

ESTON

TRAINING

Training Today for Success Tomorrow



Writing Effective Reports Course (EDL7T)

An ESTON Training Distance Learning Course
(with tutorial support)

“A well-crafted report is an efficient means of management communication, which plays an important part in the professional operation of many companies. However, the skills required to produce reports, that are effective management tools, have seldom been fully understood, and as a result the standard of company reports has regularly failed to match up to the reliance placed upon them.”



Writing Effective Reports, Course EDL7T

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About this Course

The [Writing Effective Reports](#) distance learning training course comprises [Study Notes](#) and tutor-assessed [Exercises](#) that build into the most comprehensive study programme of its kind available. Subjects covered include relevant topics and skills such as decision making, writing in English, writing précis, information research and management and analysing comprehension, which are of great practical value to all in industry and commerce.

Aims

This course aims to train you in the disciplines required to become a professional writer of effective reports. As you progress through this training course, you will learn more about the following fundamental skills and topics that must be fully understood by those who wish to become successful report writers:

- [The English language](#)

There is, in fact, no substitute for having a good eye and ear for English. When using the English language as the tool of communication, good observation skills can very quickly stimulate reader interest, which can be self-generating, as interest makes for keener scrutiny.

- [Considering your readers](#)

Having established a picture of the readers of your report in your mind, as a communicator you should consider their likely use of your material, as it will have a major influence on the content and the way you structure and present the information.

- [Decision making](#)

Report writing, in common with all communication, relies on establishing and presenting facts. This involves making decisions. Decisions are made on the facts understood by the decision maker and nothing else. The ability of the report writer to ferret out facts is, therefore, fundamental.

- [Writing in English](#)

This report writing course does not attempt to teach English as a subject, but only to ensure that your ability to write English will be to a practical and acceptable standard in your workplace. Writing is not just about style and grammatical correctness. It includes all the techniques that make the written word easily and quickly understood and remembered. Try to write as you would speak. If you were describing an aspect of your hobby, you would more than likely describe it simply and fluently.

- [Making notes and taking notes](#)

Note making and note taking are core skills in the report writer's arsenal. In this course you will learn these skills, and afterwards you will be asked to demonstrate them in the course exercises. Well-developed notes form the working framework for all organised writing, speaking and decision making.

The techniques of both note making and note taking are generally similar. In many cases, notes taken during a discussion may have to be re-worked through the note making process, as a framework for a document, such as a report, or simply to give an intelligible understanding of what was said.

- **Using English at work**

Certain aspects of the English language are specific to writing in the workplace, so some explanation is appropriate. Although actual words, phrases and nomenclature used within different industries may be peculiar to those industries, the principles apply generally. As communication is not a precise art, the objective of this course is to put emphasis on the principles that suit our particular circumstances.

- **Writing précis**

Summarising, or writing a précis, is a task that confronts all writers at some time. When collecting information, we often find someone has expressed perfectly what we want to say, but there are too many words for our purposes. There are occasions when we have to summarise a long correspondence running through a file, perhaps as a brief, or to provide a summary or abstract to inform others of the content of an article. And, of course, one of the possible elements of a report is its summary, which should give the gist of the whole report compactly and succinctly.

- **Analysing comprehension**

We have all experienced difficulty in understanding things from time to time. When we have broken through to understanding, the subject has rarely been as difficult as it appeared during the learning stage. There are occasions when a document has been read, perhaps only a paragraph, and it has not been at all clear what was meant. It would take several readings before its content could be summarised and explained. The problem is compounded in report writing, as the reader has to follow the English meaning and understand the technical or commercial subject simultaneously.

- **Holding successful meetings**

Meetings are a frequent occurrence in many organisations and both their effectiveness, and the means of improving them, is considered in this course. Few company meetings would be considered well run or efficient in retrospect if a tape recording of the meeting was expertly analysed.

