Lesson Plan

Writing for Business: Avoiding Common Errors

Objective: Students will identify common errors made in word usage and apply correct usage to a business document.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate reading and writing skills.**

Demonstration includes

- *reading and interpreting workplace documents*
- *effectively writing workplace documents, considering*
    - *ability to convey messages with clarity*
    - *professional tone, appropriate to audience*
    - *grammar*
    - *forms and conventions (e.g., formatting documents, using an email signature).*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

- Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
- Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
- Demonstrate information-literacy skills.
- Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

- English: 6.DSR, 6.RV, 6.RI, 6.C, 6.LU, 6.W, 7.DSR, 7.RV, 7.RI, 7.C, 7.LU, 7.W, 8.DSR, 8.RV, 8.RI, 8.C, 8.LU, 8.W, 9.DSR, 9.RV, 9.RI, 9.C, 9.LU, 9.W, 10.DSR, 10.RV, 10.RI, 10.C, 10.LU, 10.W, 11.DSR, 11.RV, 11.RI, 11.C, 11.LU, 11.W, 12.DSR, 12.RV, 12.RI, 12.C, 12.LU, 12.W
- History and Social Sciences: CE.1, CE.14, VUS.6, GOVT.1

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Pre-assess student knowledge about proper word usage.*** Determine students' current level of mastery with grammatical usage and common word errors with a short introductory activity. Display the following sentences large enough for the class to see, and ask, "What is wrong with these sentences?" Correct sentences with student feedback; if there are errors the students do not initially recognize, discuss those examples as a whole group and determine what corrections should be made.

    There going to they're classroom, which is located over their.
    (Correct version: They're going to their classroom, which is located over there.)
    Juan was excited to except the job.
    (Correct version: Juan was excited to accept the job.)
    Rachel explained that the error could of effected the company's profits.
    (Correct version: Rachel explained that the error could have affected the company's profits.)
    At the end of the night, there was less coins in the cash register then normal.
    (Correct version: At the end of the night, there were fewer coins in the cash register than normal.)
    We couldnt determine to who the shoe belonged.
    (Correct version: We couldn't determine to whom the shoe belonged.)

2. ***Explain to students that correct word usage is extremely important in the workplace***. Discuss the ramifications of using poor word usage. Ask students, "Why would an employer be concerned about an employee using correct grammar and usage? In what ways might poor word usage inhibit a person's job acquisition or advancement?"

3. ***Ask students to complete Quizlet matching activity with a partner***. The Quizlet activity, Commonly Misused Words, (https://quizlet.com/_3f636t) includes 20 terms. This will give students practice identifying correct terms for various uses prior to their application of the lesson.

4. ***Distribute Handout #1, Editing a Business Letter***. Ask students to find and correct grammar mistakes throughout the letter. Can they identify over 20 mistakes?

5. ***Conclude with a discussion on the link between proper business writing and another workplace readiness skill***: ***demonstrate self-representation.*** Ask students, "What is the link between the two skills? Why would it be difficult to demonstrate self-representation skills without a working knowledge of grammar and usage?"

Formative Assessment:

- Gauge student understanding during introductory whole-group activity.
- Use Quizlet tools to evaluate student mastery of the Commonly Misused Words activity.
- Evaluate student editing of business letter. There are 22 errors and/or poor word choices throughout the letter. Please refer to the answer key for a corrected version of the letter with corrections highlighted.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

- To offer scaffolding to students and to complete this activity in a shorter time frame, complete Handout #1, Editing a Business Letter, as a whole group; students may also complete this with a partner. Teachers may want to prompt students by letting them know that there are 22 errors and/or poor word choices throughout the letter.
- To offer an extension option to students, brainstorm additional terms that are commonly misused and ask students to differentiate between correct and incorrect usage.
- To offer another type of extension, project Handout #1, Editing a Business Letter, and lead a discussion about spell-check and grammar-check in word processing programs. Ask students, "Why is it of critical importance not to rely on a word processing program to alert us to spelling and grammar errors? How many errors from the handout are *not* underlined in blue or red on the projected version?"

Suggestions for Follow-up:

- To practice the process of editing, and to sharpen student writing skills, ask each student to compose a cover letter for a hypothetical job application. Ask students to peer edit each other's cover letters.
- Extend the lesson by completing an additional lesson, entitled "Using Email," related to the Workplace Readiness Skill related to effective use of telecommunications. The lesson can be found with the Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge, from the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.
- Build upon the concepts in this lesson by asking students to complete activities associated with the lesson on page 89, "Text vs. Email: Does it Really Matter?" in Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge, from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Teacher Resources:

- Audience, Purpose, and Language Use in Electronic Messages, Read.Write.Think., National Council of Teachers of English
- Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.
- Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Assessment: Virginia Overview, Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS).
- Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth: Instructional Resources, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.

Handout #1

Writing for Business: Avoiding Common Errors

Virginia's CTE Resource Center

578 Main Street, Suite #34
Greenville, VA 12345
January 1, 2018

Mr. A. Smith
Project Management Director
Franklin Business Solutions
90 Bent Tree Circle
Greenville, VA 12345

Deer Mr. Smith:

I am writing to apply for you're job opening for administrative assistant. Their is no one whom can better represent you're company then me. You'll find that my organizational skills, ability to work affectively as a part of a team, and positive work ethic will benefit Franklin Business Solutions.

Many of my classes in high school has helped prepare me for a future in business, expecially the ones I've listed on my résumé. Additionally, I do lots of affective administrative functions at my current job, such as filing, answering phones, writing emails, and entering company data. My ability two multitask, represent the company good, and solve problems have helped me secede.

Please except this application for employment with Franklin Business Solutions. My résumé is attached. I would like too speak with you farther about this opportunity and learn additional about Franklin Business Solutions. At you're convenience, I am available four an interview. I look forward too hearing from you soon.

Sinerely,

Jo Johnson

Jo Johnson
(234) 567-8901

Handout #1

Editing a Business Letter Answer Key

578 Main Street, Suite #34
Greenville, VA 12345
January 1, 2018

Mr. A. Smith
Project Management Director
Franklin Business Solutions
90 Bent Tree Circle
Greenville, VA 12345

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to apply for your job opening for administrative assistant. There is no one who can better represent your company than me. You'll find that my organizational skills, ability to work effectively as a part of a team, and positive work ethic will benefit Franklin Business Solutions.

Many of my classes in high school have helped prepare me for a future in business, especially the ones I've listed on my résumé. Additionally, I perform many administrative functions effectively at my current job, such as filing, answering phones, writing emails, and entering company data. My ability to multitask, represent the company well, and solve problems have helped me succeed.

Please accept this application for employment with Franklin Business Solutions. My résumé is attached. I would like to speak with you further about this opportunity and learn more about Franklin Business Solutions. At your convenience, I am available for an interview. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jo Johnson

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(234) 567-8901