

Unit 47: Factual Writing in Art and Design

Code:	D/502/5488
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to understand the techniques and skills at the heart of producing factual material. Completion of this unit will expand learners' understanding of the qualities essential for the production of successful factual communication in art and design.

● Unit introduction

Factual writing is present in many forms of art and design. To be successful, products as diverse as lifestyle magazines, instructional leaflets and advertisements all require factual content. Areas such as web design and graphic media creation often require written content. The ability to express information efficiently and effectively, along with good design skills, is highly prized. There will always be a need for people who can express factual information in a written form.

This unit will enable learners to understand the techniques and skills at the heart of producing factual material. Completing of this unit will expand learners' understanding of the qualities essential for the production of successful factual communication.

Learners will analyse examples of factual material, examining their effectiveness and clarity, and identifying techniques employed to convey information. This will enable them to broaden their experience and understanding of informative written copy and imagery. Learners will move on to generate material of their own, presenting it using appropriate media, methods and processes. This will encourage learners to put the methods they have identified from their analysis into practice, producing copy and a completed product that is fit for purpose and appropriate for an identified audience.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand the qualities and characteristics of factual communication in art and design
- 2 Be able to originate factual copy
- 3 Be able to present factual copy and relevant imagery for an identified purpose
- 4 Understand own work

Unit content

1 Understand the qualities and characteristics of factual communication in art and design

Factual communication: informative documents eg leaflets, instruction manuals, 'how to' guides; factual journalism eg reporting on events, research findings

Qualities: clear; concise; unambiguous; register; vocabulary suited to audience; evidencing of facts

Accuracy: communicating information correctly; demands of appropriate legislation; industry-based codes of practice; bias; evidence to support facts

Methods of communicating information: copy; supporting illustrations and diagrams; typography choices eg use of colour, bold, font

2 Be able to originate factual copy

Produce: write copy; use word processing

Clarity of writing: rules of written English eg grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation; appropriate register; tone; style eg formal, informal, slang, dialect; explanations of jargon

3 Be able to present factual copy and relevant imagery for an identified purpose

Imagery: eg diagrams, illustrations, maps, graphs, tables

Identified purpose: specification of intended audience; product role; purpose within context

Formats: print materials eg leaflets, flyers, manuals, newspaper articles, magazine articles, packaging, labels

4 Understand own work

Sources of information: self-evaluation; comments from others eg audience, peers, tutors, clients

Process: planning; preparation; time management; reviewing work in progress; technical competencies, creative abilities

Finished product: extent to which intentions have been realised; needs of audience; content; style; skills evidenced; skills development; areas for improvement, fitness for purpose

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 discuss the qualities and characteristics of accurate factual communication [IE]	M1 explain the qualities necessary for effective factual communication, expressing ideas with clarity and with appropriate use of art and design terminology	D1 evaluate critically the qualities necessary for effective factual communication, expressing ideas comprehensively and using art and design terminology correctly
P2 originate factual copy [CT]	M2 originate considered, appropriate factual copy, displaying competent technical standard of writing skills	D2 originate appropriate factual copy independently, for an identified purpose with precise recognition of audience, expressing ideas fluently
P3 present factual copy and relevant imagery for an identified purpose [CT]	M3 present factual copy and relevant imagery for an identified purpose in an effective format	D3 present factual copy and relevant imagery to professional standards, showing independence, creativity and flair
P4 review own work. [RL]	M4 explain own work with reference to well-chosen examples, expressing ideas with clarity.	D4 evaluate critically own work in the context of professional practice, expressing ideas fluently and using art and design terminology correctly.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

For learning outcome 1, learners should analyse a wide range of printed products covering both informative print products and factual journalism. Products such as magazines, websites, instructive cards from DIY stores, instruction booklets, instruction manuals, government health information leaflets and flyers, and promotional materials featuring directions or maps would all be of use in analysis. Teaching should include coverage of journalistic bias as a factor when analysing the accuracy of factual writing but it should not become the main focus of the analytical activities. Learners should be aware of the difference between factual journalism and editorial or opinion-based reporting. They should be encouraged to identify examples of these as part of their analysis of existing print products, defining the qualities that constitute factual reporting.

