Chapter 1

Succeeding in Business Communication

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# 1) Description of the Chapter

This chapter motivates students to improve their communication skills, offers an overview of communication in organizations, discusses the costs of poor communication, stresses benefits of improving communication and using technology to communicate, outlines criteria for effective messages, introduces the importance of following conventions, and demonstrates how to analyze and solve business communication problems.

The student learning objectives include:

* **LO 1-1 What the benefits of good communication are**
* **LO 1-2 Why students need to be able to communicate well**
* **LO 1-3 What the costs of communication are**
* **LO 1-4 What the costs of poor communication are**
* **LO 1-5 What the basic criteria for effective messages are**
* **LO 1-6 What role conventions play in business communication**
* **LO 1-7 How to solve business communication problems**

# 2) Essentials to Cover

**LO 1-1 What the benefits of good communication are**

* Communication helps organizations and the people in them achieve their goals. People put things in writing to create a record, to convey complex data, to make things convenient for the reader, to save money, and to convey their own message more effectively.

**LO 1-2 What you need to be able to communicate well**

* The three basic purposes of communication are to inform, to request or persuade, and to build goodwill. Most messages have multiple purposes.
* The ability to write and speak well becomes increasingly important as people rise in an organization.

**LO 1-3 What the costs of communication are**

* Common communication costs include writing time, document cycling, printing, mailing, and electronic storage of copies.

**LO 1-4 What the costs of poor communication are**

* Poor writing wastes time, wastes effort, and jeopardizes goodwill.

**LO 1-5 What the basic criteria for effective messages are**

* Good business and administrative writing meets five criteria: clear; complete; correct; saves the receiver’s time; and builds goodwill.

**LO 1-6 What role conventions play in business communication**

* Common business communications have conventions, as do organizations. Business communicators need to know how to adjust conventions to fit a particular audience, purpose, and context.

**LO 1-7 How to solve business communication problems**

* To evaluate a specific document, students must know the interactions among writer, the reader(s), the purposes of the message, and the content. No single set of words will work for all readers in all situations.
* To understand business communication situations, students should ask the following questions:
  + What’s at stake—to whom?
  + Should you send a message?
  + What channel should you use?
  + What should you say?
  + How should you say it?
* The following process helps create effective messages:
  + Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions.
  + Answer the analysis questions in Figure 1.4.
  + Organization your information to fit your audiences, your purposes, and the context.
  + Make your document visually inviting.
  + Revise your draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
  + Use the response you get to plan future messages.

For suggestions on ways to teach this material, see the lesson plans in Section 8.

# 3) Exercise Planning Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learning Objective | Difficulty: Easy | Difficulty: Medium | Difficulty: Hard |
| **1-1**  What the benefits of good communication are | 1.1.1, 1.3, 1.3 | 1.8 |  |
| **1-2**  Why you need to be able to communicate well | 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2 | 1.9, 1.10. 1.11 |  |
| **1-3**  What the costs of communication are | 1.1.4, 1.5 |  |  |
| **1-4**  What the costs of poor communication are | 1.1.5, 1.6 |  |  |
| **1-5**  What are the basic criteria for effective messages | 1.1.6 |  |  |
| **1-6**  What role conventions play in business communication | 1.1.7 | 1.7 |  |
| **1-7**  How to solve business communication problems | 1.1.8 | 1.9, 1.10, 1.11 |  |
| Exercises with multiple learning objectives | 1.1 | 1.9, 1.10, 1.11 |  |

**In-class exercises:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7

**Out-of-class exercises:** 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11

**Best if you teach in a computer classroom:** 1.9, 1.10, 1.11

# 4) Continuing Case Analysis

The All-Weather Case, set in an HR department in a manufacturing company, extends through all 19 chapters and is available at [www.mhhe.com/locker11e](http://www.mhhe.com/locker11e). This chapter’s exercise gets students acquainted with the characters in the case. It also asks students to think about the basics of business communication and why it is important for All-Weather.

This activity works well if you place students in small groups and serves as an introduction to the All-Weather case study that your class can explore throughout the rest of the text. Start with this activity after students have read the chapter and the introduction to the organization, All-Weather. This activity permits students the opportunity to begin a forum that discusses issues related to business communication in the working world. Ideally, this activity will get students discussing ways to adapt their message to an audience, highlight issues with poor communication, and invoke some ideas about delivering effective presentations.

