

How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write

By Sandra E. Lamb

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Write personal and professional communications with clarity, confidence, and style.

How to Write It is the essential resource for eloquent personal and professional self-expression. Award-winning journalist Sandra E. Lamb transforms even reluctant scribblers into articulate wordsmiths by providing compelling examples of nearly every type and form of written communication. Completely updated and expanded, the new third edition offers hundreds of handy word, phrase, and sentence lists, precisely crafted sample paragraphs, and professionally designed document layouts. *How to Write It* is a must-own for students, teachers, authors, journalists, bloggers, managers, and anyone who doesn't have time to wade through a massive style guide but needs a friendly desk reference.

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Editorial Review

Review
“This is an extraordinary book. A reference so comprehensive, yet so simple. . . . Every person who isn’t living in a cave should have this by their elbow on a daily basis.”
—Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

“To express the principles of etiquette—respect, consideration, and honesty—is to apply sincerity and tact as naturally and spontaneously as possible. *How to Write It* shows exactly how to do just that.”
—Peggy Post, author of *Emily Post’s Etiquette*

About the Author
Sandra E. Lamb was a technical writer, editor, and ghost writer before launching her career as a writing teacher. She has guided many diverse groups to greater eloquence, from the American National Cattlewomen’s Association to the American Society of Journalists and Authors. Lamb is the author of *Personal Notes* and *Write the Right Words*. For more information, visit www.sandralamb.com.

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3: ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement may be good news or bad news, but the form itself is consistent: Get the reader’s attention, then give him or her the single message you want to communicate. Be direct, focused, brief, and timely.

ETIQUETTE

Give very careful consideration to the reader when the announcement contains emotional or very personal content. Sometimes your announcement may be of a delicate nature, and in that case require the civility of a human moment—a face-to-face delivery. Use great discretion when this is the case.

DECIDE TO WRITE

Announcements are suitable for many of the events and changes in our lives:

- Change of address
- Anniversary: wedding or business
- Birth or adoption
- Personal life event: graduation, wedding, marital separation, divorce, retirement, or death
- Employee change: resignation, firing, promotion, transfer, special achievement, new employees, job opening
- Opening a business, branch office, or store

- Business changes: new business name, price changes, product recall, new programs, products, policies, hours, practices, contracts, organization buyout, merger, bankruptcy, expansion, acquisition, company layoff, downsizing, closing, or record sales

- Seminars, workshops, or conferences

- Open house for home, business, or school

- Bad news of some sort

THINK ABOUT CONTENT

- Ask yourself *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how* to help focus the information you want to communicate and to ensure you make it complete.

- State the information in order of importance.

- Be direct, brief, and concise.

- Check the prescribed format of different kinds of announcements.

- Emphasize the goodwill aspects of your news. If your company is changing working hours, for example, emphasize the greater convenience for employees and customers.

- Use the “need-to-know” guideline in making your announcement. Who needs to know your news?

- When it’s appropriate, emphasize the reasons for your news to promote understanding and goodwill.

ELIMINATE WRONG MESSAGES

- An announcement should supply complete, basic information. Leave out lengthy explanations or extraneous facts. Even when the announcement is a hybrid—combined with a sales message, for example—the format and style should strengthen the single message.

- Don’t let employees hear or read your organizational information from an outside source first.

- Don’t put off a bad news announcement. It is usually best that your bad news be received directly from you rather than from another source. If nothing else, announce the basic news and state that full information will follow.

CONSIDER ANNOUNCEMENT TYPES

- A personal name change is announced by stating that, as of (date) the person formerly known as (name) will be known as (name). No explanation is needed, but written notes to friends and colleagues are desirable.

- Graduation announcements are usually formal and printed but certainly may be handwritten. This announcement has evolved because space at graduation ceremonies is now restricted to only a few invitations per graduate. Send only to close family members and friends. This announcement may be sent

with an invitation to a graduation party. “No gifts, please” may be written in the lower left-hand corner.

• Engagement announcements can be handwritten or printed and should be sent to relatives and friends. Because of the rich tradition of this announcement in our culture, a special section has been devoted to it (see page 26; also see Wedding & Engagement Correspondence, page 82).

