

Applied Learning Exercises for *Business Communication Today*, 16th Edition

These 190 Applied Learning Exercises (10 per chapter across 19 chapters) provide instructors and students with optional, higher-order thinking questions that:

- Deepen engagement with *Business Communication Today*, 16th Edition.
- Connect theory to AI-driven, ethical, and global workplace realities.
- Encourage reflection, creativity, and career readiness.

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Chapter 1 — Professional Business Communication in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

- 1.1 How is AI changing what it means to “communicate as a professional”? Provide one positive and one negative real-world example.
- 1.2 Interview someone who uses AI tools at work. How do they balance speed and authenticity when communicating?
- 1.3 Analyze a workplace message written by AI. What revisions would make it more human, empathetic, or ethical?
- 1.4 Identify an instance where poor communication—human or AI-assisted—damaged a company’s reputation. What could have prevented it?
- 1.5 Explain how the communication process model (sender–message–medium–receiver–feedback) applies to an AI chatbot. Where can misunderstanding occur?
- 1.6 Evaluate a company’s public statement about AI adoption. Does it demonstrate transparency and ethics?
- 1.7 Design a short “AI-use policy” for student group projects that ensures fairness and academic honesty.
- 1.8 Observe a meeting or virtual class. What examples of professionalism—tone, clarity, courtesy—did you notice?
- 1.9 Reflect on a time when you or someone else failed to communicate effectively. Which principle from this chapter would have improved the outcome?
- 1.10 Do you agree that communication skills are more valuable in an AI-driven workplace? Defend your view with evidence.

Chapter 2 — Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, and Business Etiquette

- 2.1 Compare collaboration in in-person versus virtual teams. What communication challenges arise in each setting?
- 2.2 Record (with permission) or observe a team meeting. Which behaviors demonstrate active listening and which hinder collaboration?
- 2.3 Using the three-step writing process, draft etiquette guidelines for your class's discussion board or chat space.
- 2.4 Describe how emotional intelligence affects teamwork. Share a workplace or classroom example where empathy changed the result.
- 2.5 Many companies now use AI meeting assistants. What benefits and risks do these tools create for collaboration?
- 2.6 Analyze a recorded virtual presentation. How effectively did the speaker use nonverbal cues and technology to maintain connection?
- 2.7 Reflect on a conflict you have experienced in a team. Which conflict-resolution technique from the chapter could have improved it?
- 2.8 Evaluate a company's social-media policy. How does it balance professionalism with authenticity?
- 2.9 Design an AI-powered "virtual teammate." What communication tasks should it handle, and which should remain human? Why?
- 2.10 Develop a short case scenario showing how poor etiquette—digital or face-to-face—can derail teamwork, then propose solutions.

Chapter 3 — Communication Challenges in a Diverse, Global Marketplace

- 3.1 Research a global company's diversity or inclusion campaign. How effectively does it communicate across cultures?
- 3.2 Identify one example of bias—intentional or unintentional—in a public message. Rewrite it using inclusive language.
- 3.3 Interview an international student or colleague about a workplace or classroom communication difference they've noticed.
- 3.4 Create a short checklist to ensure cultural sensitivity in business messages.
- 3.5 Examine how AI translation tools can both bridge and widen intercultural gaps. Provide one example of each.
- 3.6 Reflect on your own cultural identity. How might it influence your communication style?
- 3.7 Review a global marketing campaign that failed due to cultural misunderstanding. What lessons apply to intercultural business communication?
- 3.8 Develop a "cultural intelligence plan" for a team working across three countries.
- 3.9 Evaluate whether your favorite brand's advertising reflects workplace diversity authentically or superficially.
- 3.10 Explain how empathy serves as a bridge across cultural differences, both human-to-human and AI-mediated.

Chapter 4 — Planning Business Messages

4.1 Choose a recent company announcement. Identify its purpose, audience, and main idea using the three-step writing process.

4.2 Compare a human-written and an AI-generated business memo. How does each handle clarity, tone, and organization?

4.3 Write two short messages with the same goal—one for executives and one for new hires. How does audience analysis shape your wording?

4.4 Practice prompt engineering: craft an AI prompt that helps you generate ideas for a project. Evaluate the results for accuracy and bias.

