

**“YEAR OF PURPOSEFUL ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT”**

**PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY**

**CIRCULAR NO. 12/87**

**REFERENCE NO. PS: 16/0/1**

FROM: Permanent Secretary,  
Public Service Ministry

TO: All Permanent Secretaries,  
Heads of Departments and  
Regional Executive Officers

**SUBJECT:**

Improvement of standards in official correspondence.

DATE: 1987/03/09

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It has been observed that there is need for improvement of the standards in the writing of official correspondence in the Public Service. The attached documents which are now being re-issued serve as a guide to certain areas where attention should be paid.

Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments and other senior officers are hereby reminded that correspondence addressed to their colleagues and other officials should not be copied to Cde. President or to a Minister of Government. It is advisable that whenever necessary, a form of communication appropriate to the office should be adopted if a Minister or Cde. President is to be informed.

Please ensure that the contents of this circular and its attachments are brought to the attention of all staff under your control.

.....  
J.E. Sinclair,  
Permanent Secretary,  
PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY.

"YEAR OF STANDING UP FOR GUYANA"

Copy

PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

164 Waterloo Street,  
Georgetown.

Reference No. PS: 16/0/1

Dated: 1985/06/10

Dear,

Preparation of Overseas Correspondence

The Public Service Ministry is aware that very often the standard of preparation of written correspondence in the Public Service is below acceptance level of efficiency.

There are many contributory factors. Some of these are:

- the swift turnover of staff without the careful handing over of Functional Guides, Manuals and Standard Operation Procedures;
- the absence in some cases of Functional Guides / Manuals;
- the absence of On-the-Job Training supervisors;
- a difference in the quality of the output from Commercial Schools today;
- the frequent acceptance by some supervisors of low mediocre standards;
- the lack of awareness of the high standards that are required;
- a lack of interest on the part of some workers in high quality performance.

There are many complaints about correspondence signed on behalf of Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments. Many of these letters, minutes and memoranda contain:

- spelling and grammatical mistakes;
- discourteous language;
- poor typing layout;
- frequent typeovers and too liberal a use of 'whiteout';
- no paragraphing or poor paragraphing;
- such worn out typewriter ribbons that the typed documents are almost illegible;
- incorrectly and inadequately addressed envelopes; (remember that official correspondence that arrives at the wrong destination can embarrass your agency as well as the Nation);
- the use of the term 'Comrade' in the salutation of letters addressed to foreigners and to non-public sector employees and sent through the Post Office;

(the term 'Comrade' is for use in the Public Sector of Guyana and on mail addressed to our Mission Staff when the mail is going through the Diplomatic Bag and not through the Post Office)

- the incorrect use of carbon copy initials on external mail, please see attachment A – Circular to this effect no. 1/1985 dated 1985/01/05.

This Ministry, as a first step, has revised the TYPIST'S MANUAL. Copies will be made available shortly. THE MANUAL OF OFFICE INSTRUCTIONS is currently being revised.

However, as an immediately measure, I am asking you to impress upon your supervisors that they have a responsibility:

- (a) to supervise, guide and coach their subordinate staff into doing what is correct;
- (b) to hold On-the-Job Training Sessions with their clerical staff;
- (c) to request from the Training Division of the Ministry of Education, longer-term training if there is the need in the respective departments;
- (d) to ensure that in each registry, there is for reference purposes, an English Dictionary and copies relevant Manuals.

Kindly circulate among your staff copies of:

- ATTACHMENT B - words frequently misspelt
- ATTACHMENT C - most commonly made grammatical errors

Until our revised Manuals have reached your office, please encourage your supervisors to ask questions if they are unsure. The number of the Management Services Division of the Public Service Ministry is 66415 or 68867.

Yours co-operatively,

.....  
J.E. Sinclair,  
Permanent Secretary.

ATTACHMENT A

PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

CIRCULAR NO. 1/1985

REFERENCE NO. PS: 16/0/1

FROM: Permanent Secretary,  
Public Service Ministry.

TO: All Permanent Secretaries,  
Heads of Departments and  
Regional Executive Officers.

SUBJECT: Carbon Copy initials used on external mail.

DATED: 1985/01/05.

