

Effective Writing
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Lecture - 11
Business Writings and its Functions

Good morning and welcome to NPTEL online lectures on Effective Writing. You are listening to effective writing lectures by Binod Mishra and presently we are going to start the modules on Business Writing. Friends, as we all remember prior to this, we have already talked about the different nuances of academic writing and today we are going to talk about business writing. One question that you all might be having is, is business writing different from other forms of writing and do you really need business writing. So, before we go on to nitty gritty of business writing, let us talk about what actually we mean by business.

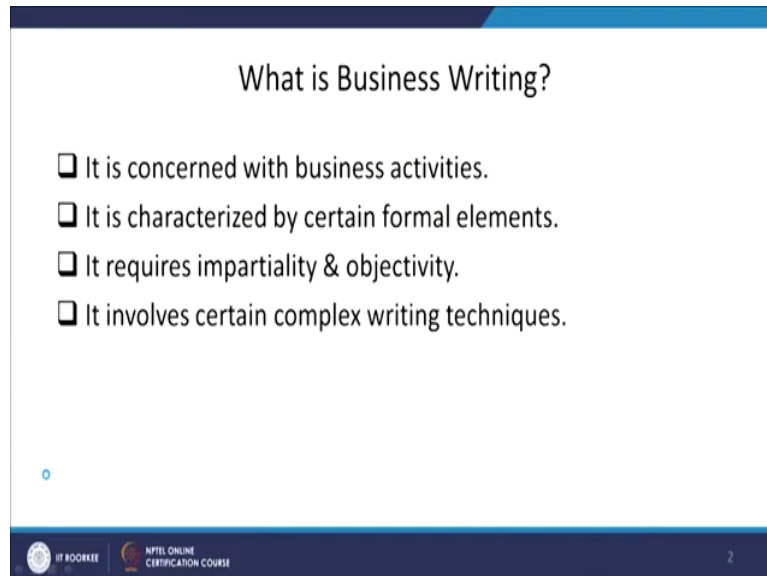
Dear friends, all of us in some way or the other are into some kind of business. If we have to define business, the simplest definition will be whatever we do in our day to day life is also a part of business. But then when we specifically come to business writing and we want to know about the nitty gritty of business writing, we will find that once you are in an organization or in an institution you have to do lots of writings and all these writings are for the transaction of business. Now, the question that you might be thinking about is what sort of business you are in.

Naturally your profession will require different sorts of business transactions which will also require from time to time writing. And if we today are thriving; if we today are successful in the world of business that is not only because of business communication, but also specifically because of business writing. Whatever comes to you in the form of writing in an institution has already been conceived well before it came to you.

Now, the question is you might all be wondering whether business writing is different and what exactly is business writing. To say it very plainly business writing is the writing that you do for the transaction of business. Of course, depending upon your organization and the nature of your job, you will have to make some amount of writing and one thing has to be

kept into consideration is not all forms of writing are the same. However, we have been talking about the effectiveness in terms of writing, but then when we talk about business writing business writing like other forms of business communication is concerned with business activities.

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What is Business Writing?

- It is concerned with business activities.
- It is characterized by certain formal elements.
- It requires impartiality & objectivity.
- It involves certain complex writing techniques.

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Imagine you want to buy a car somebody wants to buy a house, somebody wants to make some investment, somebody is a bank professional, somebody is an insurance agent, somebody is a salesman, somebody is an executive, somebody is a CEO, somebody is the manager, somebody is the leader.

Now, all these people in some way or the other have to transact some sort of business and these businesses require things to be conveyed not only orally at times, but also in the written form. You might be knowing well that most of these business communication business

writing is aimed at expressing and not at impressing. That is why when we talk about business writing what we have to bear in mind is that business writing though concerned with business activities is often characterized by certain formal elements.

What exactly do we mean by these formal elements? Now, when we talk about formal elements naturally we have in mind that maybe there is some amount of informality also involved in it because in business transactions since we are discussing or dealing with people at times, we have to be formal; we also have to be informal. But then when you are projecting yourself or your organizations image in the outside world, you have to understand that your writing has to be followed by certain formal elements.