4.5 Review a news release or corporate blog. How effectively does it balance information, persuasion, and conciseness?

4.6 Using the “you” attitude, revise a poorly written email so that it centers on the reader’s needs.

4.7 Develop an outline for a message that announces a workplace change. Which organizational pattern (direct or indirect) would you choose—and why?

4.8 Create a short experiment: ask AI to organize raw ideas into an outline, then improve it manually. What did you add or delete?

4.9 Reflect on a time when unclear purpose led to communication failure. Which step of the planning process was skipped?

4.10 Design a classroom or workplace scenario where misjudging the audience caused confusion. How would better planning have helped?

Chapter 5 — Writing Business Messages

5.1 Find a real company email or announcement (public or internal). Does it demonstrate the “you” attitude? Rewrite it to improve empathy and reader focus.

5.2 Identify a message that uses poor etiquette. How could the writer maintain courtesy while still being direct?

5.3 Observe two social-media posts by a company. Compare tone and professionalism. What cues make each message more or less credible?

5.4 Use GenAI to draft a short customer-service reply. Then edit the output to improve credibility, clarity, and warmth.

5.5 Review a corporate apology. Does it sound authentic or defensive? Which chapter principles apply?

5.6 Interview a manager or peer about how they establish credibility in written communication. Summarize their techniques.

5.7 Collect three examples of plain-language writing from different industries. What makes them effective?

5.8 Create a one-page infographic illustrating the difference between active and passive voice using examples from real business situations.

5.9 Reflect on a time when tone affected your interpretation of a message. What lesson did it teach about emotional intelligence in writing?

5.10 How does AI challenge or reinforce the importance of “voice” and “authenticity” in business messages?

Chapter 6 — Completing Business Messages

- 6.1 Exchange drafts with a classmate and serve as each other's editor. Apply the revision checklist for clarity, tone, and organization.
- 6.2 Use an AI editing tool such as Grammarly or Word's Copilot to revise your draft. Compare its feedback to a human editor's comments. Which is more helpful?
- 6.3 Analyze a published corporate report or press release for design consistency. Does layout aid or hinder readability?
- 6.4 Practice simplifying a long paragraph into concise bullet points without losing meaning.
- 6.5 Create a short style guide for a student organization or campus department that ensures message consistency.
- 6.6 Review a company's email newsletter on your phone. How well is it designed for mobile readability?
- 6.7 Conduct a "proofreading race" with classmates: one using only human review, one using an AI checker. Discuss which errors each method catches.
- 6.8 Research the accessibility requirements for digital communication. How can inclusive design principles improve comprehension?
- 6.9 Explain why distributing a message through the wrong channel can weaken even a well-written document. Provide a real example.
- 6.10 Draft a paragraph describing how revision improves both quality and ethical accuracy in professional writing.

Chapter 7 — Digital Media

- 7.1 Review an organization's email marketing message. Identify how it applies—or violates—the three-step writing process.
- 7.2 Evaluate a company's use of emojis in professional messaging. When do they add value, and when do they risk misunderstanding?
- 7.3 Compare the tone and structure of a Slack message, a formal email, and a company intranet post. What changes across platforms?
- 7.4 Use GenAI to draft a workgroup-messaging update. How must you humanize or personalize it before sending?
- 7.5 Visit a company website. Does its organization follow best practices for readability, navigation, and credibility?
- 7.6 Explore a corporate wiki or knowledge base. How does collaborative writing enhance or complicate accuracy and tone?
- 7.7 Listen to a professional podcast episode. Identify how the producer applies narrative structure to hold attention.
- 7.8 Analyze a case in which a company's internal communication platform became overloaded or misused. What lessons emerge?
- 7.9 Compare printed and digital messages for permanence, formality, and emotional impact. When is print still the better choice?
- 7.10 Design a short experiment: craft the same announcement for three digital channels (email, chat, and website). How does each format alter reader experience?

Chapter 8 — Social Media

8.1 Choose a brand's LinkedIn or TikTok campaign. What communication objectives can you infer from its tone and visuals?

8.2 Develop a brief social-media strategy for a fictional startup using the “why, who, what, how, where, when” framework.

8.3 Identify a company that mishandled a social-media crisis. How could empathy and the “you” attitude have changed the outcome?