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On more than one occasion this Ministry has received complaints from our Embassies overseas about the practice existing in some agencies locally of carbon copying correspondence sent to them when the original is for a foreign agency.

2. Often it is necessary for Government Officials to bring to the attention of a Guyana Embassy some important piece of correspondence which is addressed to someone or some agency overseas. Unfortunately, officers simply put a "c.c. Guyana Embassy...." On the external mail. This is incorrect.
3. A more appropriate way of dealing with this for a carbon copy to be sent to the relevant embassy with a covering note indicating that the attachment is for information or action.
4. Kindly instruct the relevant officers in your agency to desist from using the c.c. method on external mail.
5. In 1985 this Ministry hopes to have ready:
  - (a) A Revised Manual of Office Instructions;
  - (b) A Revised Typists' Manual.

Both of these will help to alleviate some of the many problems of procedure that now exist in matters such as these.

6. Best wishes to you for high standards in 1985.

.....  
J.E. Sinclair,  
PERMANENT SECRETARY.

## ATTACHMENT B

### Words frequently misspelt

- above-mentioned
- acknowledgement
- advice (n), advise (v)
- aging
- aide-memoire (invariable in plural)
- air-conditioned
- aircraft
- allot, allotted, allotment
- analyse
- absence
- access
- accommodation
- allege
- alter (change)
- altar (church)
- analogous
- anxious
- appropriate
- au fait
- awkward
- balance-of-payments (adj.)
- balance of payments (noun)
- balance sheet
- behaviour
- benefited, benefiting
- biannual (twice a year)
- biennial (every second year)
- biennium (pl. bienniums)
- bimonthly
- budgeted
- bureau
- bureaucracy
- cancel, cancelled, cancelling
- case-study
- catalogue
- centre
- center, centred, centering
- channelled, channelling
- charge d' affaires
- check-list
- cheque (bank)
- coexistence
- communique
- compel, compelled
- connection
- co-operate, co-operation
- counterproductive
- counterpart
- counterproposal
- cross-reference
- cross-section
- curriculum vitae (pl. curricula vitae)
- cut-back
- career

- consensus
- curiosity
- deadline
- decision maker
- decision making (adj. And noun)
- dependant (noun)
- dispatch or dispatch
- draft (text)
- draught (air)
- dearth
- definitely
- disappointment
- earmark
- enclose
- endeavour
- enroll, enrolment
- ensure (make certain)
- equalled
- everyday (adj.)
- exorbitant
- expel, expelled, expelling
- expose
- eligible
- eligibility
- embarrass
- emphasize
- encyclopedia
- exaggerate
- fact-finding
- fait accompli
- far-reaching
- favour
- feedback
- flow-sheet
- focused, focusing, focused, focusing
- follow-up
- footnote
- forcible
- forego (precede)
- for ever
- forever
- forfeit
- forgo (to go without)
- forum (plural: forums)
- freedom fighter
- front line (noun)
- front-line (adj.)
- fulfil, fulfillment, fulfilled, fulfilling
- good will (virtuous intent)
- goodwill (kindly feeling, benevolence)
- grey
- groundwork
- guidelines
- gauge
- harbour
- heretofore
- highlight
- honorarium (plural: honorariums, honoraria)
- honour

- honourable
- hydroelectric
- hanger (shed)
- humorous
- indispensable
- infrastructure
- inquire, inquiry
- install, installation, installment
- insure (take out insurance)
- inter-agency
- inter alia
- inter-American
- intercede
- interdependence
- interdisciplinary
- intergovernmental
- interregional
- interrelate, interrelation
- inoculate
- its (possessive)
- it's (it is)
- kilogram or kilogramme (kg)
- kilometer (km)
- kilowatt
- kilowatt-hour
- know-how
- labour
- laborious
- laissez-passer
- last-mentioned
- layout
- liaison
- licence (noun)
- license (verb)
- litre
- liveable
- long-term (adj.)
- manoeuvre
- man-made
- many-sided
- meagre
- meanwhile (adv.) BUT: in the mean while
- meeting-place
- microfiche
- microfilm
- midday
- misspelt
- modelled
- multilateral
- multinational
- multi-purpose
- maintenance
- miscellaneous
- mutual
- neighbour
- nevertheless
- non-co-operation