The purpose of meetings is usually to inform others, to collect information or to obtain balanced views, usually as part of a decision-making or planning process. Although people may go to a meeting ostensibly to discuss a subject, discussion in itself is not the main objective; there should be the minimum discussion required to achieve a declared objective. The key to successful meetings is objectiveness.



- **Researching information**

All of the source information you will need to include in your report is waiting to be found. It may be included in written material, for example: e-mails, letters, on the Internet, in other reports, specifications, articles and books. The source information that you require may also be included in engineering drawings, schematics or parts lists, or it may be stored in people's heads representing experience or new ideas. In the majority of cases, researching involves extracting information from all of these sources.

- **Searching the Internet**

The Internet comprises millions of websites containing billions of pages of information on every subject imaginable. These days, the Internet is an invaluable business tool, as well as being an increasingly widely-used resource for personal computer users at home.

- **Selecting information**

One of the most important judgements anyone writing company reports must consider is which facts and information are relevant to the particular purpose. Your mind, and any reference material you have gathered, will no doubt contain far more facts than will be necessary or desirable, so you will have to be selective and retain only the information that is essential.

- **Using a word-processing program**

Microsoft Word is a comprehensive and powerful word-processing program, which includes hundreds of features and options that are accessed via several separate drop-down menus on the menu bar. In addition, Word includes many toolbars that can be displayed around the Word screen, as and when required.

Many of the features and options available in Word, such as selecting different fonts, making text bold or underlined, indenting paragraphs and saving and printing documents, are basic and common to most word-processing programs. However, it is not intended to describe all of the basic word-processing features and options in this course.

- **Preparing reports**

Company reports form an excellent model for teaching the principles of all written communication and document production. To produce any document, the writer must establish the objective precisely, collect the information, either from other sources, or from his or her own work, validate the information, consider how best to present the subject matter for a particular readership, plan a structure or decide how to fit in with a specified structure, arrange for illustrations and graphics, write and edit the report, and then get it reproduced in the quantity required; with all of these tasks using the minimum of resources. The basic principles are similar, whether writing a letter or e-mail, an article, a proposal or user instructions for a piece of equipment, or answering progress assessment questions. Only the conventions of

presentation are specific to report writing; the logical thinking, planning and organisation of information apply generally.

Syllabus

The [EDL7T](#) course syllabus is based on many years relevant industrial and commercial experience, and is intended as a comprehensive career-enhancement programme. The relevant information is presented in a number of [Study Notes](#) and progress is assessed via stimulating and effective tutor-assessed [Exercises](#). Relevant to your background and experience, they provide training that is both practical and realistic. The course is updated regularly to reflect advances in technology and new methodologies, and does not rely on outdated textbooks.

The [Writing Effective Reports](#) distance learning training course comprises the Study Notes and Exercises shown in the following list:

List of study notes and exercises

Study Notes		Exercises
No.	Title	File Reference
1.	Course Introduction	SN1
2.	Note Making and Note Taking	SN2
3.	Making Notes	E1
4.	The English Language	SN3
5.	Writing in English	SN4
6.	Using English at Work	SN5
7.	Making More Notes	E2
8.	Preparing Reports	SN6
9.	Decision Making	SN7
10.	Writing Précis	SN8
11.	Report Writing, including Tutorial Advice	E3
12.	Considering your Readership	SN9
13.	Information Research and Management	SN10
14.	Preparing a Planning Schedule	E4
15.	Successful Meetings	SN11
16.	Analysing Comprehension	SN12
17.	Selecting Relevant Information	SN13
18.	Managing Director's Report, including Tutorial Advice	E5
19.	Searching the Internet for Information	SN14
20.	Microsoft Word – Keyboard Shortcuts	SN15
21.	Microsoft Word – Some Advanced Features	SN16
22.	Final Report	E6