One other distinguishing feature of the All-Weather case is that once students are introduced to the case study in Chapter 1, they can jump into the dilemmas that All-Weather faces regardless of the order in which you cover chapters. In other words, you do not need to follow the consecutive order of chapters for the story to still make sense to your students.

# 5) Answers and Analysis for In-Text Exercises

Answers for each problem in Chapter 1 of *BAC* are given below.

1.1 Reviewing the Chapter (LO 1-1 through 1-7)

Difficulty Level: Easy

1. Why do businesses need to be able to communicate well? (LO 1-1)

Communication helps organizations and the people in them achieve their goals. People put things in writing to create a record, to convey complex data, to make thing convenient for the reader, to save money, and to convey their own messages more effectively.

1. Why do you need to be able to communicate well? (LO 1-2)

Students will spend most of their writing and speaking in the workplace. In addition, being a good communicator will increase their chances to be promoted.

1. What are some flawed assumptions about workplace communication? What is the reality behind the myths? (LO 1-2)

“An administrative assistant will do all of my writing.”

**Reality:** Because of automation and restructuring, job responsibilities in offices have changed. Today, many offices do not have typing pools. Most secretaries have become administrative assistants with their own complex tasks such as training, research, and database management for several managers. Managers are likely to take care of their own writing, data entry, and phone calls.

“I’ll use form letters or templates when I need to write.”

**Reality:** Form letters only cover routine situations, many of which are computerized or outsourced. The higher students rise, the more frequently they’ll face situations that aren’t routine and demand creative solutions.

“I’m being hired as an accountant, not a writer.”

**Reality:** Almost every entry-level professional or managerial job requires you to write e-mail messages, speak to small teams, write documents, and present your work for annual reviews. Workers who do these things well are likely to be promoted beyond the entry level.

“I’ll just pick up the phone.”

**Reality:** Important phone calls require follow-up letters, memos, or e-mail messages. People in organizations put information in writing to make themselves visible, create a record, convey complex data, make things convenient for the reader, save money, and convey their own messages more effectively.

1. What are the costs of communication? (LO 1-3)

* Writing time
* Document cycling
* Printing
* Mailing
* Electronic storage/servers (as well as administering and maintaining them)

1. What are the costs of poor communication? (LO 1-4)

* Wasted time
* Wasted effort
* Jeopardizes goodwill
* Legal problems

1. What are the basic criteria for effective messages? (LO 1-5)

Good business and administrative writing meets five basic criteria: it’s clear, complete, correct, builds goodwill, and saves the reader’s time.

1. What role do conventions play in business communication? (LO 1-6)

Conventions help people recognize, produce, and interpret different kinds of communication. All business documents follow some conventions. However, the key to conventions is that they always need to be adjusted to fit the rhetorical situation—audience, context, and purpose.

1. What are the components of good problem solving method for business communication opportunities? (LO 1-7)

* Gather knowledge and brainstorm solutions
* Use the analysis questions in Figure 1.4 to analyze the audience, purpose, and situation.
* Organize the information to fit the audiences, contexts, and purposes.
* Make the document visually inviting.
* Revise the draft to create a friendly, businesslike, positive style.
* Edit the draft for standard English; double-check names and numbers.
* Uses responses to plan future messages.

1.2 Assessing Your Punctuation and Grammar Skills (LO 1-2)

Difficulty Level: Easy

The answers to the Diagnostic Test from Appendix B can be found in the Appendix B file.

1.3 Messages for Discussion 1—Asking for a Class (LO 1-1)

Difficulty Level: Easy

Message 1

* Salutation is too informal.
* Message lacks you-attitude.
* Message lacks goodwill by stating the student didn’t take it last year.

Last sentence, as it states, makes Jake sound desperate; there is no incentive for the audience to act on the message.

Grammar and spelling need to be improved.

Message 2

* The salutation is better than the first message, but still not good enough.
* The writer blames other people instead of the student taking responsibility.

The tone is too informal overall.

The writer is too demanding.

There is no incentive for the audience to act on the message.

* The message lacks you-attitude. The emphasis is on what the writer not the reader.

Message 3

* The salutation is good.
* The tone is much better than the previous two.
* The student takes responsibility and politely asks to be put on a waiting list in case a seat opens.
* The student builds goodwill by stating their interest in the course.

The closing is professional by thanking the reader for her time.

Message 4

* The salutation is good.

The spelling and grammar need attention and lose goodwill for the writer in the current state.