- non-existent
- non-governmental
- none the less or nonetheless
- north-east (ern)
- note verbale (plural: notes verbales)
- notwithstanding
- naive
- occur, occurred, occurrence
- offence, offensive
- offhand
- offset
- offshore
- ongoing
- on-line
- onward
- organization (BUT: International Labour Organisation)
- organize
- overall (noun and adj.)
- over-emphasize
- overestimate
- overrate
- overriding
- overrun
- overspending
- omitted
- omission
- paralyse
- pay-roll
- per annum
- per capita
- per diem
- photocopy
- practice (noun)
- practise (verb)
- pre-condition
- pre-empty
- prerequisite
- principal (head person)
- principal (adj.)
- principle (noun) a matter of
- programme
- storey (building)
- sub-committee
- sub-contract
- pamphlet
- perform
- privilege
- pronounce, pronunciation
- query
- radioactive
- recognize
- raison d'etre
- re-establish
- regime
- resume
- saleable



- set-back (noun)
- separate
- shortcoming
- sizeable
- skilful
- south-east (earn)
- specialize
- spelt (past participle)
- staff member
- stationary (not moving)
- stationary (paper)
- sub-division
- sub-entry
- subgroup
- subheading
- subject-matter
- subparagraph
- subregional
- subsection
- subtitle
- supersede
- supervise, supervisor
- subtle
- taxpayer
- telegram
- time-consuming
- time-limit
- timetable
- title-page
- totalling
- trade mark
- transferable
- traveling
- twofold
- two thirds (noun)
- two-thirds (adj.)
- typesetting
- tyranny
- underdevelop
- underemployment
- underestimate
- underlie
- underprivileged
- underrepresented
- versus
- vice versa
- viewpoint
- weekday
- weekend
- well-being
- well-founded (adj.)
- well-known (Attributive, immediately preceding noun)
- well-known (predicative)
- whole-hearted (ly)
- widespread
- withhold
- word processing (noun)

- work-load
- world-wide (adj.)
- worth while (predicative adj.)
- worthwhile project (attribute adj.)

- whether (if it be the case that)
- weather (atmospheric condition)
- yacht
- yield

COMMON ERRORS OF USAGESubject – Verb Agreement

- (1) The quality of programmes were not up to standard. (incorrect)  
The quality of programme was not up to standard. (correct)
- (2) But today the decline of these church activities are caused by sports. (incorrect)  
But today the decline of these church activities is caused by sports. (correct)
- (3) The Secretary General and his team has to deal with international conflicts. (incorrect)  
The Secretary General and his team have to deal with international conflicts. (correct)
- (4) His interest were many and varied. (incorrect)  
His interests were many and varied. (correct)

There - Verb – Subject

- (1) There is no objections. (incorrect)  
There are no objections. (correct)
- (2) There is no data. (incorrect)  
There are no data. (correct)

Determining Subject – Verb in the following structures

- (a) Either .....or: Neither ..... nor: or; nor; egs.
- (i) The players or the coach are going to protest. (incorrect)  
The players or the coach is going to protest. (correct)
- (ii) Neither Winston nor his accounting colleagues was satisfied with the regulations. (incorrect)  
Neither Winston nor his accounting colleagues were satisfied with the regulations. (correct)
- (b) .....as well as ; ..... along with .....; ..... together with .....; egs.
- (i) The President, as well as his advisors, have defended the bill. (incorrect)
- (ii) The President, as well as his advisors, has defended the bill. (correct)

Use of 'one of those'

- e.g. (i) She is one of those Secretaries who types well. (incorrect)
- (iii) She is one of those secretaries who type well. (correct)

## Agreement

Indefinite pronouns as subject.

- (1) Each take their turn at bowling. (incorrect)  
Each takes his turn at bowling. (correct)
- (2) Everyone have their prejudices. (incorrect)  
Everyone has his prejudices. (correct)
- (3) Everyone want their team to win. (incorrect)  
Everyone wants his team to win. (correct)

## Collective nouns as subject

- (1) The whole family are concerned. (incorrect)  
The whole family is concerned. (correct)
- (2) The number in the class were small. (incorrect) ('The number' is regularly taken as a unit)  
The number in the class was small. (correct) ('The number' is regularly taken as a unit)
- (3) A number of the class was sick. (incorrect) ('A number' refers to individuals)  
A number of the class were sick. (correct) ('A number' refers to individuals)

## Tense

- Errors in use of -        appropriate tense form
- tense sequence
  - subjunctive mood
  - shall and will

## Case

Insufficient care taken with pronouns in apposition and in compound constructions.

