

A refreshing resource
to help you develop
better business writing

[COPY CAFÉ]

Resource Library: Checklist

How to check your work



Photo by James Sutton on Unsplash

How to check your work

A handy checklist to help you produce the best possible business writing

How do you check your written communications work? Quickly run it through the spellchecker and that's it? Okay, well, that's certainly better than nothing...

But building time into your schedule in advance to allow for thorough checking is the optimal approach. It gives you ample space and time to review your writing properly before hitting Send or Print. Of course, if you're sending your work off for professional printing, you should *definitely* allow time for dedicated proofreading.

It's an unfortunate fact that we don't always have the luxury of time in today's busy world. However, if you *are* able to add half an hour to the time you've allocated to complete your writing job, it will undoubtedly pay dividends for you.

A general point – and a simple test

Here's a simple test for you to use on any piece of written communication that you produce – whether it's an email, a letter, an internal report or a customer quotation.

Before you send or print anything, take a couple of minutes to read it back to yourself, imagining that you are the intended recipient. Ask yourself:

"What would I think if I received this? How would I feel?"

If your answers are less than positive, you should take the time to re-write any sentences or sections that cause you to hesitate during your read-through.

Turn the page for a checklist of other considerations >>>

Checklist – 10 key considerations for the best way to check your work

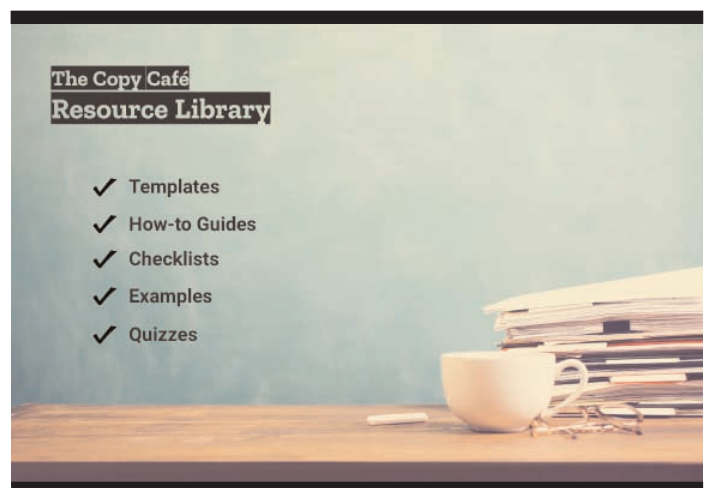
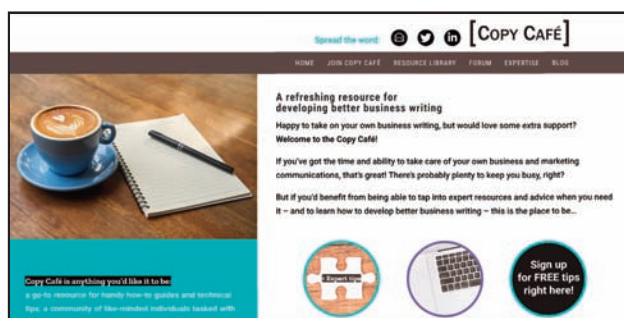
1. Read it out loud to yourself (or under your breath, if you're surrounded by other people – but definitely voice it) – is there anything that doesn't sound right? Don't rush it, and pause in all the right places...
2. Pretend you're the intended recipient and read it again, as if you've never seen it before – does anything cause you to stop and re-read something to properly understand it? If so, you may need to re-work that aspect to clarify your intent.
3. If you're still not feeling confident, ask a colleague to read it through too.
4. Have you greeted the recipient correctly, spelled their name properly and used an appropriately professional sign-off?
5. Have you checked that all spelling is correct – and caught any American English/British English differences?
6. Have you checked your punctuation? Are there any awkward-sounding sentences, where the presence or otherwise of a simple comma may cause confusion in the reading and understanding of your message?
7. Is your writing clear? Concise?
8. Have you made it clear what you would like the recipient to do after they have finished reading?
9. Have you used (and also checked) sub-headers to help break up any dense areas of text in longer written communications?
10. Is the layout of your work as easy on the eye as it could be?

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If you have any queries, please feel free to email Kyla at hello@copycafe.co.uk

I'd also love to hear from you if you have any suggestions or requests for future Resource Library content...



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