Course Structure

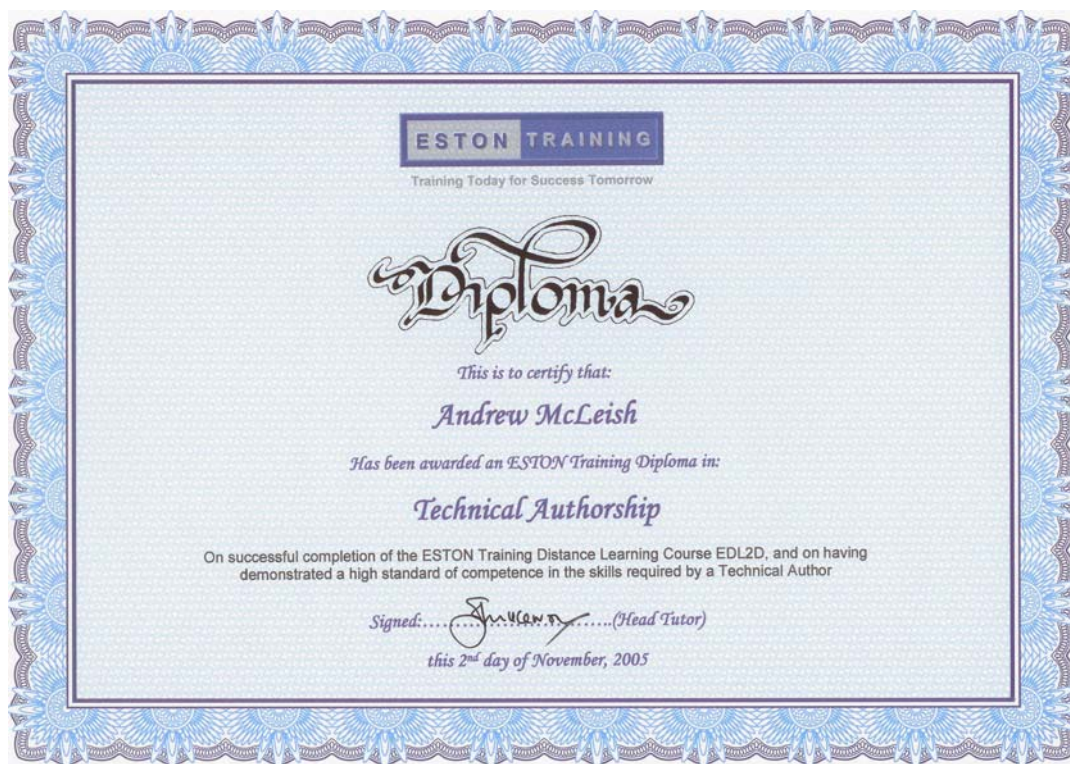
Within a few working days of receiving your [Enrolment Form](#) and payment, we will send you the complete course, via [MailBigFile](#).

The course contains study notes for you to read, and exercises for you to complete. There are around 200 pages of [Study Notes](#) and [Tutorial Advice](#) on more than 20 subjects, forming a permanent reference for you to use during and after the course.

There are six [Exercises](#) for you to complete and send to your personal tutor. Your tutor reviews your submissions and returns a [Tutorial Response](#) with detailed advice and/or a [Specimen Answer](#). You can take as much time as you need to complete the course; although, we do apply a 12-month time limit on the tutorial support for contractual reasons. However, in exceptional circumstances you can apply for an extension to this period without incurring an extra charge.

ESTON Training Diploma

If you complete the Writing Effective Reports training course you will receive an [ESTON Training Diploma](#), similar to the following diploma, provided that your tutor-assessed course work attains the required standard.



Distance Learning

Writing Effective Reports is a distance learning training course. But what exactly is distance learning and what are the benefits of this training method?

Training without classrooms

Distance learning is **the** training method for the 21st century. Training on a major subject usually calls for a lengthy, and often inconvenient, period of work release. Courses are expensive and accommodation costs are high. This means that traditional classroom courses tend to be too short to cover the subjects thoroughly. Also, the backlog that greets your return to work often means that you don't get the chance to introduce new ideas while they are still fresh in your mind. Many intended innovations, or new methodologies, never see the light of day.