• Wedding announcements are often printed in a prescribed format. They may also be personal letters or notes (see Wedding & Engagement Correspondence, page 82).

• Birth or adoption announcements are usually made by both parents to friends and relatives. The announcements may be selected either before the birth, and then the final information phoned in after the birth, or commercial cards with blanks may be purchased and then filled in and sent out. Include the infant’s sex; birth date (and time, if you wish) or age (if adopted); parents’ full names; siblings’ names (if you like); and an expression of happiness. Parents may also send an announcement to newspapers and other publications that print this information.

Example:

Roger and Brenda Dell of 344 South Parker Road, Littleton, are delighted to announce the birth of a son, Jared, on August 12, 2007, at Littleton Hospital. They have one daughter, Meredith, four. Mrs. Dell is the former Miss Brenda Sales.

When the couple has been divorced before the birth, the announcement is made by the mother, in the name she now uses. Widowed women may use “Sally and the late Paul Davidson.” A single mother should use her chosen title and name. In all cases, personal announcements are in the best taste. Personal birth and adoption announcements should also be sent to close colleagues and work associates.

• Retirement announcements are especially important when the retiree is a doctor, dentist, or other professional. These announcements are usually combined with the announcement of the person taking over the practice or any other changing business information. Printed announcements with a good-news emphasis are important here.

• A death in the family is difficult at best. The immediate family must notify other relatives and friends by telephone and ask that they notify others. If funeral arrangements have been made, this information can be given, eliminating the need for another round of calls. The next step is notifying the attorney of the deceased. Written announcements generally take a number of forms:

> *An announcement may be arranged by the funeral home, or a paid newspaper notice may be placed.*

> *An obituary may be written by newspaper staff. Usually the information is verified by a close family member. Information generally included is the complete name of the deceased (including the original family name), date of death, date of birth or age at the time of death, address at the time of death, names of immediate family members and place of residence, hours and location where friends may call on the family, place and time of the funeral, whether the funeral is private, and frequently a request that any contributions be given to a charity (often designated) instead of flowers being sent to the funeral home.*

> *A news article describing the achievements and contributions of the deceased may be written by newspaper staff and/or a family representative.*

> *Printed announcements may be sent to colleagues and/or out-of-town acquaintances.*

> *Handwritten notes may be sent to out-of-town relatives, friends, and acquaintances.*

• Legal announcements or announcements with legal implications should be made in conjunction with the proper attorney. Plans to remarry where there are legal agreements in place, adoption of children, and change in payment of debts incurred all come under this category.

• Annulments are very private matters and should be handled with the utmost confidentiality. Generally, only immediate family and close friends are told, and then only on a need-to-know basis. They may be told informally and verbally, or in a personal note.

• Divorce is also the private business of the two people involved and a printed announcement is in very poor taste. Informal notes may be sent as necessary to those who have a need to know. A statement and no explanation is best.

• Good business news is best announced by using a press release. Sending the release to newspapers and other media is a good way to get the word out. Be sure to include a contact person and complete contact information: telephone and fax numbers and an email address (see “Press Release,” page 385).

• Business announcements (opening a branch, moving to a new location, introducing a new product, and the like) offer the opportunity to stage an open house. Printed announcements or invitations, a newspaper announcement, and perhaps announcements by other media are the best ways to get the word out.

• Bad business news—if the news is of major public concern—may best be handled by calling a press conference to make a statement. Letting people hear directly from you first gives the organization points for being forthright, open, and honest. This approach also preempts cover-up rumors and/or an unfavorable spin, which can follow when a story originates from the media.

• Board of directors’ meeting announcements should follow corporate bylaws, state requirements, and federal laws. Include the date, time, place, reason for the meeting, and who is invited. A waiver of notice or proxy card is enclosed with a postage-paid, addressed return envelope.

• A change of address, status, or mode of doing business should be sent, with only the pertinent information, to the businesses or people who need to know. If this change has legal ramifications, check the particular requirements for making such an announcement or notification.

• A business change should put the information in its best light. State the change; why it’s being made; the benefits for employees, customers, clients, and others affected by the change; and any expressions of appreciation to those involved.

SELECT A FORMAT

• Formal personal announcements for an engagement (see page 26; also see Wedding & Engagement Correspondence, page 82), open house, new business, and the like are often printed and mailed directly to the recipients.