The tone is too informal.

The writer seems to be uninformed and offers little reason for the reader to act.

The writer doesn’t explain his need for taking this course.

The closing is insincere and no appropriate.

1.4 Messages for Discussion II—Responding to Rumors (LO 1-1)

Difficulty Level: Easy

Message 1

* The subject line is vague.
* The first paragraph emphasizes the writer’s role, rather than stating what readers need and want to know: how they will be affected by the merger.
* The second paragraph contains negative references and blames readers for the rumors that are circulating.
* Even the last paragraph sheds no new light on the effects of the merger on employees. As a result, rumors are likely to increase rather than decrease.

Message 2

* This memo gives too little information. The subject line is not specific, and the body of the memo offers no details to make “no layoffs” seem credible. For the rumors to stop employees must be reassured—by hard information from someone they trust—that their jobs are not in jeopardy.

Message 3

* The subject line does not inform readers
* The first paragraph gives too many details too soon, de-emphasizing the main point: no layoffs. It’s unfriendly. Placing the supporting details in a second paragraph and omitting the sarcastic “if you do the math” would improve the message considerably.
* The second paragraph gives readers two reading assignments without explaining why or what employees are to derive from the assignments. The writer might have cited passages of Acme’s mission statement and goals to reinforce his no-layoffs message.

Message 4

* The subject line sets a negative tone for the message.
* The first paragraph contains a grammar error, which seems minor compared to the harsh tone. It omits information designed to reassure employees and quell rumors about layoffs.
* The second paragraph lacks you-attitude. It, belatedly, contains the main message: “. . . we won’t be laying off employees after the merger.” But the extremely negative, disrespectful tone makes the statement seem insincere. The paragraph shows ill will toward employees, rather than goodwill.
* The third paragraph continues to scold employees and undercut any trust between them and the writer.

Message 5

* The subject line is acceptable, though “Layoffs—the True Story” would be better in case the readers’ screen displays fewer than the 28 characters in this line.
* The first paragraph has an understanding, neutral tone; but since the main message (no plans to lay off any of our valued people) is positive, it should appear here instead of in the second paragraph.
* In the second paragraph, although the writer wants to reassure employees, “Have no fear!” is inappropriate. Much of this paragraph belongs in Paragraph 1. The writer could have increased you-attitude by writing himself out of the picture and by stressing that updates will appear in the newsletter and on the intranet at regular, predictable intervals.
* The third paragraph could be more positive and forward-looking. “Our people” is patronizing. And, the writer issued an open invitation to bombard him with all sorts of questions.

1.5 Discussing Communication Barriers (LO 1-3)

Difficulty Level: Easy

Discussions will vary by student teams. However, the main objective is to get students to begin considering the importance of communication in the workplace and how to overcome and deal with potential barriers.

1.6 Identifying Poor Communicators (LO 1-4)

Discussion Level: Easy

Discussions will vary by the students in each group and their unique experiences. The main objective is to get students to learn from communication mistakes they’ve encountered in the past.

1.7 Identifying Changing Conventions (LO 1-6)

Difficulty Level: Medium

Discussions will vary by student teams and their individual experiences. Nonetheless, try to have students to think about the ways technology has changed the conventions of the classroom or their workplace.

1.8 Understanding the Role of Communication in Your Organization (LO 1-1)

Difficulty Level: Medium

This problem works well for students with either part-time or full-time jobs. If your students are not currently working, ask them to interview one of their professors or someone in their chosen career field.

Discuss the questions at some length before directing students to begin. Most students will need guidance on conducting an interview. Specifically, discuss what to do before, during, and after an interview (e.g., knowing purpose, setting up interview, organizing questions, bringing proper materials, writing a thank-you). If you discuss these steps ahead of time with students, their interview experiences will be more fulfilling, and they won’t lose goodwill with their interviewees.

1.9 Introducing Yourself to Your Instructor (LO 1-2)

Difficulty Level: Medium

This assignment is straightforward. Many instructors like it because it helps them see students as individuals and as competent people. Students who are not good writers have impressive achievements in other areas. Since people going through rough periods may not be ready to write about themselves, consider giving students a choice of either this assignment or another from this chapter. This assignment can be non-graded and could serve as a diagnostic writing tool.

Take 10 minutes to tell students to

* + Use complete memo format.
  + Include only information they are comfortable sharing.
  + Be specific enough to show how they’re different from other people who are from the same town, in the same major, planning the same career path, etc.