Freedom to learn

Distance learning overcomes all of these barriers. It is now one of the foremost teaching techniques used by individuals, companies and colleges alike. Participants do not need to be released from work, the training is cheaper than classroom fees, and there are no additional accommodation costs. The course contains all the training material required and gives you the freedom to learn at your own pace. You can implement new ideas as the course progresses. Instead of being one in a class of many, the only participants in distance learning are you and your tutor.

ESTON Training tutors

The best way to judge your performance and identify weaknesses is to have your work assessed critically against objectives and acknowledged standards by expert and experienced, time-served tutors.

Personal attention

ESTON Training's tutors are practised and professional writers, with extensive publications management experience. Although you will be allocated your own tutor, he or she may well call in another opinion, when a particular skill is required.

Thoroughness of the personal tutorial is recognised by individuals and companies alike as a unique feature of ESTON Training courses.

Help and advice

Although your exercises are designed for submission and return by e-mail, you are always welcome to telephone your tutor for additional help and advice, or if you need a particular point clarified.

Suitability

If you are seriously thinking about enrolling on the Writing Effective Reports training course, it is natural to question whether you have the right qualities and experience to make a success of it. The following notes may help you.



Personal qualities

When preparing reports you will work with other people at all levels to acquire information; therefore, you must be a good communicator. You must also be effective and efficient, inquisitive, persistent and self-assured, when identifying and acquiring the information your readership needs.

Basic English

You need to be able to write sound, grammatically correct English. If you have had little or no writing experience since your school days, you can expect to be a bit rusty. Provided that you remember the basics, this course will provide the required polish. However, should it be required, ESTON Training also provides an excellent Business English training course titled “[English at Work](#)” (Ref: [EDL6](#)) for those students who need to re-acquire the basics.

Background and experience

Good report writers come from all walks of life, with wide-ranging technical and commercial experience. The main thing you really need is the desire to succeed.

Report Writers in Industry and Commerce

In an industrial or commercial company, a report writer’s work breaks down neatly into two parts: the technical or commercial side and the writing.

Technical or commercial requirements

On the technical or commercial side, you must establish your customers’ technical or commercial requirements, technical ability and intellectual level. You research information by study, discussion, and correspondence (e-mail or traditional post). You must also verify the information’s accuracy and suitability for your customer.

Writing requirements

As a report writer, you may be expected to establish contractual commitments, prepare synopses, and estimate times and costs. You may also need to determine a programme of cost and production control, design and plan the report, instruct illustrators, graphic designers and printers, and write the information so that the reader can understand it and assimilate it easily.

Information management

Despite the name “[Report Writer](#)”, the writing element of report writing comprises only one facet of the work. As in most jobs, the bulk of your time is spent managing information, investigating, discussing, liaising with other staff and using your judgement to plan and make decisions.



Funding your Course

You can pay for the course yourself, or funding may also be available. Assisted funding policies are variable, changing from region to region and from time to time. However, you may be eligible for sponsorship, so it is worth enquiring at your local Jobcentre Plus. Also, your local Chamber of Commerce may know of sponsorships. We are pleased to explain our training schemes to sponsors, if they want to discuss your application for funding.

- **Employers.** Often employers see training as a valuable initiative that benefits the company. It is worth approaching your employers to establish whether they will pay part, or all, of the cost of your course. They may even allow you a few hours off each week in which to study.
- **Armed Services.** There are training entitlements to help with funding courses. Your Education Officer will give you advice and make the necessary arrangements on your behalf if you are eligible for a partial refund.

Professional association

As a student with ESTON Training you qualify for student membership of the [Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators \(ISTC\)](#) at a reduced fee for the first year. This professional association aims to establish and maintain professional codes of practice for people engaged in all branches of scientific and technical communication, and provides a forum for the exchange of views. It aims to further members' expectations and interests.

