Praise for *Wait, How Do I Write This Email?*

“Danny Rubin’s no-nonsense guide to effective writing is sure to make anyone a better communicator. If you’ve ever wondered, ‘How should I phrase that?’, this is your go-to source.”

— Jenna Goudreau, deputy editor of Business Insider

“Take one look at the table of contents, and you’ll understand how much these templates could boost your career and help you build relationships. Read Danny’s book—you’re going to need it.”

— Dan Schawbel, bestselling author of *Promote Yourself* and *Me 2.0*

“*Wait, How Do I Write This Email?* gives the average job seeker a fighting chance in today’s job search landscape. Danny addresses some of the most intimidating aspects of a person’s career and provides simple how-to guides for the reader to put into practice.”

— Casidy Lemons, talent acquisition at General Motors Company

“There are some books you keep by your desk, others you keep by your nightstand and a few you take on vacation. *Wait, How Do I Write This Email?* qualifies as all three and will make you better from the minute you open it.”

— Jonathan Jackson, program manager for consumer content at LinkedIn

“Millennials are passionate about finding the career path that makes them happy. With each email template, Danny helps you take action steps to build the career you want and attain a work/life balance. Great resource!”

— Chelsea Krost, millennial expert and co-founder of The MPulse, a digital marketing agency

“Wow! What Danny Rubin has created should be THE required career manual for every college graduate, young professional, savvy professional, and basically anyone who communicates. In any fashion. Danny Rubin is the guru of 21st century
communication. This book is bursting with so much practical and actionable wisdom that following just one of Danny’s deep insights will not only pay for the price of the book, it might just save your career.”

— Paul Angone, author of *101 Secrets For Your Twenties and All Groan Up: Searching For Self, Faith, and a Freaking Job!*

“Most job seekers do not have the training or resources to know how to formulate a concise, impactful email to an employer to help them land a job. Danny’s book will guide job seekers in writing the most appropriate email to that employer.”

— Shira Itzhak, owner of Remedy Intelligent Staffing

“The most recurring complaint academics hear from employers focuses squarely on poor writing skills of young professionals. Danny’s book will become an important resource for corporations and universities seeking to improve written communications of employees and students.”

— Ron Culp, professional director of the Graduate Public Relations & Advertising Program at DePaul University

“Danny’s book is a perfect resource for workforce development centers and youth service providers across the country. There are so many people who are unemployed or underemployed who would rely on a guide that teaches effective writing skills in the job market.”

— Lisa Wornom-Zahralddin, MS, CWDP, program manager for the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals

“*Wait, How Do I Write This Email?* is your new career glossary. You will find any template or quick idea to connect your career aspirations to a real person in a real, effective way. Don’t wait. Use it now!”

— Jon Mertz, author and founder of Thin Difference

“Danny’s focus on practical writing skills is a much-needed complement to the work we do helping young people align their passion with purpose in the job market.”

— Adam Smiley Poswolsky, author of *The Quarter-Life Breakthrough*
Wait, How Do I Write This Email?

Game-Changing Templates for Networking and the Job Search

Danny Rubin
TO ANYONE WITH A GREAT STORY TO TELL. 
THAT MEANS YOU.
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Introduction

Hi there. I’m Danny Rubin.

I realize we met a minute ago, but I can already tell you have big plans for your career and intend to make an impact. I mean, a real impact. The kind where your talent, passion and ambition collide in a beautiful explosion to better the lives of everyone around you.

How do I know?

Well, you picked up this book. That means you recognize writing skills are a critical aspect of career development and business success. Plenty of people dream big dreams, but only a select few can put their vision into words and move others to action.

With *Wait, How Do I Write This Email?*, I help you turn routine situations into game-changing opportunities.

A networking email isn’t a burden; it’s your chance to make a lasting impression before you ever shake hands.

A job search email isn’t a chore; it’s a way to demonstrate poise and confidence.

And a cover letter isn’t an imposition; it’s how to tell your story and stand out from the competition.

*Wait, How Do I Write This Email?* is a teaching tool and reference guide. As you compose professional documents and emails, refer to my chapters on brevity and etiquette to stay sharp. When you need to write/revise your resume or compose job application emails, you can use my 100+ templates to structure the message and hit “Send” with confidence.

As you read this book, keep in mind great leaders are more than effective organizers, managers and public speakers. They are people who understand the power of the written word in our noisy digital age.

Strong writing is a remarkable tool, and I’m excited to show you why. I encourage you to read the opening chapters on writing skills before you use the templates. That way, you will understand the fundamentals and be ready to compose effective emails and documents.

Now let’s get started.

