Our aim…

• Inspire you
• Tell you about opportunities
• Tell you how to open up opportunities
• Talk about skills
• Take a bird’s-eye look at the pinnacle
Business writing is changing

- Poorly written
- Bureaucratic
- Vague, imprecise, ambiguous

- Poorly structured
- Self-important
- Not fit for purpose
Business writing is changing

• Clear, coherent
• Easily accessible
• Transparent
• Accountable
• Super-efficient

• Fit for purpose
The vehicle of change
Ride the wave
Who we are: Write Group
First steps…

A business writing franchise
A moment of awakening

‘If only I’d seen the participants’ own writing first.’

‘If only I’d seen examples of some of the actual documents they work on.’
Finding our niche

Customised business writing training
Who we are: WriteCoach
Building our knowledge

• Focused, in-depth knowledge
• Breadth and depth of experience
• Huge credibility
• Devoted clients
Bringing theory to life

Real-world business results
Expanding our experience

Editing and proofreading services
Our edge

Professional editors with two huge pluses
Who we are: WriteEdit
Something more

We needed a standard…
An accredited quality mark
Who we are: WriteMark
Why?

Editing and proofreading — part of the natural cycle of all publishing
How?

Improve editing and proofreading skills
How can we inspire?

Develop better pathways to success
How?

Make editing for the public and corporate sectors a **key component** of all editor training
How?

Develop an expertise that makes editors and proofreaders indispensable
Write Group’s plain English platform

- WriteWeb
- WriteEdit
- WriteCoach
- WriteMark
Plain English carries clout

• Clients want the benefits
• Clients see the benefits in practice
• Clients value your expertise
What is plain English?

• Clear
• Concise
• Precise
• Appropriate to the audience
Whose needs?

Plain English focuses on the reader’s needs
Plain English — main elements

- Structure
- Content
- Language
- Grammar, punctuation, spelling
- Style consistency
- Layout, overall presentation
Plain English — main elements

Additional elements for web content:

• Strategic purpose
• Credibility
• Usability
• Links
Easy to read…
Plain English — key principles

• Clear purpose
• Key messages upfront
• Lots of clear, informative headings
• Active voice
• Short sentences
• No jargon
• Clear layout with plenty of space
The goal of plain English

The reader understands what the writer is saying, on the **first reading**
Plain language is an international movement
The wave of change

Plain English
More than just a style

Plain English — a principle of democracy
More than just a style

Plain English is essential for social justice
More than just a style

Plain English reduces the waste of taxpayer money
More than just a style

The contribution you make goes much further than the document itself
More than just a style

A lot of seemingly magical, win-win things happen
More than just a style

Plain English benefits everyone
Are you a generalist?

Generalists like a little bit of everything
Are you a specialist?

Specialists like to specialise…
Where’s my paintbrush?
Recognised opportunities

All types of paper-based publications in the public arena
Recognised opportunities

Documents and publications in a specific discipline or field
Recognised opportunities

Style guides
Recognised opportunities

Web content
Search engine rankings matter
Unrecognised opportunities

Critiquing documents
Unrecognised opportunities

Designing forms
Unrecognised opportunities

Testing document usability
Unrecognised opportunities

Developing templates
Have you considered…?

Managing

• Communications manager
• Publishing manager
Have you considered…?

Consulting
Create opportunities

• Position yourself
• Make yourself valuable
• Team up with organisations
• Offer yourself for overflow work
Create opportunities

• Team up with other freelancers
• Increase your knowledge and skills
• Network and build sound working relationships
• Get involved with chambers of commerce
Take opportunities

Plain English

A place where you’ll be inspired … the place where you can be inspiring
Entry-level skills — Write Group

• Editing and proofreading experience
• Experience of business documents
• Plain English
• Knowledge of local and international style conventions
• Ability to work within tight timeframes
• Pass of 90% in our editing test
Skills

Plain English

Editing and proofreading
Beautiful portfolios
But…

- Incorrect table of contents
- Incorrect page numbering
- Varied page format
- Duplicated information in headers and footers
- Inconsistent bullet points (size and indent)
- Muddled heading styles
But…

- Inconsistent capitalisation
- No number style
- Ampersands in headings
- No knowledge of en and em dashes
- Muddled quote marks (single / double)
- Items that should be kept together on one line running over two…
Skills

Style (local and international)
Skills

Word (format)
Get a grip on Word
Skills

Ability to think
Skills

Research and learning skills
Skills

Communication skills
Skills

Interpersonal and leadership skills
Skills

Project management skills
## Range of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>submissions</th>
<th>manuals</th>
<th>movie</th>
<th>flyers</th>
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Range of work

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- letters
- press
- contracts
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- templates
- releases
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Example 1

A selection of transport modes

Rewrite

A choice of transport
Example 2

These staff help to facilitate the process assisting the group…

Rewrite
These staff help the group to…
Example 3

Consultation and the involvement of all teachers in the development of student achievement targets is recommended.

Rewrite

We recommend you involve all teachers when developing student achievement targets.
Example 4 [Before]

Legal representation and other expert advice or representation is permitted in adjudication and parties may use this to help them prepare for and argue their case. Any such assistance used by the homeowner would be at their own expense.
Example 4 [After]

You may get advice from your lawyer, who may help you argue your case at the adjudication meeting. If you do use a lawyer, you will need to pay the lawyer’s fees yourself.
Example 5 [Before]

What happens when you turn 30? You can expect a letter from us around the time of your birthday. As you know, ABC Money is designed especially for people under 30, 19–29 year olds in fact, so we’ll get in touch to outline the advantages of our other everyday accounts, including XYZ Money, and help you change accounts.  

[58 words]
Example 5 [After]

What happens when you turn 30?

You can expect a letter from us around the time of your 30th birthday. We’ll tell you about our other great banking packages and help you choose an account that suits your needs. [39 words]
Writing for a global audience

Jim is a Vietnam vet.

Translation
Jim is a veterinarian from Vietnam.
Writing for a global audience

She died in a freak rugby accident.

Translation

She died in a rugby match for people with deformities.
It’s got to fit

Michael J Summerville, Morguefile.com
Foster success

Do what you love
Love what you do
How far? How high?

Alex Orlando, Morguefile.com
Expand your horizons

Be inspired!
WriteMark plain English conference

Where? Wellington, New Zealand
When? 16 November 2007
Website [www.writemark.co.nz](http://www.writemark.co.nz)