Course Enrolment

You can enrol whenever you want to; there is no fixed start time. Just complete an [Enrolment Form](#) (supplied on request) and return it to us with your payment, or company purchase order number. Alternatively, you can enrol on line at the ESTON Training website. For further information, visit the following web page:

<http://www.estontrg.com>

Ten good reasons for choosing an ESTON Training course

1. ESTON Training is the United Kingdom's leading business writing training company, as well as being a world leader in the field.
2. We have been successfully training business writers since 1982.
3. We are uniquely placed to know exactly what industry and commerce looks for in writers.
4. We are innovators (our Software Authorship Course was the first available on the world market) and we are constantly improving and updating our courses.
5. We employ experienced, professional staff who specialise in a wide variety of subjects and technical disciplines.

6. We gear our training to the market's requirements, updating our courses regularly to reflect developments in technology and legislation.
7. We offer student membership of the ISTC at a reduced fee, giving students access to the benefits of this professional association.
8. You don't have to finish the course within a set time; you really can set your own pace (within the 12-month tutorial support limit).
9. Our courses are purchased by industry and commerce, world-wide.
10. Over 3 800 students have benefited from our business writing and associated courses; many are now in senior positions within their companies. This wealth of practical experience is reflected at every stage of the course, and should be borne in mind when comparing this course with any other distance learning training courses available.

Seal of approval

Since 1982, many companies, world-wide, have chosen ESTON Training courses, identifying them as the most cost-effective, comprehensive training courses of their kind available. The companies who have purchased our courses include those in the following list:

Abbey National ■ Asquith Machine Tools ■ BBC Radio ■ BMW ■ Rolls-Royce Aero Engines ■ British Aerospace ■ British Airways ■ British Telecom ■ CompAir Broomwade ■ DHL Systems ■ Davy Morris ■ Docklands Light Railway ■ Dresser Rand ■ Earth Observation Sciences ■ Ericsson Telecom AB, Sweden ■ European Gas Turbines ■ Flight Refuelling ■ Fokker Aircraft BV, Holland ■ ALSTOM Transport ■ GEC Avionics ■ GKN Defence ■ GPT ■ Leyland Bus ■ LogTek, South Africa ■ London Underground Ltd ■ Lucas Aerospace ■ Marconi Radar ■ Marconi Command and Control ■ Martin-Baker Aircraft Company ■ Mass Transit Railways, Hong Kong ■ Mercury Communications ■ UK Ministry of Defence ■ Motorola ■ NEI International Combustion ■ National Power ■ NatWest Bank ■ Nuclear Electric ■ OKI Europe ■ Ohmeda ■ Pafec ■ Perkins Engines ■ Perkin-Elmer ■ Pilatus, Switzerland ■ Rank Xerox ■ Research Machines ■ Rolls Royce & Associates ■ Royal Australian Air Force ■ Ruston Diesels ■ Qantas ■ Sankey Vending ■ Sealmaster ■ Standard Telephones and Cables ■ Systems Reliability ■ SME Aviation (Malaysia) ■ Trioxide ■ Transmitton



Students' comments

Finally, don't just take our word for how good our courses are; here are some of our students' comments:

"Excellent value for money." [Student J W, \(T54IP\)](#)

"There has been a logical progression through different aspects and I feel that the course has been invaluable and will always remain a source of reference for me."
[Student B C G, \(T736P\)](#)

"I thought they (the course exercises) were well designed, and each one was mentally stimulating." [Student D T, \(T620P\)](#)

"Fast, efficient (administration) and generally of a high standard. Tutorial attention, invaluable." [Student M A, \(T1033\)](#)

"Administration very good, all materials arrived in good time despite my location in Saudi Arabia." [Student A G R, \(E1236\)](#)

All students are invited to comment about the course they have just completed; this is just a small but genuinely representative sample.

Contact Details

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