## Appositives

- (1) John and me are responsible for the damage. (incorrect)  
John and I are responsible for the damage. (correct)
- (2) The damage was caused by John and I. (incorrect)  
The damage was caused by John and me. (correct)

## Compound Constructions

- (1) The accountant and me share experiences. (incorrect)  
The accountant and I share experiences. (correct)  
(explanatory note) – 'I' subject of verb 'share'
- (2) The issue between you and I is settled. (incorrect)  
The issue between you and me is settled. (correct)  
(explanatory note) – 'me' is object of the preposition 'but'

### Pronoun as subject

- (1) He will employ whomever is willing to work. (incorrect)  
He will employ whoever is willing to work. (correct)
- (2) She respects whomever is in power. (incorrect)  
She respects whoever is in power. (correct)

Pronoun followed by parathetical 'I think', 'I know', 'he says' etc.

- (1) Yvonne is a person whom I think will prove worthy of every trust. (incorrect)  
Yvonne is a person who I think will prove worthy of every trust. (correct)
- (2) Basil is a man whom we know is dependable. (incorrect)  
Basil is a man who we know is dependable. (correct)

Pronoun followed by 'than' or 'as'.

- (1) He is older than me. (incorrect)  
He is older than I. (correct)
- (2) He is as wise as them. (incorrect)  
He is as wise as they. (correct)

### Sentence Fragment

Using phrases as complete sentences.

- (1) I made little progress. Finally giving up all my efforts.  
Making little progress I finally gave up all my efforts.
- (2) He will have an opportunity to visit his new office. And to see what the conditions are like.  
He will have an opportunity to visit his new office, to see what the conditions are like.
- (3) She once seemed a committed worker. Arriving at work early and leaving until late in the afternoon.

She once seemed a committed worker who arrived at work early and left late in the afternoon.

### Using adjectives and adverbs

e.g.s

- (1) We ought to treat everybody fair and square. (incorrect)  
We ought to treat everybody fairly and squarely. (correct)
- (2) They work too slow for my liking. (incorrect)  
They work too slowly for my liking. (correct)
- (3) His clothes fit him perfect. (incorrect)  
His clothes fit him perfectly. (correct)
- (4) The farmer has a reasonable secure future. (incorrect)  
The farmer has a reasonably secure future. (correct)

### OTHERS

- (1) Hopefully: An adverb which cannot properly be used as an absolute expression, but must modify a verb, an adverb, or an adjective:  
  
WRONG: Hopefully, dinner will be served on time.  
  
RIGHT: Hopefully, we listened for the dinner bell.
- (2) 'Reason' followed by 'because' rather than 'that'.  
  
The reason is because I was too ill to come. (incorrect)  
  
The reason is that I was too ill to come. (correct)  
  
I did not come because I was too ill.
- (3) In regardless = vulgarism for regardless.
- (1) Due to the rain, I could not go. (incorrect)  
  
Because of the rain, I could not go. (correct)

Due to is used after the verb to be.

e.g.

- (1) My absence was due to influenza.
- (2) Her failure is due to her inability to think.

Less books. (incorrect)

Fewer books. (correct)

Less is used with a singular noun e.g. less ink. Less milk.

But Fewer people. Fewer pens. Fewer rooms.

(1) Everyone comes with their milk bottles. (incorrect)

Everyone comes with his / her milk bottles. (correct)

#### Misplaced adjectives phrase

(1) He borrowed an antiquated typewriter from his friend, with a rusty space bar. (incorrect)

He borrowed from his friend an antiquated typewriter with a rusty space bar. (correct)

(2) Many countries possess its own industries. (incorrect)

Many countries possess their own industries. (correct)

(Countries is a plural subject and therefore is followed by 'their' and not 'its').

Disinformation – the dissemination of deliberately distorted information.

Misinformation – the inadvertent transmission of inaccurate information.

Advice, Advise

Advice is a noun. Advise is a verb.

'I give you advice' but 'I advise you'.

