“Wanted: A person with excellent writing skills” What does that mean?

Writing clearly, concisely, correctly, and in a manner that can communicate with others is a skill that many employers wish their employees had. Whether it is writing a letter, an email, a memo, an employee handbook, or web page content, good writing skills are considered a premium skill.

Being able to write clearly and concisely is not enough. Proofreading is something many people struggle to do — mainly with their work. Microsoft Word does not catch all grammatical errors (e.g., site, sight). Proofreading is your last chance to ensure that the reader understands your message and has a favorable view of your skills.

No matter what you write daily, people can and will judge you by your words, sentences, paragraphs, and punctuation. It’s important to get it right the first time.

KEEP ON LEARNING

- Go to Grammar Girl’s (Mignon Fogarty) website. She has multiple articles and tips for written and spoken communication.
- Forbes, How to Improve Your Writing Skills at Work, is an excellent article to help you improve your skills.
- There are several grammar checkers to help you improve your writing skills. This link goes to the Best Grammar Checkers of 2019. Check with your manager and UAB IT before you invest.
- Lynda/LinkedIn Learning has a course, Editing and Proofreading Made Simple, with Erin Rickard. It’s about 40 minutes long, but proofreading is where many people have problems.

CALL TO ACTION:

1. Identify your challenges — English, sentence structure, wordiness, lack of clarity, misspellings, etc. If you need help, ask a trusted friend, co-worker, or your boss.
2. Set a minimum of three SMART goals to improve your written skills for the next quarter. Get an accountability partner if possible. Work on your goals consistently. Check-in with your accountability partner at least quarterly.
3. Go to Lynda/LinkedIn Learning (uab.edu/lynda) and search for courses related to your challenges.

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