

Conversational but Professional: Hitting the Right Note

Capturing the right tone in business communication requires careful consideration of audience, an organization's corporate climate, and writing purpose. Whether composing a text message or an e-mail, good writers project professionalism by choosing words that will make them sound educated, mature, and conversational.

To hit the right note between being too relaxed or too formal, keep these points in mind.

- Adopt a casual tone that sounds conversational instead of the high-level diction found in formal reports or letters.
- Avoid overblown words such as *awesome* or *incredible*.
- Be concise and polite.
- Compose using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Don't use abbreviations that are appropriate only for non-work messages (*BTW* instead of *by the way* or *gr8* for *great*).
- Use personal pronouns such as *I*, *we*, and *you* to sound friendlier.

Practice hitting the right tone by rewriting the sentences below. If the tone of a sentence is appropriate, mark it as correct with a *C*.

1. All managers are hereby instructed to administer the pro forma documents to the appropriate parties for the ensuing quarters.
2. Bossman Steve, totally awesome news!! Gretchel has FINALLY tossed her heinous idea so we can go with the cool one Benny came up with.
3. Please return the signed documents so we can process your check quickly.
4. The advent of unforeseen events adding to the difficulty of completion of the tasks does not abrogate your presence at meetings nor the original due date.
5. Hey, dude, you promised me those docs like three days ago? WTH?
6. As a new employee, you can contribute to our volunteer efforts in many different ways.
7. Per the dictates contained in the previously mentioned contract containing your signature, your inability to fulfill the parameters of the assignment are reasonable cause for immediate dismissal.
8. R U coming 2 the mtg at 3 cuz if not el jefe will be mucho mad.

9. Pursuant to our orla communication which took place on the afternoon of the 12th of November, you are hereby notified that your application for vacation has been met with approval.

10. It is desirous that all employees adhere to the signs posted in various and sundry locations throughout our establishment and properly cleanse their hands.