your marks will be determined by considering the four broad areas reflected in the following table:

| ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| CONTENT AND CONTEXT | STRUCTURE | LANGUAGE | |
| | | LANGUAGE ACCURACY AND EDITING | STYLE AND REGISTER |
| <p>The revision of the text as a whole in order to improve the content through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of the main purpose and audience • selection of relevant details • omission of irrelevant details • inclusion of additional relevant details | <p>The revision of the text as a whole in order to improve the structure and the organisation of the information.</p> | <p>Technical writing skills in using correct language / grammar structure.</p> | <p>The appropriate level of formality and tone to establish purpose and audience.</p> |
| <p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctness (relevancy & accuracy) • completeness • coherence • conciseness • clarity | <p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correctness of format • logical sequencing/ paragraphing/ subheadings/ visuals (if applicable) • handwriting/ typesetting/ layout | <p>Criteria to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grammar (vocabulary) • spelling • punctuation • sentence structure • expression | <p>Criteria to be considered :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usage of words/ phrases • sentence structures • punctuation aimed at supporting appropriate • style and register |

Ensuring compliance with the 5Cs of good business writing skills should always culminate in the following tasks:

- editing of your revised content, structure, language usage and business writing style;
- proofreading to correct minor mistakes that might distract attention from what you are communicating to the reader.

EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

Your answers must meet the specific requirements of each question. Although we do not require that you show your planning or drafts, you need to carefully consider the instructional key words of each question. Questions and instructions are often complex, and need to be analysed step by step. You will be tested partly on your ability to interpret the questions correctly and to provide well planned responses to specific instructions.

Remember to make your answers as realistic as possible by including sufficient 'factual' information. You may invent (make up) relevant and appropriate necessary details.

If you need to do some rough work, use the back pages of your answer book and rule a line through it so we can see it is not to be marked. Be sure that you have enough time to complete all the answers. But, you should also try not to rush so much that you do not use all of the time available to you. Depending on the mark allocation, you should be able to estimate how much time you can spend on each question. You will write a 2-hour paper worth a total of 100 marks.

Note that your examination mark will contribute **60%** of your final mark; the remaining **40%** will come from your semester mark as derived from your assignments. However, if you get less than 40% in the examination itself, your assignment marks will not be considered at all.

The ENN1504 team wishes you all the best for your next assignment and the forthcoming examination.

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