Now, this we shall come to discuss when we talk the various about types of business writings and the various forms of business writing because not all business writings for not all business documents are the same. Sometimes you are going to ask something, sometimes you are going to explain, sometimes you are going to clarify, sometimes you are going to convince, sometimes you are going to seek, sometimes you are also going to promote sell. I mean there are several ways you are transacting business. Sometimes you are going to allocate task, sometimes you are also going to take the stock of and for all these somehow or the other some amount of writing is essential.

Now, since business thrives on the relationship whatever business it be, I mean when we are because when we talk about business communication naturally it is between two parties like all other communications. So, you have also to see who the other party is, to whom you are going to have your business with, to whom you are going to share something with some pieces of information. That is why in order to ensure a smooth business, what is actually required is in terms of dealing in terms of writing that business writing requires impartiality and objectivity.

I mean you are in a business organization or say sometimes because things change quite soon in the business world. Sometimes you are going to explain, but sometimes you are also going to ask. Sometimes there are situations where you may feel that you are being alleged or you

have to explain. Now, it is very difficult because there comes the question of writing and it requires the question of language. So, what sort of language you are going to write?

So, when you are going to do some amount of business writing you also have to see that you are impartial, is not it? You are impartial; impartial meaning why? You do not have any sort of favor you know that somebody has committed a mistake and that has to be brought to the notice or you want the wrongs to be corrected. Naturally you have to say it because unless and until you say it, the wrong cannot be corrected; the gaps cannot be overcome and if there is any amount of miscommunication that cannot be clarified. So, that is why we have to tell people things in a very clear manner.

Also a business writing involves certain complex writing techniques. It is it is as I said even though it may appear at times because the business well also has become a bit informal. But when you have to write something you have to maintain a level of formality, you have to maintain a sort of objectivity. That is why we say it involves I mean a business writing involves certain complex writing techniques, a letter cannot be written the way a report is, a memo cannot be written the way a letter is, a technical proposal also cannot be written the way a minutes are written.

I mean you have to do all sorts of writing, but then when you are doing these sorts of writings especially a in a business world, you actually have to see that it involves certain complex writing techniques. Now, though we have already been talking about various writing techniques, then for every other writing that you are going to do; there are certain regulations, there are certain restrictions, there are certain structures involved because we are living in a age when all of us are having the constraints of time the problem of time.

And if when you are writing a document and it is not being followed by these structural elements of a business document naturally people do not have time enough to go into the entire details. If we have to understand the complexities of writing various business documents, it would also not be out of fashion or it would it would be quite appropriate rather to understand what are the functions. Because based on the functions of an organization will

be decided the way what is to be written. Now, there can be two functions two functions in a business organization; one will be an internal function.

Now, a business organization is also a group of people and all people have different responsibilities. There are different units different sections fine. So, and in all these sections people have to do different tasks. So, naturally we have both internal as well as external function. So, internal function, what are these internal functions? Among the group members or among the members of the organization, among the employees they at times require to be assured and to be clarified about the policies and the procedures. You work in an organization.

You have to be aware of you must know what are the policies and what are the procedures. Because as I have been telling that as an important member of the organization, you are also an ambassador and with that you also have to see that internal communication whether it is written or oral though here we are focusing on the written communication. One way of written communication is to issue is to issue and clarify because one man cannot run the entire business. There are different people for different tasks and then to inform management of the progress.

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The slide is titled "Internal Functions" and lists five key tasks:

- ❖ To issue and clarify policies and procedures
- ❖ To inform management of progress
- ❖ To persuade employees or management to make changes
- ❖ To co-ordinate members
- ❖ To evaluate and reward employees

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Every organization wants to know at the end towards the end of the year how much it has progressed, where are the gaps, what is to be done and for that there are different documents also to be written. So, one function internal function of business communication is to inform the management about the progress and then from time to time you might find that there are different policies new policies come into being and the old policies are often relegated.