8.4 Test an AI social-media generator. What elements of its output would you keep or modify to protect brand voice?

8.5 Evaluate how one company integrates AI moderation or sentiment analysis into its social-media management.

8.6 Compare three platform posts (LinkedIn, Instagram, X). How do content type and audience expectations shape communication style?

8.7 Examine how social media can blur lines between personal and professional identity. What ethical boundaries should communicators maintain?

8.8 Design an internal “Social Media Etiquette Pledge” that encourages employees to represent their company responsibly online.

8.9 Conduct a mini-A/B test: post two short messages (with instructor approval) and analyze engagement differences. What did you learn about timing and tone?

8.10 Reflect on Coca-Cola's Create Real Magic case from the text. What lessons does it offer about co-creation and trust in the AI era?

Chapter 9 — Visual Media

- 9.1 Explore Canva, Visme, or another visual-design platform. Create a visual that communicates a complex idea simply. What principles of visual design guided you?
- 9.2 Find an example of an unethical or misleading chart online. Explain how the design choices distort interpretation and suggest ethical corrections.
- 9.3 Compare visuals from two global brands. How do they use imagery and color to appeal to different audiences or cultures?
- 9.4 Analyze how inclusive design can make visuals more representative. Find or redesign an example that shows cultural sensitivity and accessibility.
- 9.5 Use an AI image generator to create a business visual. What ethical and accuracy challenges arise?
- 9.6 Examine how companies use visual storytelling on social media (for example, Nike, Headspace, or Apple). What story elements make their visuals persuasive?
- 9.7 Review a company infographic. Does it communicate data clearly or overwhelm the audience? Identify two design improvements.
- 9.8 Conduct a brief experiment: create the same chart with three different scales. How does perception change?
- 9.9 Interview someone in marketing or HR about how visuals help them communicate information internally or externally.
- 9.10 Reflect: How do visuals enhance emotional engagement and comprehension in a business context compared to text alone?

Chapter 10 — Writing Routine and Positive Messages

10.1 Find a real-world company email that delivers good news or a confirmation. How effectively does it use the three-step writing process?

10.2 Draft a thank-you message to someone who helped you professionally. Then refine it to make it concise and reader-focused.

10.3 Create an AI-generated positive announcement (e.g., promotion or milestone). How can you revise it to sound more human and sincere?

10.4 Analyze a company's customer-service response to positive feedback. Does it reinforce goodwill effectively?

10.5 Compare two welcome messages from different organizations. What tone or phrasing best builds relationships?

10.6 Research how organizations express appreciation publicly on social media. What ethical considerations arise when tagging individuals?

10.7 Write a short memo acknowledging team success. How can you balance enthusiasm with professionalism?

10.8 Identify the elements of credibility and courtesy in a routine message. Why do they matter even when sharing good news?

10.9 Examine a workplace email thread. How could more structured writing have prevented confusion?

10.10 Reflect: Why are routine positive messages vital for building long-term trust in business relationships?

Chapter 11 — Writing Negative Messages

11.1 Analyze Apple’s apology for its “Crush” advertisement. What made it an effective—or ineffective—negative message?

11.2 Rewrite a real company’s public apology or recall notice. How can it better demonstrate empathy and accountability?

11.3 Draft a rejection email for a job applicant using both direct and indirect approaches. Which would you choose, and why?

11.4 Use GenAI to write a “bad-news” message. Identify weaknesses in tone or ethics and revise them manually.

11.5 Explore how cultural differences influence perceptions of apology and blame. Find an international example to illustrate.

11.6 Review a social-media crisis response. Was the company transparent and timely? How could it have improved audience trust?

11.7 Reflect on an instance when you had to deliver disappointing news. What communication strategies helped or hindered the outcome?

11.8 Create a decision tree (like Figure 11.2) for choosing between direct and indirect approaches in modern communication channels.

11.9 Discuss the ethics of timing when delivering bad news. Is it ever acceptable to delay? Provide examples.

11.10 Reflect: How can mastering negative messages help you maintain relationships and credibility throughout your career?

Chapter 12 — Writing Persuasive Messages

12.1 Examine Sephora's customer engagement strategies from the chapter. What persuasive techniques make its messaging effective?

12.2 Choose a company ad or campaign. Identify how it appeals to basic human needs (see Table 12.1) and analyze its effectiveness.