List *at least five* accomplishments. These can be anything that makes the writer feel good about himself or herself, even if it’s not the kind of thing that goes on a résumé. For example, someone who has just run a 10K race for the first time may justly be proud of that, even though other people run farther or faster.

Your students may write better memos when you give them a memo about yourself. (They also enjoy learning something about you, just as you will enjoy being able to see them as individuals.)

If you use this assignment, point out to students that it is different from other assignments they’ll have. Some people do well when writing about themselves but poorly when asked to assume the roles of middle managers. The opposite also happens: some students who write vague, stilted memos about themselves do just fine in the course.

1.10 Introducing Yourself to Your Collaborative Writing Team (LO 1-2)

Difficulty Level: Medium

This assignment can help you decide which students to put together in teams; it can help students in teams get to know each other more quickly and to identify similarities and differences in work styles before these cause conflicts.

On many campuses, most students have worked in teams (in classes, on the job, in extracurricular activities), but they may not have a vocabulary for describing teams. You will get better memos if you allow some time for discussion. (Note: In discussion, you might refer to the common tasks and behaviors within teams without emphasizing or expecting students to learn them. Tasks: starts discussion, seeks information and opinions, gives information and opinions, synthesizes, coordinates, evaluates, and summarizes. Positive behaviors: encourages participation, relieves tensions, checks feelings, solves interpersonal problems, and listens actively. Negative behaviors: blocking, dominating, clowning, overspeaking, and withdrawing.) Remind students to be specific, perhaps giving examples to back up the adjectives they use. You may also consider combining this activity at the same time you have your students read Chapter 8.

1.11 Describing Your Writing Experiences and Goals (LO 1-2)

Difficulty Level: Medium

This assignment informs you about what your students already know about writing and can help you plan the course.

Good writers tend to do well on this assignment, whereas mediocre writers have problems. They aren’t conscious of what they’ve been taught or of how their writing has been evaluated—they remember only the grade, not comments. They may not have enough awareness of labels or of the kinds of areas in which writing is evaluated to know what they see as strengths and weaknesses. However, even if their view of strengths and weaknesses is off, you may still want to know what they think and feel about themselves as writers.

# 6) PPT Lecture Outline

PPT 1.4-1.5 Discuss the different forms of business communication and why its important for their careers

PPT 1.6 Introduce the purposes of business communication

PPT 1.7 Introduces internal and external audiences and why these matter for business communication. Chapter 2 addresses audiences in more detail.

PPT 1.8 Introduces the costs of poor communication and why this matters.

PPT 1.9 Introduces the criteria for effective messages. These should be the basis of all messages students compose throughout the semester.

PPT 1.10 Introduces goodwill and why these matter for business communication. Chapter 3 addresses audiences in more detail.

PPT 1.11 Introduces conventions and why these matter for business communication. You might ask students to name some conventions they’re aware of in a college setting.

PPT 1.12-1.25 Introduces strategies for how to solve business communication problems, including gathering knowledge, answers analysis questions, organizing information, making document visuals inviting, revising, editing, and using responses to plan future messages.

# 7) Strategies for Increasing Student Learning

The chapter is straightforward to teach. Students tend to have difficulty primarily when they resist taking the course, either because they do not believe writing and communication will be important to their careers or because they have already had other writing courses. You can counter these problems by stressing the sections in Chapter 1 of *BAC* that discuss how important writing is to career advancement and by illustrating ways that business and administrative writing differs from other kinds of writing. Make clear that students may have to alter the writing styles they used in other classes to do well in this course. For example, in their other courses, particularly first-year composition, the students’ main purpose was to display knowledge to their instructor. In this course, you, the instructor, may not be the students’ primary audience. Students should respond to communication situations that have larger implications for the business world.

I have found that students benefit from seeing actual business documents early in the course and having immediate experiences writing. Bring in examples, or have your students bring in examples, of professional documents that you can begin to analyze together with your students. Ask them to identify purposes, audiences, and contexts of the documents. Moreover, to help them come to terms with the different demands of writing in a business setting, consider giving some short writing exercises for which you give feedback but not a letter grade. Starting in this way can give students a solid foundation on which to build for the rest of the semester.

The lesson plans in the next section offer suggestions on how to implement these ideas.

# 8) Possible Lesson Plans

Most courses spend one to two hours on this material. Many of the issues and ideas raised in this chapter provide your students with a context for the messages they will create throughout the course.