So, and the employees whenever a new policy comes into force, but before that the employees have to be persuaded or the management also (Refer Time: 12:29) Because something goes wrong and as employees of the organization ah, you may also feel that if there is a change in these policies maybe there will be some change which is likely going to affect or which is likely going to make some space or make some mark in progressing the organization.

Also different members of the organization in order to have a sort of coordination ah, they also require a sort of return exchange and it is this return exchange that is why things keep moving on. There is actually a system, there is a channel from one channel to another from one person to another, from one group to another, one unit to another; things keep on passing and that is based on the information and these information are in the form of written information.

Moreover one of the internal functions is also to evaluate and reward employees. The organization also wants to know who are the people, who have really been instrumental in bringing the progress of this organization and also from time to time in order to understand where the organization is what needs to be done. So, to evaluate and reward employees also we have to make some written documents.

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The slide is titled "External Functions" and lists seven tasks:

- ❖ Answer queries about products or services
- ❖ Persuade customers to buy
- ❖ Clarify supplier specification
- ❖ Issue credit
- ❖ Collect bills
- ❖ Respond to govt. agencies
- ❖ Promote a positive image

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And then we have also external functions. Among the external functions are sometimes from the organization or some people in the organization outside people, they would like to know about the products or services. Somebody launches a new product the outside world unless and until the outside world comes to know that the bag will not sell.

So, promotion then customers also needs to be convinced as to buy the product and this is possible only when proper sales letter is written and then customer supply specification and many organizations see to it that in case they have other clients customers. And in order to transact business from time to time ah, the credits are also given, but then only giving credit is not enough the credit also has to be collected.

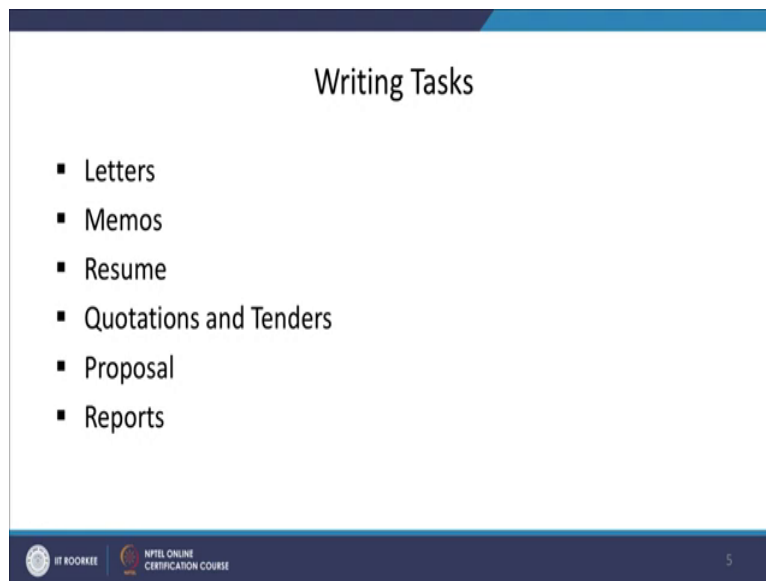
So, credit and then collection of the bills at times we also have to answer the government agencies. And in order we have to create a positive image in the business world also from time to time, you will find the annual report that comes, the process that comes. All these are written pieces and all these pieces actually help in the overall progress of the organization.

Now, having come to know about the functions of a business organization, now is the time to know what can be the writing tasks. As I said the writing tasks in a business organization can be different depending upon the circumstances, situations ah, demands needs and whatsoever. It is very difficult to cover everything in just one or two lectures, but then there are certain things which we must know. So, that we can have an idea as to how these business documents are to be written, how they are to be drafted in order to create the positive image of the organization. And in order to see that the organization is also competing with other organizations in the same area.

Now some of the writing tasks that you as an employee may come across very first is letters you have to write letters. So, we shall also be talking about how to write effective business letters, how to write effective business letters. When we talk about writing letters the letters can be of all sorts which we shall discuss when we talk about the types of letters.

