



Business writing should follow the right tone. It must be easy to follow. It has to be well formatted. It should be clear. But above all, it ought to be grammatically correct.

Let's see how word order can help with this.

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## Better Business Writing: Word Order

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### **Follow traditional word order**

You can change word order if you wish, but paying attention to grammar always helps to transmit clear and correct messages. Check the chart at the head of this article and try to follow it.

### **Why is this important?**

English is an isolating language where words mostly interact with each other not through inflection but through the place they occupy in a sentence. There is almost no gender division, no plural for adjectives and little verb conjugation.

Order in other languages is not so determinant. In Spanish, for instance, “A los pacientes trató el doctor” and “El doctor trató a los pacientes” are dissimilar in style but not in meaning. In English however, “The patients treated the doctor” is very different to “The doctor treated the patients”.

Of course, there are several ways to build a sentence correctly but this guide defines a standard that you can mostly follow. Please see some examples below.

*Adverbs of time can go at the beginning or at the end of sentences.*

*The order of the indirect and direct object will depend on the verb.*

*Frequency adverbs go before the verb except with “to be”, as in “I am always late”.*

Subject	Verb	Direct object	Place	Time
They	saw	the mistake	at the office	on Monday.

Time	Subject	Frequency	Verb	Place
On Fridays	she	often	studied	at home.

Subject	Verb	Indirect object	Direct object	Time
Peter	bought	Susan	a present	last week.

Subject	Verb	Direct object	Manner	Place
Sandra	played	football	very well	at her club.

Subject	Auxiliary	Frequency	Verb	Manner
Sebastian	has	never	worked	badly.

Andrew's advice: Be careful with order. Mixing words can confuse readers.

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