Aggravate = 'to make worse or more serious'

e.g. The cold wind will aggravate his bronchitis.

(Aggravate does not mean 'to irritate' or 'to annoy').

Agree to: Agree with:

'I agree to your offer of \$10.00 for the book' but 'I agree with you that she is slow'.

Aim at.

'Aim at the target' is correct. 'Aim for the target' is wrong.

Aim to go.

Although we say 'intent to go', 'propose to go', 'plan to go', 'arrange to go', we do not say 'aim to go'. It should be 'aim at going'.

Anticipate, expect

Anticipate should be followed by a direct object as in 'The policeman anticipated a break-in and took up his position accordingly'. It should be used in the sense of forestalling someone (or something).

Do not use anticipate before a 'that' clause, and do not use it instead 'expect', 'predict', 'think', etc. Instead of 'I anticipate that he will win' say 'I predict (think or expect) that he will win.'

Appreciate.

It is correctly used in 'I appreciate your help' and 'he cannot appreciate good music'. It is incorrectly used in 'I appreciate that you do not wish to come'.

Appreciate = 'To value justly', 'to recognize the value of', 'to esteem'. It may also mean 'to rise in value' as in 'The shares have recently appreciated'. Appreciate does not mean 'realise', 'understand', 'know' etc.

Apt.

It is incorrect to say 'when there is cricket it is apt to rain' or 'we are apt to lose'. In both of these sentences, apt means 'likely'.

Apt = 'suitable', 'fit', 'inclined to', e.g. 'an apt student'.

Confronted by, confronted with.

'by' and 'with' are both correct, but they are not interchangeable. In 'He was confronted by a dog' there is a sense of defiance, opposition and possible attack. In this case 'by' is the correct word. In 'He was confronted with a high wall'. There is only the idea of coming face to face with a wall. In this case 'with' is correct.

Doubt.

The verb doubt should not be followed by 'if'. 'I doubt if he will come', is wrong. Normally the clause following doubt should start with 'whether' or 'that'. 'Whether' is correct after a positive statement, e.g. 'I doubt whether he will come'. 'That' is correct after a negative statement, e.g. 'I do not doubt that he will lose'.

Many, much

Many refers to numbers. Much refers to quantity, volume or bulk.

Thus: 'There were as many as fifty people present' not  
'There was as much as fifty people present'.

(1) Should of; could of;

e.g. You should of responded promptly. (incorrect)

You should have responded promptly. (correct)

(2) Did – past tense

e.g. Frank did not noticed that Sheila was asleep. (incorrect)

Frank did not notice that Sheila was asleep. (correct)

(3) The unrelated participle

Having eaten work began. (incorrect)

Having eaten we began to work. (correct)



Using a subordinate clause etc. as a complete sentence

(1) I have some ideas about management. Although I have never been a manager. (incorrect)

I have some ideas about management, although I have never been a manager. (correct)

(2) You should work when you are young. And should leave dreams to old men. (incorrect)

You should work when you are young, and should leave dreams to old men. (correct)

Some misused words

Apt	instead of	liable
LIABLE	“ “	likely
Disinterested	“ “	uninterested
Due to	“ “	owing to
Practical	“ “	practicable
Aggravate	“ “	annoy
Alternate	“ “	alternative
Amount	“ “	number
Contemptible	“ “	contemptuous
Mutual	“ “	common
Transpire	“ “	happen
Adopt	“ “	adapt
Implied	“ “	inferred

“YEAR OF PURPOSEFUL ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT”

The mode of Address on envelopes when writing or coping correspondence  
To Ambassadors or High Commissioners

VIA    DIPLOMATIC    BAG

His Excellency,  
Cde Cecil Pilgrim, C.C.H.  
High Commissioner to London,  
London.

Other staff in the Embassy.

VIA    DIPLOMATIC    BAG

Cde    X,  
First Secretary,  
Guyana Embassy,  
Cuba.

Please check whether it is a High Commissioner or an Ambassador that you are writing.

e.g.

His Excellency,  
Cde Dr. C.H. Grant, C.C.H.  
Ambassador for Guyana to the  
United States of America,  
Washington, D.C.,  
U.S.A.

His Excellency,  
Cde .....

High Commissioner for Guyana  
To the United Kingdom,  
Guyana High Commission,  
London.