

Your language skills might be holding you back

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Imagine that English is not your first language, that you were taught English through your mother tongue, and that your company or clients expect you to be a proficient English speaker. Imagine that you have to write emails, proposals and reports or do presentations in English, and that your message and tone are misinterpreted - or even called unprofessional - because your writing and speaking skills do not have those slight nuances of a first language speaker.



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For many South Africans, the above is not just imagination; it is a reality and something they face every day in the workplace. Moreover, many hard-working and enthusiastic people are often overlooked when it comes to promotion, simply because they cannot write a report, structure a decent presentation or they make a few grammar or spelling errors when they write emails. The result is a work environment that destroys employees' confidence to express and communicate ideas.

For years, many companies have regarded language skills in the workplace as a "soft skill"; it is something that is useful but considered unnecessary to do the job. However, many employees have started to see the importance of using English more professionally in the workplace, in an attempt to better their own language skills and gain more self-confidence, and in order to qualify for promotions. For this reason, many employees have started to enroll in English classes – not to learn the language from scratch, but to help them enhance their current language skills.

[Courses at the Wits Language School's English Communication for Professional Development](#) units do just that! The programmes are tailored for second language speakers who want to build their personal and professional vocabulary, revise some essential grammar rules and learn how to write cohesive documents that are effective, professional and persuasive. Do you want to learn how to write the best cover letter for your CV, how to create a stellar PowerPoint presentation that will be remembered or how to structure an objective, detailed and cohesive report? Would you like to refine your pronunciation skills and speak with confidence before a group of people, or would you like to say as much as is necessary using as few words as possible? Maybe you want to learn some spelling rules or how to use the comma and semicolon correctly. The Wits Language School offers a range of courses to help you do exactly that.

Courses are run on Saturday mornings over a period of 10 weeks and vary between 40 and 50 contact hours (class time). The various courses are taught by professional and experienced teachers in an interactive and communicative way that makes the learning process fun and memorable. Throughout the course, you complete assignments to track your progress and then demonstrate your new skills with an exam at the end of the course. Furthermore, upon the successful completion of the course, you receive a University of the Witwatersrand Certificate of Competence.

You can speak, read and write just like a first language English speaker after doing the courses at Wits Language School. Not only will your confidence improve, but you will also be able to apply everything you learn in your work place.

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