And when we shall also be talking about because sometimes you know, you are in the world of business. Sometimes maybe there comes an angry letter. Sometimes there maybe ah credit letter, sometimes you also may have to collect the amount which you have given to an organization and for years together from months the amount has not been received.

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The slide is titled "Writing Tasks" and lists the following items:

- Letters
- Memos
- Resume
- Quotations and Tenders
- Proposal
- Reports

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So, you have to write letters of all sorts. Sometimes of enquiry sometimes of order, sometimes of supply, sometimes of complaint, sometimes of adjustment, sometimes of sales; I mean there can be variety of letters to be written.

Then memos in organization sometimes the new policies that come into practice and sometimes some new policies have to be implemented that also have to be written in the form of memo and these memos of various functions. Sometimes you have to inform to memo, sometimes you need to seek, sometimes you need to convince, sometimes you need to

enquire, sometimes you also need to familiarize your employees with new policies and all and then sometimes your resume; they are also required.

Resume though is a different sort of writing ah, but then from time to time because at times you may also be avoided as we have already said and in order to see from your own benefit also you must familiarize yourself with resume writing. And then quotations, tenders, sales, notice whatsoever and then you also have to write at times proposal. But suppose you want to devise something new or you want to make something new or your organization has made something new and you are now going to make propose it propose it internally at times.

And because when the internal quality assurance cell has already checked it and then finally, you find that it is to a satisfaction then maybe it is sent outside. So, you have to write a proposal and then reports in order to get proper evaluation of what has been done and what is remaining reports are also to be written. Of course, we shall be debating special you know lecture to reports ah, but then here my way of giving a reference I have mentioned all these.

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The slide is titled "Components of Business Writing". Below the title, it states "Same as other effective writings" and lists four bullet points: "Clarity", "Accuracy", "Simplicity", and "Style/ Tone". The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains the IIT Kharkee logo, the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", and the number "6".

Now, these are the writing tasks. And when these writing tasks you are aware of, you also might be interested to know are these writing of documents different from other documents. My dear friends of course, in today's world though all sorts of effective writing are the same, but with some little amount of difference.

For example, the way you read in academic writing there are certain rules to be followed. The same cannot be true in a business world in academic writing, you may be explaining something while you might be writing an essay or a research paper or a thesis you might be having.

But here you have to even though you have to convince people because as I have been telling that in a business world you have to persuade people; you have you do not need to impress, but you need to express. So, clarity is required whatever you want to say you have to be clear

now when I say clarity, what I mean is if you want to say about a product or you want to raise a doubt or a complaint about something you have to be very specific; you should not wrap your message in a jungle of words. So, that the receiver does not understand. So, clarity is the hallmark.

And then accuracy, suppose you are going to lodge a complaint. Suppose you are going to know about some specific product and you are not sure as to what you want to buy or what sort of order it is. If you are not providing them the accurate number, accurate design, accurate model, accurate makeup or whatsoever your business ah transaction or your business writing will be considered incomplete. And then simplicity, when it comes to simplicity what exactly is meant by you have to write things in a very lucid manner in a very simple manner.

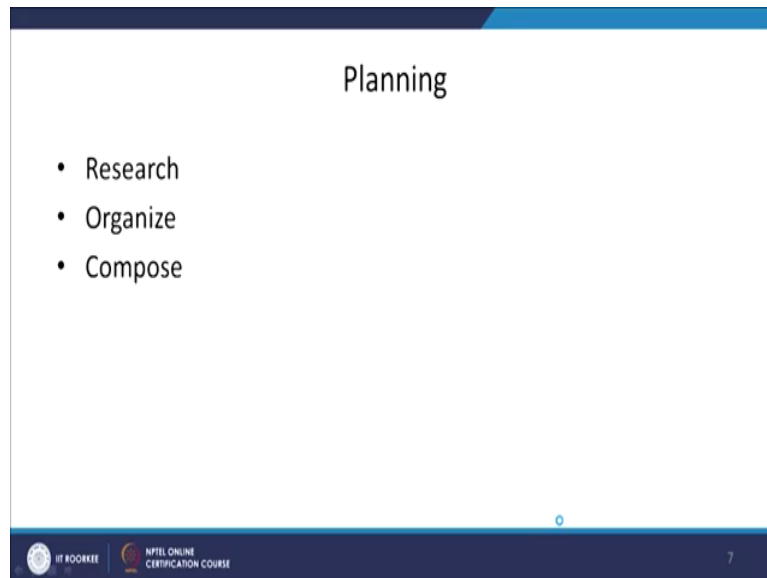
I mean you need not spend unnecessary words otherwise what because your purpose is to get your task done and for that clarity accuracy; and then of course, the way you are writing the way you are writing. I mean the style the tone what sort of tone because you know depending upon the situation and the circumstances the tones will also vary. But then in business world you always want to retain your customers maybe there are times when you feel that your customers are very demanding or they are making unnecessary demands whatsoever they are asking sometimes irrelevant questions.