For learning outcome 2, learners will need to generate their own copy. Learners should identify or be provided with a definite purpose for their material before beginning work. This will help ensure they are employing the correct techniques from the beginning. Consideration of the audience they are writing for, the context or product their text would appear as part of, and the basic information to be conveyed should all be agreed before they begin. Encouraging learners to formalise this information, perhaps in the form of a proposal, would ensure they are clear on these areas and able to reflect at the end of the process on the extent to which they have met their intentions. Learners should use word-processing packages throughout the drafting stages of this element of the unit, in line with current industry practice. It may be of benefit to encourage learners to print out and save drafts of their work to show the development of their ideas and adjustments made to suit their purpose. They should also be taught how to save and track electronic versions of their work. Evidence for the achievement of learning outcome 2 could consist of a body of copy, the amount to be determined by the tutor. The purpose of the copy should be agreed with the tutor before work commences.

Learning outcome 3 requires the production of a factual product that should allow learners to put into practice the understanding gained from analysing existing products. It should also offer them an opportunity to put the copy they have generated into a suitable context. Depending on the nature of the factual copy the learner has chosen to focus on, further research into the requirements, features and conventions of the product they produced may be required. Learners should be encouraged to observe the conventions of the type of product they are producing when working on this element of the unit. Suitable products to be presented could be a leaflet or double-sided flyer, an information card, selected pages of an instruction manual or a newspaper or magazine article. In planning this piece, learners could plan out their work using more traditional paper-based layout techniques, or use digital design methods from the outset. Either method should evidence an appreciation of the communication intended in the product and the conventions of that product type.

A live brief for a client or for a designated purpose could be ideal for incorporation into this unit. This would give learners the opportunity to work in a truly vocational context, presenting to a client their analysis, findings and proposals for their final product as well as getting feedback throughout the process and on the final product. This will support their ability to comment on the effectiveness of their own work.

Learning outcome 4 requires learners to make an ongoing analysis of their work and a final evaluation. Evidence for the achievement of learning outcome 4 could be presented in a variety of different ways, including verbal presentation with visual aids, written report, and essay or within a suitable audio, moving image or interactive medium.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments and activities
Unit introduction.
Assignment 1: Evaluative Blog Evaluation of work completed – in comparison to existing professional examples and in light of the client brief. Analysis of skills developed and areas for further improvement. Word processed evaluation report to accompany final submission for assessment. Introduction. Learner initiated study.
Assignment 2: Research Presentation Introductory illustrated lecture outlining the use of factual writing in selected products and highlighting the link between visual and written communications. Coverage of the conventions of factual writing products will inform work on the rest of the unit. Learner initiated investigation into examples of factual writing in art and design related products, identifying the components of the contents construction.
Fact vs opinion – analysis of promotional or persuasive examples and factual reporting styles. Identification of features and methods of communication used. Mini-assignment to select a world news event and write a short piece firstly from a biased perspective and secondly from a neutral factual stance.
Survey or audience feedback exercise related to a chosen piece of factual writing, gaining insight into the information gained by readers and the areas of importance for inclusion and consideration.
Assignment 3: Copy Production Written communication workshops introducing a range of writing styles used in the creation of products featuring factual writing, eg journalistic or editorial pieces, instructional leaflets or guides, promotional material. Sessions take the form of group deconstruction, talks from visiting practitioners or lectures followed by practical application and practice of skills.
Assignment 4: Page Layout Page layout and design workshops to include guidance on digital illustration packages and page layout and publication design software. Guided tutorial using smart board followed by individual experimentation and implementation. Introduction of a set brief to include group analysis and deconstruction of examples from the field, first as a whole group then as a paired activity. Learner initiated idea generation by learners in response to the set brief – analysing client need, examining potential concepts, determining the audience need and potential uses of resolved outcomes. Learner initiated initial drafting of proposed resolution to set brief – for group critique. Opportunity for interim formative assessment and feedback. Final drafting of written content, with own evaluative deconstruction of content, vocabulary selection, style, tone and clarity issues – highlighted using track changes feature in word processing package.
Lecture on illustration – detailing the use of tables, graphs, graphics and maps to support factual information. Followed by paired analysis of illustrative use in existing examples. Learner initiated sourcing, design and implementation of illustrative content.
Final document layout – incorporating image and text content using page layout and design skills built up in skills workshop sessions.
Present for final assessment with short group critique on the resolved outcomes and the implementation of illustration to accompany the text.
Unit review and assessment.