12.3 Write a short persuasive message encouraging students to adopt an ethical AI policy in their work.

12.4 Use GenAI to draft a product pitch or proposal. Edit it for clarity, credibility, and logical flow.

12.5 Find a company that uses storytelling to persuade (e.g., Patagonia or Dove). What narrative techniques strengthen its appeal?

12.6 Evaluate the ethics of influencer marketing. How can transparency and authenticity enhance credibility?

12.7 Design a short survey to identify what motivates people to act on a persuasive message. What did you discover?

12.8 Compare persuasive techniques in traditional media versus social media posts. Which channel encourages stronger emotional appeal?

12.9 Reflect on a time when you were persuaded to change your opinion or behavior. What strategies were most effective?

12.10 Create a mini-presentation that persuades your peers to adopt one business writing best practice. Explain which principles make it compelling.

Chapter 13 — Finding, Evaluating, and Processing Information

13.1 Conduct a brief online research task using both a traditional search engine and GenAI. Compare the accuracy, transparency, and bias of the results.

13.2 Review how a company cites data or sources in its press release. Does it provide clear evidence or rely on vague claims?

13.3 Develop a checklist for verifying the credibility of online information. Include both human and AI-assisted steps.

13.4 Evaluate a business article or blog post for confirmation bias. What signals suggest partial or unbalanced reasoning?

13.5 Create a side-by-side table comparing human versus AI information-gathering strengths and weaknesses.

13.6 Identify three ways misinformation could damage a company's reputation. Provide a recent example for each.

13.7 Test how AI summarization tools process a long report. What key details are lost or distorted?

13.8 Interview someone who conducts business research regularly. How do they ensure their findings are reliable?

13.9 Practice note-taking with AI support: have AI generate a summary, then revise it manually for accuracy and tone.

13.10 Reflect: How does responsible information processing safeguard a communicator's credibility and ethical integrity?

Chapter 14 — Planning Reports and Proposals

14.1 Examine Microsoft's AI at Work report from the chapter. How does its structure guide readers from data to action?

14.2 Choose a short business article or case study. Identify its problem statement and restate it as a clear purpose statement.

14.3 Draft a statement of purpose for a report you might write this semester. Does it begin with an infinitive phrase?

14.4 Compare informational and analytical reports. Which would you choose for a recommendation project—and why?

14.5 Create an outline for a proposal to implement a new AI-driven communication tool at your college.

14.6 Evaluate how visual aids and interactivity enhance comprehension in digital reports. Provide an example from an online publication.

14.7 Review the ethical considerations of selective data use. When does emphasizing one point cross into manipulation?

14.8 Identify a company white paper or trend report. How does it establish credibility through evidence and organization?

14.9 Develop a "report-writing work plan" that includes schedule, sources, and deliverables.

14.10 Reflect: How can clear planning and purpose prevent wasted effort and ensure that a report drives meaningful business decisions?

Chapter 15 — Writing and Completing Reports and Proposals

- 15.1 Review a published corporate report or government summary. How does it use headings, visuals, and transitions to guide the reader?
- 15.2 Write a short executive summary for a hypothetical report. What must you include to make it self-contained?
- 15.3 Use GenAI to draft a two-paragraph section of a report. Edit the output to ensure accuracy, originality, and tone consistency.
- 15.4 Analyze a company's annual report. What storytelling techniques does it use to transform data into narrative?
- 15.5 Conduct a readability test on a report excerpt using AI tools. What revisions could improve comprehension?
- 15.6 Identify how formatting and document design affect a reader's first impression. Provide before-and-after examples.
- 15.7 Discuss the ethical responsibility of citing AI-generated text or visuals in business reports.
- 15.8 Compare a persuasive proposal with a purely informational report. What makes one more action-oriented than the other?
- 15.9 Revise a section of a report to make it more scannable for mobile readers.
- 15.10 Reflect: Why does professionalism in report completion (editing, design, proofreading) signal credibility and respect for the audience?

Chapter 16 — Developing Presentations in a Social Media Environment

16.1 Watch a TED Talk or LinkedIn Learning presentation. How does the speaker balance storytelling and data?

16.2 Use the “presentation anxiety” strategies discussed in the chapter to prepare a short class talk. Reflect on which techniques worked best.

16.3 Create a short GenAI prompt that outlines a presentation plan. Evaluate how helpful the AI’s structure is for your topic.