But then you have to keep your cool my dear friend, when you are going either to reply or to tell them or you are going to send them brochure. So, in all these while you are going to make all these documents, you have to see that you maintain a proper style. We shall be discussing further as to how we can maintain a proper style, how you can manage a proper tone without losing the customer sometimes you know in business world every now and then you cannot say yes every now and then you cannot agree you at times may disagree also.

Suppose somebody wants a sort of credit and you are not in the position to lend them credit, but they are your good customers or clients. So, you have to refuse those out sometimes some proposal comes to you and you are not in a position to approve that proposal. So, you have to tell them the truth, but while telling them truth you have to be rational because you do not want to lose the customers. For all this what is actually required is I mean in order to write

effectively for business what needs to be done is you need to make a proper planning. What exactly I do mean by proper planning?

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By proper planning is first you must know why you are going to write something and what is the intention behind this writing. When you come to know that how will we come to know you have to do a research. Suppose you have been given something new to write a proposal on because in business world you are going to tell them the facts you are going to provide them the factual information, is not it? So, when you are going to do that what you need to do you need to make some amount of research.

Suppose your boss has asked you to make a report or your boss has asked you to take a verification stock verification, you have to check the quality control. Now what will you do? You cannot just sit and write you have to do some amount of research and that is the first

thing which you are going to do in terms of planning. So, what you will do? You will do some amount of research. In order to do the research, where will you get the information?

And in most of the organizations because you know people or if you are new suppose you are new you have joined newly, then what will you do? You will actually like to know from the past files from the files or to the people I mean there are people also, who can guide you who can tell you. So, make some amount of research. While you are doing research, what you are doing you are actually collecting data, gathering data. And when you are going for the research, you will come across all sorts of data, is not it? Now do you think that the entire data will go to your writing?

No, you will actually have to make some amount of selection. I mean you have to make some amount of scrutiny. So, when you have done the data collection then and while in the course of data collection because when you are going to make data collection, you are going to write anything becomes haphazard no everything becomes haphazard and you have written it in a zig-zag manner.

Now what you need to do is you actually need to organize. While organizing first you have to ask what is it that you are going to write what is the main class the main topic and when you come to know about the main topic, based on the data you can put those in certain heads and sub heads.

Unless and until you have made a proper division unless and until you have made proper heads and subheads, you cannot because the entire data is there before you and you at times feel very embarrassed. You are having a good number of data, but then to which portion should it go that actually has to be decided by you.

Once you have organized when you are organizing, you are not writing anything in terms of sentences. You are actually going to write them in symbols, you are going to write them in figures, you are going to write them in some short you know acronym or abbreviations or whatsoever.

But when finally, you are satisfied with your data that you have been able to create your data in the best possible manner. Now is the time that you should come to compose. Composing is a very challenging task, but it is not without rewards my dear friend. Even though you have to do a lot of labor before, but when finally, you compose you will yourself feel know you will yourself feel a sort of satisfaction and after you have composed, then the last stage I mean many people say that when you are going to organize the data in a way you are also going to organize your entire written document.