Assessment

Learners should work throughout this unit towards building a portfolio evidencing their work. This portfolio should evidence clearly all of the required understanding and skills detailed in the grading criteria. If learners have worked in groups, then each individual learner must clearly document their own contribution to the group project and identify the different roles that they undertook at each of the production stages.

The portfolio could include a recording, with supporting documentation, of a verbal presentation given to the group, written as a report or presented in an interactive form using multimedia software. Learner responses could be recorded on video or audio formats, either as presentations or during a group-based or individual question and answer session. Tutor observation records could also be used to support evidence of achievement in the case of classroom-based activity.

For P1, learners will provide a basic description of the qualities that are necessary for factual communication to be successful. All aspects of the description will be accurate and relevant. Whatever is being dealt with will be covered substantially, though not necessarily entirely. A learner's response may include comments such as 'Those writing factual pieces need to check that they explain any terms that their audience might not understand.' While not explaining why this is important, they have demonstrated knowledge of the kind of issues that need to be considered.

For P2, learners will present factual copy for an identified purpose. Content will be accurate and relevant facts will be researched where appropriate. The style will be appropriate to the audience addressed but will not be precisely focused at all points, and learners will find it hard to move outside their own personal style. Written English will be substantially correct, though there may be occasional minor technical errors and there will typically be a lack of understanding of the more complex technicalities of written English. Proofreading skills will be weak and heavily dependent upon the software spell-check function.

For P3, learners will present the copy they have produced, along with supporting images, within a print product. This should show evidence of basic technical ability in inserting copy and images, with some understanding of the conventions of the product being produced. In terms of the aesthetic or imaginative qualities of their work, learners will not move beyond the conventional, but the conventions applied will be appropriate to the form or genre within which they are working.

For P4, learners will be able to consider their own work in such a way that they move beyond merely describing it. They will make evaluative comments on what they have done but these comments will be assertions that are not supported by evidence or exemplification. For example, a learner might write 'I think the facts that I found in my research helped back up the message of my piece.' While this is evaluative it does not identify which element of the research was helpful.

For P1 and P4, oral language skills will be sound and learners will be able to express themselves with sufficient clarity to be understood, though vocabulary and in particular technical vocabulary will be limited, and register will not always be appropriate to the situation or audience. Formal writing skills will be basic, with frequent errors of spelling and punctuation and occasional lapses in grammar and syntax. However, learners will be able to make themselves understood in writing when communicating simple ideas or dealing with straightforward material. Please note that, given the nature of this unit, higher levels of technical skills in written English are required for the actual product than for the work generated in response to learning outcomes 1 and 4.

For M1, learners need to go beyond straightforward description to clearly explain the qualities that are necessary for factual communication in print documents to be successful, supporting their points with examples from their research. Learners will be able to talk about techniques in such a way as to show how or why they are used or are the way they are. Examples given to support what is said will be relevant, but the learner will not elucidate these examples to show how they illustrate the point they support. For example, learners may say 'It is important to make sure that you check that things you state as facts are

backed up with evidence. In my research I have found out that some newspapers fail to do this.' This shows an ability to identify an example which, while relevant, does not go into any depth regarding how it relates to their assertions.