16.4 Analyze Vanessa Van Edwards’s approach to human connection in presentations. How does empathy enhance audience engagement?

16.5 Design a short audience profile for an upcoming presentation. What emotional states or expectations must you address?

16.6 Review a virtual presentation (Zoom, Teams, etc.). What techniques helped the presenter overcome the limits of screen-based delivery?

16.7 Draft an opening and closing for a presentation about ethical AI use. How do these sections influence audience memory and emotion?

16.8 Create a plan to handle audience feedback or live questions during a presentation. How can AI tools assist with preparation?

16.9 Evaluate the accessibility of a recorded presentation—captions, visuals, or transcript. What improvements would make it more inclusive?

16.10 Reflect: Why is public speaking—despite all technological aids—still fundamentally about human connection?

Chapter 17 — Enhancing Presentations with Slides and Other Visuals

17.1 Analyze Cole Nussbaumer Knaflc's advice from *Storytelling with Data*. Choose one of her principles—simplicity, focus, or narrative—and apply it to a slide redesign.

17.2 Compare structured versus free-form slide decks. Which is more effective for persuasive communication, and why?

17.3 Use a GenAI presentation tool (e.g., Tome, Beautiful.ai, or Canva's Magic Design). How well does the AI balance design and content logic?

17.4 Create two versions of a single slide: one overcrowded, one simplified. Ask peers which communicates the message more clearly and why.

17.5 Study a well-known company's investor presentation. How do visuals support credibility and engagement?

17.6 Evaluate color, typography, and imagery choices in a presentation. How do they influence emotional tone and professionalism?

17.7 Explore accessibility features in presentation software (e.g., alt text, readable fonts, color contrast). Why do they matter ethically and legally?

17.8 Test the storytelling power of animation: use step-by-step builds to reveal data and observe how it shapes audience comprehension.

17.9 Compare AI-generated visuals to human-designed ones. Which feels more authentic and aligned with brand identity?

17.10 Reflect: How can visuals turn complex data into meaningful stories—and what ethical guidelines should communicators follow when doing so?

Chapter 18 — Writing Employment Messages

18.1 Analyze three job postings for similar roles. What communication skills are most in demand, and how can you highlight them in your résumé?

18.2 Use AI to generate a résumé or cover letter draft. Identify and correct errors in tone, structure, or exaggeration.

18.3 Review a LinkedIn profile from a professional you admire. How effectively does it communicate brand, credibility, and purpose?

18.4 Write a one-paragraph professional summary that uses strong action verbs and quantifiable results.

18.5 Evaluate the ethics of using AI résumé screeners. How might these systems unintentionally introduce bias?

18.6 Conduct a mock interview using an AI tool or class partner. What communication habits improved or hindered your performance?

18.7 Compare two sample cover letters—one generic, one tailored. Which better reflects audience-centered writing, and why?

18.8 Draft a thank-you message following an interview. How can tone and timing influence employer perception?

18.9 Research how digital portfolios and multimedia résumés are changing professional communication expectations.

18.10 Reflect: How does mastering employment communication demonstrate every key skill taught throughout the course—clarity, ethics, audience awareness, and adaptability?

Chapter 19 — Building Careers and Writing Résumés

19.1 Review your current résumé or LinkedIn profile through the lens of “storytelling.” Does it narrate your career trajectory clearly?

19.2 Interview a hiring manager or career counselor. What résumé trends are emerging with AI-based hiring tools?

19.3 Conduct a résumé keyword analysis using an AI scanner or job-matching site. How can data improve your chances of selection?

19.4 Compare chronological, functional, and hybrid résumé formats. Which would best showcase your current strengths?

19.5 Evaluate an AI-generated résumé for ethics and accuracy. Does it overstate or misrepresent qualifications?

19.6 Create a brief infographic résumé using Canva or Visme. What visual design principles ensure clarity and professionalism?

19.7 Draft a “career brand statement” (one or two sentences) that captures your values, strengths, and goals.

19.8 Examine how social media presence (LinkedIn, X, or Instagram) contributes to or detracts from professional credibility.

19.9 Research trends in video résumés or virtual introductions. What communication techniques make them effective?

19.10 Reflect: How can continuous learning and digital adaptability ensure long-term success in a world shaped by AI and constant change?