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Planning Process

- The objective
- Audience
- Reader's reason
- Format
- Review Process
- The schedule

(Anne Janzer, *The Workplace Writer's Process*)

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Now, since every document has to be planned in this connection while I was reading a book by Anne Janzer and the name of the book is the Workplace Writer's Process. So, Janzer suggests three things that when somebody is going to write one should actually create three plans. Once you make a proper planning and the very first planning because you know half of

your battle is one only in the planning stage. So, when you are planning you ask yourself certain things. What are these certain things that you are going to ask?

The very first thing that you are going to ask is what will be the topic. So, when you know your topic, I mean there are six things that you should keep into consideration and what are these six things? First is what is the objective? Why you are writing why you are writing this and to whom will it go? Because any writing you know any communication when you do not know who your audience members are naturally you will not be able to do justice with it. So, first you must be clear about the objective what is the objective, why you are writing and who are the target audience, is not it?

Once you know why you are writing, you will also come to know who are your audience members. Audience awareness is very important and when we talk about audience awareness one thing one has to be careful of is what is the relationship you know them you may not know them. I mean when we talk about the audience, we also think of it who will be the primary audience; who will be the secondary audience. Primary here secondary, here; you remember I have already talked about in some of the lectures. So, finally, who is the audience?

So, maybe when you have drafted something the first audience will be or the first receiver will be your boss who will actually sign off. So, he will sign off unless he will not sign off unless and until he gets the satisfaction that you have done it in a thorough manner and then the readers reason. You also should think because all these you know all these will tell you all these will actually help you go through your document very you know in a meticulous manner. Why should my reader read this? By reading what am I going to give them is my writing beneficial to them? Will they react positively to whatever I write?

These things are very important to be discussed. So, think about the readers reason why should the reader read it and what ultimately be the reaction and then the format. Now having come to know all this, then you decide the format. It has to go in the form of a mail as I said it has to go in the form of a mail, it has to go in the form of a letter, it has to go in the form of a memo, it has to go in the form of a sales letter or it has to go in the form of a query

whatsoever. So, decide the format. Now many organizations have already got their proper formats, but in case it does not have you can always create a proper format.

Because this format actually gives you a sort of systematic vision as to how you should move my dear friend. So, once you have the format, then comes the review process review process. When you have formatted it everything I mean when I say formatted it everything means you have composed your written document and as well and once you have composed, then comes review you know. As I have been saying major amount of time should be devoted to the review process by review process I mean revision.

So, when you revise you will find that either there is some problem with the tone or there is some problem with the language or there is some problem with the arrangement of the sentences or there is some problem with the difficult difficulty level of the words or there is problem with the knowledge of the audience. I mean so many things come into picture.

So, spend a lot of time revising what you have done. So, review process and after having reviewed now the document is ready, now you have to think of when to schedule it, when to send it. I mean you will find many organizations, many business organizations they actually decide a certain time though most of the proportions are done beforehand.

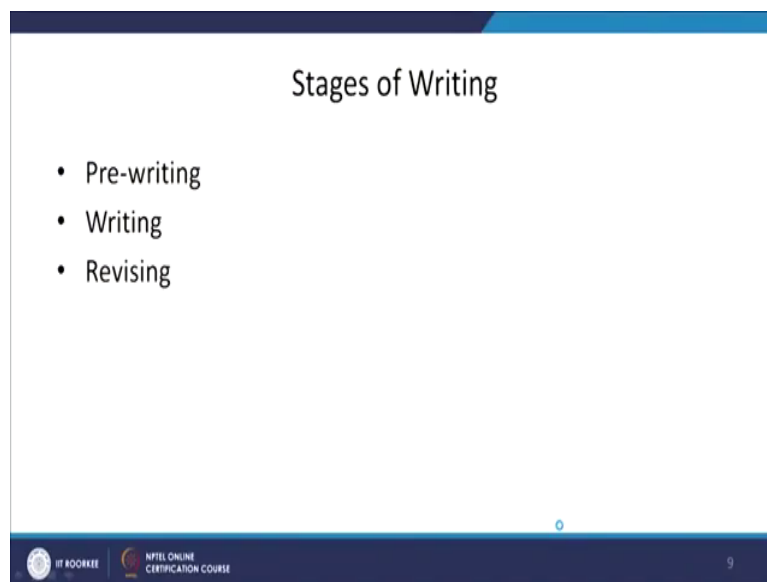
But then they are actually waiting for a proper time when they will launch a new product or when they will circulate this message to the outside world, they know they are very careful because every now and then you cannot you know launch a new product every. And when you recognize the importance of time I mean at a certain point of time when you have come up with a new idea and your, but then all these things have to be done quite in advance. And then once you decide that you are doing to schedule it, you are going to send it then rest assured that things will be and your written task.