• Birth or adoption announcements may be hand-designed, printed, or the blanks of commercially available cards filled in and sent to friends and relatives.

- Inter-office announcements are usually best done in memo format, and may be emailed.

- Changes of address, sales, and new business openings are often emailed, or printed on postcards and mailed.

- Newspaper announcements are best completed after contacting the correct editor and learning exactly how he or she wants the announcement submitted. Most will be by email.

SELECT STRONG WORDS

announce
appointed
call
celebrate
change
delighted

happy
honor
immediate
inform
introduce
notice
open
pleased
promoted
report
start
welcome

CONSTRUCT EFFECTIVE PHRASES

change in hours
effective immediately
give notice that
located at a new address
open for business
please join us
pleased to announce
to inform you
will open soon

WRITE STRONG SENTENCES

Start with a key verb. Then construct information in concise order of importance:

We welcome Brian Lee Turner, born August 20, 2011, at 3:36 p.m., weighing seven pounds and six ounces, measuring twenty-two inches, to the family of James and Janice Turner.

Greg and Alice Albright are proud to announce the adoption of a baby boy, Alexander Lee, age seven months, on September 15, 2011.

Our new sales policy will allow you to extend the billing period fifteen additional days for new orders.

We are pleased to announce that Mr. George F. Frommer has accepted the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors at Chances effective June 1, 2011.

We must increase the price of the Model A-455 Diluter from $566 to $625 effective July 1, 2011.

Robert R. O'Malley of Pittsburgh, formerly of Denver, died of leukemia September 12, 2011.

John H. Hadley, formerly of Danbury, a physician and program director at St. Mary's Hospital, died August 30, 2011, in St. Louis.

The "Race for the Cure" breast cancer benefit 5K run will take place at Washington Park's Pavilion on September 29, at 8:00 a.m.

BUILD EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS

Focus on an action verb and the essential facts to build strong and effective paragraphs. For example:

We rejoice at the birth of our beautiful new daughter, Kathleen Kate McNeilly, born at 2:34 a.m., Thursday, May 10, 2006, measuring twenty-one inches and weighing eight pounds, four ounces. Her parents, Ben and Mary McNeilly, and sister, Jennifer, two, welcome her into their hearts and home.

Baby Boom will open its doors in the Tamarac Square Center (next to Lloyd's Jewelry, main floor) Friday, July 15. Bring in this card for your free T-shirt. Store hours will be 10:00 a.m. till 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Open noon till 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. Sign up to win our $500 shopping spree!

Cooper's sales grew 33 percent this quarter over last quarter. The growth, said CEO Bradley Sandler, was due to the introduction of the new Model Z-560, which sold over 3,000 units.

Quick Lube offers you a full oil change—including filters—for just $24.95 at our new full-service garage on Evans and Orchard. We'll do it in just 20 minutes, while you wait. Bring in this card to receive your free sun visor.

Davis and Company Manufacturing announces the recall of their Model A-7655 Air Conditioner due to defective gaskets found in some units. Leaks from these units may cause nausea due to gases that are not properly sealed in the compressor. Please return all Model A-7655 Air Conditioner units to the place of purchase for a replacement.

Barker, Taylor, and McKenzie are pleased to announce that Harold P. Garon has joined the law firm as a partner. Mr. Garon, who has spent the past five years at Yale and Gates, will head the firm's corporate practice.

Jake Walker Pierce, formerly of Denver, a physician and program director at St. Mary's Hospital, died August 23 in St. Louis. He was 35.

The opening of the Burn Unit at St. Joseph's Hospital will take place Thursday, April 10, at 2:00 p.m. The dedication ceremony will include a speech by the governor and music by the Utah Children's Choir.

Sandra F. Frank, formerly of Schenley Advertising, has joined Marks, Inc. as creative vice president. She will handle all the conceptional aspects of the new Brewer campaign.

Dr. Richard Lewin announces his retirement, effective April 30. His practice will be taken over by his associate, Dr. Stanley Dever.

EDIT, EDIT, EDIT

Pay attention to precise details to insure that your reader gets the message you want to send.

ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Over the past several decades, many factors have influenced the traditional practices of announcing an engagement to be married: the changed role of women in our society; the high rate of divorce and remarriage; same-sex relationships; and the dramatic changes in the ages, career status, mobility, and financial resources of those who are becoming engaged. Although we still cling to some of the traditional, time-honored elements of announcing a couple's engagement, many of the old items of protocol are falling away in favor of announcements that more accurately reflect our changed roles. However, the most important element in the engagement announcement should remain the sharing of the joyous news.

To make the announcement public, it may be printed in newspapers and other publications. Contact the social editor and ask for the desired format. A black-and-white glossy photograph of the engaged couple or just the future bride may appear with the announcement.

Here are some guidelines that are still generally accepted. If a young woman has not been married, her parents usually make the announcement:

Jack and Julie Bremmer of Cottonwood Manor, Texas, announce the engagement of their daughter, Katherine Anne Bremmer, to Alex James Smerthington, son of John Z. and Lucy Smerthington of Minneapolis, Minnesota. A June wedding is planned.

Ms. Bremmer graduated from Texas A and M and is a communications consultant for Beams and Motes Advertising Agency. Mr. Smerthington graduated from Texas A and M. He is associated with Mickey Advertising Agency in New York City.

If one of the future bride's parents is deceased, the announcement is made by the other:

Mrs. Barbara Gates announces the engagement of her daughter, Ms. Sandra E. Gates, to Dr. David R. Cole. . . . Ms. Gates is also the daughter of the late Robert Gates.

If a parent of the future groom is deceased:

. . . son of Mrs. Abigail R. Wright and the late Mr. George B. Wright.

When the engaged woman is divorced or widowed, her parents may make the announcement, using her

current name.

A mature woman, single, divorced, or widowed, may make her own announcement:

The engagement of Miss [Ms. or Mrs.] Deana Turner to Mr. Jacob Die has been announced . . .

When the future bride's parents are divorced, the announcement is usually made by the mother:

Mrs. Susan Raines announces . . . Ms. Raines is also the daughter of Mr. Julius B. Raines of Boston, Massachusetts.

When the divorced parents are cordial, they may announce the engagement together:

Mr. John Kelly of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and Mrs. Margaret B. Waters of Indianapolis, Indiana, announce . . .

If a remarried mother makes the announcement, it may read:

Mr. Richard R. and Glenda F. Gaines announce the engagement of Mrs. Gaines's daughter, Ellen Sue Bates. . . . Ms. Bates is also the daughter of Mr. Robert G. Bates of Riverside, New York.

If the engaged woman is adopted, the family that raised her from infancy has no reason to mention this fact. If she joined the family later and has retained her original surname, the announcement should read:

Mr. Roy and Mrs. Rose Weinstein announce the engagement of their adopted daughter, Ms. Carla Reid, daughter of the late Mr. Carl and Mrs. Trudy Reid.

If the engaged woman is an orphan, the nearest relative, godparent, or dearest friend may make the announcement as may the woman herself:

The engagement of Daisey Marlys Gibson (daughter of the late Mr. Darrel and Mrs. Alta Gibson) is announced . . .

The parents of the engaged man may make the announcement when the woman is from another country, has no living relatives, or for some other reason has no contact with her family. The man's parents should not make it in their own names, but in the woman's parents' names:

The engagement of Miss Sutra Batra of Bombay, India, to Dr. Walker Dennis Tabor, son of Dr. Walter and Gloria Tabor of Kentilworth, Illinois, is announced.

The couple may elect to announce their own engagement, either alone or in concert with their parents:

Louise Albright and Steven Barr join with their parents, Mark and Helen Albright, and Albert and Joan Barr, in announcing the couple's engagement.

If an engagement is canceled, the same persons who received an announcement should also be notified, simply, of this change.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Matthew Williams:

This How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write book is not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book will be information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This kind of How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write without we recognize teach the one who reading it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't end up being worry How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write can bring once you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even cell phone. This How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write having fine arrangement in word and layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Cindy Knutson:

As people who live in the modest era should be update about what going on or information even knowledge to make them keep up with the era which can be always change and move forward. Some of you maybe will update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what kind you should start with. This How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Robert Olsen:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition info. Even you love How to Write It, Third Edition: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write, you are able to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Kathleen Hernandez:

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