“Cocktail Party” (40 to 50 minutes for a class of 30 students). This activity works well anytime during the first week of class.

Because success in business requires the ability to relate to other people, you may want your students to practice the social skills they will need in the business world and at the same time to build a sense of community in the classroom. Ask your students to spend about 20 minutes meeting as many of their classmates as possible and learning at least one interesting characteristic about them. You may want to stay in the room and participate, or you may decide to leave the room so students will become self-reliant as “host” or “hostess.” After 20 minutes, call on one student and ask him or her to introduce someone to the rest of the class. Then that person introduces someone else, and so on until the entire class has been introduced. This exercise is particularly valuable if your students will be working in collaborative teams.

Introduction Interview (20-30 minutes). This activity works well anytime during the first week of class and is similar to the “Cocktail Party.”

Ask your students to interview a partner to learn biographical information. Ask them to learn at least one really interesting or unique thing about their partner. After 15-20 minutes, call everyone back together. Then, go around the room and have each student report on what they learned about their partner until the entire class has been introduced. (Don’t forget to introduce yourself!) This exercise is particularly valuable if your students will be working in collaborative teams. As an added bonus, the exercise helps you become familiar with individual students and can be useful if you teach the job unit early in the semester.

Identifying and Discussing Documents Used in Organizations (25 minutes). This topic could be discussed on the first day of class after you distribute course materials or it could be used to start day two.

Ask students to brainstorm as a class about different kinds of business documents. If you prompt them to think about their own part-time or summer jobs, internships, campus organizations, a class can usually fill a chalkboard in 15 minutes. Ask students to classify the documents they have brainstormed according to audience—internal or external. Next, discuss the wide variety of communication types and identify the three basic purposes of business communication. Discuss purposes of several listed messages on the chalkboard to show that most messages have more than one purpose.

Learning to Evaluate Documents (30 to 40 minutes). After students become aware of the different business documents, they need to develop skills in evaluating them. Instead of starting with an introductory lecture that focuses on criteria, you might want to begin with a letter, memo, email, or other business document that contains obvious problems. At the first lull in the discussion, suggest better ways students will learn in your course.

Discussing messages allows you to address the dissonance students often see between your writing standards and the business writing they have seen from the workplace—people they respect who may be in positions to which they aspire. You can diffuse any tension by first acknowledging the realities of the situation before shifting your focus to teaching them how to bridge the gap between what they learn in class and what many existing corporate cultures assume is effective writing. Some points that may arise out of this discussion include:

* Lots of bad communication does exist in organizations.
* Because different kinds or genres of business communication exist, definitions of “good” and “bad” business communication differ from one document to another. It may be helpful to talk communication in terms of more or less effective.
* Different organizations with unique cultures may prefer different styles.
* Audiences should always influence the way messages are constructed.
* Until you are aware of the entire context in which a document is created and received, you cannot truly judge whether a message is successful.

Identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of Sample Messages (30-50 minutes). Outline the evaluation criteria for effective messages from the textbook. Then ask students to summarize the situations in Exercise 1.3 and 1.4, to read each message aloud, and to identify what works or doesn’t work about each message. Reading the messages aloud refreshes people’s memories and produces better discussion, though it also means that the discussion takes longer. You can use this discussion to help students become comfortable with the terminology of business communication. Throughout the discussion, stress terms like you-attitude, positive emphasis, tone, goodwill, etc.

Discussing Ways to Build Goodwill (10-15 minutes). Brainstorm with students how they could create and/or lose goodwill. Also, ask how they can maintain goodwill once they develop it. Once your students start to understand goodwill during the first few days of class, come back to the topic again before each major assignment throughout the rest of the semester. Tell them to always check to see if their communications build goodwill effectively.

Discussing Conventions for Good E-mail Messages (20 to 40 minutes). Most students are already familiar with e-mail and will probably need little or no help in actually sending messages. Their familiarity with e-mail can be a mixed blessing if students use e-mail only to communicate with friends. Such students need to see early in the course that writing e-mail in business is serious. All the principles that apply to paper business documents also apply to e-mail. Writers of e-mail messages need to pay special attention to conciseness and clarity.

If you teach in a computer environment or can take students to a computer lab even once at the beginning of the semester, you can have them do a practical exercise that illustrates the common problems that occur when writing e-mail in the workplace.