Now, finally, has started taking shape and you also see the reactions started coming, I mean response has started coming. So, my dear friends when you have done a proper planning; now

you are ready to write your business document. Business writing is that that is why I have been saying business writing is a bit different from other forms of writing.

It actually believes in clarity, it believes in consistency, it believes in a sort of lucidity of style, it believes in a tone that is formal yet informal. The tone that is convincing, but yet not imposing and when you have done all that be ready, now for the stages of writing. When you have done all this, please remember that the three stages and we shall be discussing all these stages in detail. The very first stage is pre writing.

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The data is there before you, you are also now aware of the format. Now, you are going to do pre writing and in prewriting also, you have to exercise a lot of caution, is not it. And then after pre writing, I mean there are three stages. One is pre writing half part of this, pre writing

is researching data collection and then you come to the writing after having done lot of formalities of outlining and dividing and sub dividing and then the revision part.

So, now you are ready and once you revise, you will see revision actually gives you another sort of satisfaction you feel that you have also been able to detect you yourself, detect your own faults. You have also been able to identify because unless and until you have done a proper revision, I think things should not go outside your organization or also from your away from your table. Because once these things go out it actually becomes difficult if you have not taken the proper care, my dear friends

So, having understood the nuances and the principles and essentials of business writing, now we have come to realize that a lot of preparation is required before we start writing for business. Once you have done that now is the time when you are going to go for pre writing as I said, you will analyze your audience. There can be audience of different levels, audience of different natures, audience of different tastes, audience of different countries, audience having different backgrounds and then one question people may often ask is how to understand who are my audience.

Maybe every now and then you might not know in that case you can anticipate. I mean you can think you can anticipate, I mean imagine and the best way is to put yourself in the position of your audience members. Imagine that if this letter or if this report comes to me how should I react, fine.

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Pre-writing

- Analyze
- Anticipate
- Adapt

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So, anticipate the audience and once you anticipate, then the time has come that you need to adapt yourself. What do I mean by adapt? By adapting means responding to twittering to or following the requirements of audience because whatever we do in the business world, we are actually doing not for ourselves, but for others.

And we have to retain our customers we have to win people and we can win people only when we talk about their interests, only when we know their preferences and their choices that is what I mean by adapt by adapting to the requirements of audience. And once you have adapted to, now is the time that you start writing. My dear friends, we have come to the end of this lecture and in the lecture that follows we shall be talking about language, we shall also be talking about various other nuances that will help you in drafting successful business documents. Thank you very much.

And let me thank you by saying that many people who have joined an organization as a new employee might be thinking and if they are being given the task of writing, they might be thinking how will they adjust and accommodate. I mean it is only the hope and it is only the optimism that can help them.

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Summing up

If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

- Oscar Wilde

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So, let me quote one of the lines from Oscar Wilde which are very popular and relevant, if you pretend to be good because in a business world, you have to pretend to be good you actually want to be good to others. The world takes you very seriously. If you are talking about benefits of others, the world actually looks towards you in a very serious manner.

If you pretend to be bad and if you really pretend to be bad, it does not; I mean people always want and business actually wants that we have to win the faith of the customer; the belief of the customer, the trust of the customer such is actually the astounding stupidity of optimism.

So, let us be with the optimism and let us be optimistic to write better letters, better reports, better proposals, better resumes better emails. So, that world becomes beautiful and we keep on thriving in a business world after that.

Thank you very much.