For M2, content will be accurate and relevant facts will be evidenced by good research, where appropriate. The style will be carefully chosen for the audience addressed, with appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures, and it will generally be maintained throughout the copy. Written English will be correct with no minor technical errors but with some mistakes in the more complex technicalities of written English. Proofreading skills will be good, but still often dependant upon software spell-check functions.

For M3, learners will present their work effectively, evidencing a sound understanding of the requirements and demands of the product and its audience. Finished products, while perhaps not quite of a professional quality, should be well presented and purposeful, indicating an awareness of the requirements of professional print products.

For M4, learners will be able to explain what they have tried to accomplish and how they have worked to try to successfully achieve it. They will be able to explain decisions and will be able to exemplify these explanations through relevant and detailed reference to their own work, though the examples they give will not be further elucidated, for example, 'I feel that I explained the dangers of drink driving effectively by explaining what a unit of alcohol was and how much an adult can drink.' This indicates that the learner is aware of a method of ensuring their work was effective but does not go on to discuss how this has helped.

Oral language skills will be consistent and learners will be able to express intentions and ideas clearly using, for the most part, the right word in the right context, including technical vocabulary and the language used in the industry. Register will generally be appropriate, with occasional lapses. Formal writing skills will be sound with few lapses in grammar and syntax, though there will typically be some errors of spelling and punctuation. Language skills will be good enough for learners to be able to express fairly complex ideas and to handle material of moderate difficulty.

For D1, learners will discuss the qualities that are necessary for factual communication in print documents to be successful, developing ideas critically (comparing, assessing and discriminating). They will justify points made using supporting arguments or evidence, drawing out of an example precisely what it is about it that exemplifies the point it illustrates.

For D2, content will be accurate at all points, and supported by fully documented research where appropriate. The style will be exactly right for the audience addressed, using suitable sentence structures and the appropriate vocabulary, and it will be consistent throughout the copy. Written English will be technically correct throughout and will be fluently used. Proofreading skills will be excellent, with the ability to pick up the type of errors that a spell-check function would not recognise.

For D3, learners will develop work that reflects industry standards in terms of presentation, application of product conventions, and use of typography techniques and other design features. Learners at this level will apply their writing skills not just with imagination but with ingenuity and even elegance, and codes and conventions may be used with occasionally surprising results.

For D4, learners will be able to make an accurate and critically objective assessment of their own achievement with detailed reference to elucidated examples taken from that work. They will be able to make critical comparisons of their own work with current or past practice in a relevant area.

Distinction-grade learners will speak with fluency, using a wide vocabulary and deploying both general and technical language with accuracy and confidence. Register will always be appropriate. Formal writing skills will be good, typically with very few grammatical errors and quite complex sentence structures. There will be very infrequent errors in spelling and punctuation. Language skills will be good enough to be able to express complex ideas and to handle difficult material.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P4 M4 D4	Assignment 1: Evaluative Blog	A designer documents their progress throughout a project, on activities completed, strengths and weaknesses and incorporates feedback from themselves and others on the final resolved work.	Completed blog in electronic or printed form.
P1 M1 D1	Assignment 2: Research Presentation – Fact vs Opinion	A designer writes a review of a number of pieces of factual writing for a trade blog, highlighting the top 10 points they feel make a piece effective with examples they have studied.	Tutor observation of presentation, on-screen slides, any print-outs used within presentation, written notes used in presentation.
P2 M2 D2	Assignment 3: Copy Production	A writer works with a designer to develop some factual copy for a new product website. Theme and key points are provided by the marketing department. The writer generates the copy.	Resolved copy and commentary about decisions made in either one-to-one discussion, videoed or sound recorded, audio commentary or annotated version of copy.
P3 M3 D3	Assignment 4: Page Layout	A writer works with a designer to put their completed copy into a context with suitable illustrations, diagrams and movies, within a website.	Resolved product, annotated version of resolved product highlighting features included.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Art and Design sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Art and Design suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Introduction to Graphic Visual Language	Working with Digital Art and Design Briefs	Communication Through Art and Design
Introduction to Multimedia Production	Working with Moving Image Briefs	Design Principles in Art and Design
	Working with Visual Arts Briefs	Ideas and Concepts in Art and Design
	Working with Graphic Design Briefs	Information Graphics
		Words and Images in Graphic Design