Demonstrating Communication Problem Solving (30 to 50 minutes). When faced with a communication problem, students naturally tend to begin drafting a message (merely reorganizing words in the textbook case), rather than analyzing the situation carefully first. Point out that in your course, situations will be analyzed first (often collaboratively). In fact, sometimes analysis may lead students to conclude that a spoken or written message is unnecessary. Illustrate the analysis procedures from the textbook to be used; then choose and analyze a situation, such as the ones described in Exercises 1.3 or 1.4, and help students generate ideas—a list of do’s and don’ts—for the message to address the situation.

# 9) Question of the Day

To encourage students to read assignments, you may want to begin the class period with a quick quiz question. Having a quiz question at the beginning of class also encourages students to be on time and eliminates separate time needed to call roll. To save grading time, you can have students switch papers and grade each other’s; this doubles the class time needed but saves your time later. An appropriate question follows.

**Question:** What five criteria should all business and administrative communication meet?

**Answer:** Good business and administrative writing is (1) clear, (2) complete, (3) correct, (4) saves the receiver’s time, and (5) builds goodwill.

Additional questions can be found in the Test Bank that accompanies *BAC*.

# 10) Additional Online Exercises

The following answers and/or short analyses correspond to the additional exercises that appear on the *BAC* website.

1.A Letters for Discussion—Landscape Plants (LO 1-1)

Difficulty Level: Easy

Letter 1

* Salutation is too formal and assumes that Pat is a man.
* Letter lacks you-attitude. The point the reader cares about—whether a replacement will be sent—comes at the end, not at the beginning as it should.
* The reason for the defective shipment should be omitted. It does not reflect responsibly on the company. The reader doesn’t care about the punishment.
* The replacement sounds grudging. The emphasis on the inconvenience to the seller should be omitted.
* The last paragraph implies that the writer is not sure that the shipment will arrive safely. In addition, it suggests that “complaining” about not getting what one paid for is a breach of etiquette, not part of accepted business practice.
* Since the reader is getting what he or she asked for, the reader should be happy. The recipient of this letter, however, is unlikely to respond positively.

Letter 2

* The salutation is too informal—even if that’s what the writer calls the reader in person.
* The good news is buried. The beginning and end are positions of emphasis. Here, the beginning is negative, and the ending is inaccurate.
* The reason given for the wilted plants does not inspire confidence in the company. It should be omitted.
* The style is too informal; the humor doesn’t work.
* The letter doesn’t specify when the replacement plants will arrive.
* The letter indicates $375 when the correct amount is $572.
* The letter lacks you-attitude. The emphasis is on what the writer is doing for the reader, not on what the reader gets.

Letter 3

* The customer’s last name is “Sykes,” not “Smith.” The courtesy title assumes that Pat Sykes is a man. The writer should omit a courtesy title if unsure of the customer’s gender.
* The letter accuses the customer of being responsible for the condition of the plants.
* The tone of the letter is condescending. Even if the writer wants more evidence or plans to deny the claim, doubting the reader’s word never builds goodwill.

Letter 4

* Again, the courtesy title assumes a gender for Pat Sykes, though none is indicated in the customer’s message. Pat Sykes may be a man.
* The style is legalistic. The letter is filled with unnecessary jargon: “undersigned,” “please be advised,” “as per.”
* The first two sentences are unnecessary. If the writer does want to repeat information that the reader already knows, it would be more graceful to put the old information in a subordinate clause.
* The statement of the policy is insulting. The information could be presented tactfully and positively: “To get a refund, follow the directions on the back of the Acknowledgment of Order form.”
* The last paragraph is unclear. How much detail is enough? What “documents” are “necessary”?
* The whole letter sounds negative. Then, in the last paragraph, the writer suggests that a replacement may be possible. The writer should recast the letter and start with a statement of what the reader must do to get a replacement.

Letter 5

* The salutation is acceptable.
* The good news is in paragraph 1, where it belongs. One-sentence paragraphs are acceptable—and emphatic. The paragraph focuses on what the reader wants to know.
* The reason for the wilted plants emphasizes quality, so it is effective.
* The last paragraph has good you-attitude. It refers specifically to the types of plants the customer ordered. The paragraph ends with a forward-looking sentence that reminds the reader that the products ordered will be enjoyed year after year.

1.B Discussing Wiio’s Laws (LO 1-2)

Difficulty Level: Medium

Discussions will vary by student small groups and their individual experiences.