Essential resources

Learners need access to a range of existing factual print products and personal computers with word-processing software. In addition, all learners need access to and guidance on the use of desktop publishing or page layout packages (for example QuarkXPress, Adobe Illustrator, InDesign) and colour printing facilities.

Peripheral hardware such as graphics tablets may also be of use to learners wishing to gain experience of the processes often used in the industry.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with practising writers and graphic designers, to deliver assignments to learners or to provide work experience.

Links with employers are essential to the delivery of the programme for work experience and future employment.

Vocational learning support resources:

- Learning and Skills Network – www.vocationallearning.org.uk

Business and finance advice:

- local and regional Business Link – www.businesslink.gov.uk

Assignments should be vocationally relevant; centres should consider the delivery of 'live projects', for example, to support the vocational content of the unit and programme.

Creative and cultural skills (www.ccskills.org.uk), the sector skills council for arts, crafts and design have launched the web portal Creative Choices (www.creative-choices.co.uk). This portal has a range of information about careers in the arts, crafts and design sector, including job descriptions.

Skillset, the sector skills council for creative media (www.skillset.org), provide details on their pages (www.skillset.org/careers) about careers advice and industry information, plus a regularly updated news and events page.

Skillfast-UK, the sector skills council for fashion and textiles (www.skillfast-uk.org), provide details on their careers web pages (www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob) about careers advice and industry information, plus regularly updated news and events pages.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Cullen K – *Layout Workbook: A Real-world Guide to Building Pages in Graphic Design* (Rockport Publishers 2007)
ISBN 978-1592533527

Goddard K – *Informative Writing: Your Practical Guide to Effective Communication* (Thomson Learning, 1998)
ISBN 978-0304702787

Hicks W et al – *Writing for Journalists* (Routledge, 2008) ISBN 978-0415460217

McWade J – *Before and After Page Design* (Peachpit Press, 2003) ISBN 978-0201795370

Journals

Computer Arts – Future Publishing

Digit – IDG Publishing

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/comms/index

The BBC provides some excellent materials with this site. Of particular use is the section detailing the skills necessary to write a good report

www.computerarts.co.uk

Computer Arts online – updated regularly and useful for tracking trends and fashions in the industry

www.plainenglish.co.uk/free_guidelines

Plain English Campaign, guides to effective factual English that is accessible to all

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	investigating existing professional examples and analysing the content and methods being employed
Creative thinkers	developing their own written work and considering page layout and illustrative issues, generating ideas and possibilities, adapting their ideas and asking questions of their own practice
Reflective learners	considering and evaluating their own practice, drawing on specific examples from their experience to review their progress and set goals for future development.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Team workers	investigating factual writing in groups and generating copy to a brief
Self-managers	managing their own time and progress
Effective participators	discussing the ethical implications of biased content over factual content.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	using the internet and other digital resources, eg CD ROMs or DVD content in research activities using software and hardware necessary for electronic presentation in verbal explanation of research findings
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	storing and retrieving of written copy using ICT
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using the internet and other digital resources, eg CD ROMs or DVD content in research activities
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	presenting copy in an appropriate format
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	considering the ICT resources and procedures employed and their fitness for purpose
Mathematics	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	doing calculations in page layout activities and design procedures
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in group discussions, paired debates and the evaluation process and presenting research findings
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	research work will demand careful reading and deconstruction of written text including the identification of opinion, bias and information communication
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively.	writing copy communicate information using the understanding built up about effective factual written communication.