We have important work to do.
Author's Notes

Before you begin, two points about the book:

1. I use the writing lessons and templates in the book when I lead communications workshops for college students, recent graduates and young professionals. I often see the guides help millennials open doors, begin conversations and move ahead in their careers. Still, it’s important to keep in mind the book doesn’t guarantee new relationships, job interviews, job offers or acceptance to graduate schools. The best we can do is work hard to make each message a memorable one.

2. All the people, schools, businesses and organizations I name in the guides and templates are fictitious.
Chapter 1

How to Write Everything Better

How to be Brief

YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT, BUT YOU’RE A PROFESSIONAL WRITER.

Every day, you type words on the screen and place them before your friends, colleagues, clients and extended network. In essence, you put your writing ability on display for everyone to see.

That’s why in Chapter 1, I show you easy ways to edit your work and improve how it looks and feels to the reader. Use these resources as you send emails, write job applications and correspond with people online.

In order to learn extremely effective writing skills, it’s quite important that you are paying close attention and following instructions.

By the end of this chapter, you’ll recognize all the problems with the above sentence. I count five issues. (Find an improved version on page 17)

OK. Let’s dive in.
THE ONE QUESTION EVERY GREAT COMMUNICATOR ASKS

“Do I need it?”

Everything you write, whether an email to one person or a presentation to 5,000 people, requires the “Do I need it?” treatment. When you cut what you don’t need, your argument becomes stronger and more discernible. Two key parts of the deletion process:

► Remove extraneous words that make your writing too long (more on page 3)
► Remove ideas and arguments that distract the reader (more on page 6)

Questions to ask as you work on professional documents:

Resumes

► Do you provide too many bullet points under each job? Three is usually a good benchmark, although you may only have room for one or two (more info on page 215).
► Are you too wordy as you describe your duties at each company? Less is more.
► Is some of the information so old it’s no longer relevant? For example, you list every internship even though you’ve worked for five years. Time to hit delete.

Cover Letters

► Do you explain how the job will boost your own career? Instead, focus on how you can help the company prosper.
► Do you include unnecessary details about your life? Focus on what’s relevant to the job.
► Does your cover letter summarize your resume? That’s boring. Better to use the letter to tell one great story. More on the “storytelling” cover letter on page 195.

Speeches and Presentations

► Practice your speech in front of someone else. Ask the person, “Does it go on too long?” If yes, read through each section and then ask yourself, “Do I need it?” Either find sections to remove, or you’ll give a dull speech.
► Does your talk occasionally drift from the main topic or central argument? Locate parts that aren’t essential and remove them.
Do you spend too much time on any one topic? Are there sections you can cut out entirely? If so, delete them.

A speech isn’t about you. It’s about the people in the crowd who take your message to heart. “Does the audience need to hear it?” That’s what counts.

**Emails**

- Does the reader have to hunt to find your main point? Help the person out.

  *NOTE: What’s essential? The main argument or one big request.*

  *Everything else deserves the “Do I need it?” treatment.*

- Do you devote too many words to the problem? The reader would prefer you lay out a solution.

- Is the email you’re about to send necessary at all?

We are trained to think the “delete” key is a negative. Like we only press the button when we screw up. Nonsense. The “delete” key is the most important command on the keyboard. With every stroke, we strengthen our writing.

**How to improve everything you write in three minutes**

The tutorial below allows you to improve anything you write in a few short minutes. Keep these pages handy!

**STEP ONE:** When you finish your document, hit CTRL+F to bring up the search function.

**STEP TWO:** One by one, look for these words and delete/amend them.

- very, just and really (remove all three)
- that (delete, as in “I believe that you are correct”)
- quite (delete, excess word)
- thing (replace with specific word for the “thing”)
- utilize (switch to “use” or pick another verb)
- get or got (pick another, more descriptive verb)
- -ing verbs (“The boy is running” becomes “The boy runs”)*

**STEP THREE:** Read over your work to check your edits.

*The “-ing” verbs bullet point deserves further explanation. At the start of an email, you may want to use the phrase “I am writing” as in “I am writing to introduce myself.” In my view, that’s an acceptable use of an “-ing” verb because it’s the best way to begin. “I write to introduce myself” is too stilted.

In many other cases, you can cut the “-ing” and the sentence still makes sense. Here’s one more example with multiple “-ing” words:

*At my most recent job, I was responsible for managing projects, working with clients and overseeing our budget.*

Let’s chop down the three “-ing” verbs.

*At my most recent job, I managed projects, worked with clients and oversaw our budget.*

The original sentence has 18 words and 31 syllables.

The revised sentence has 15 words and 22 syllables.

Brevity makes you sharper. Plain and simple.

**“Filler” words to cut out and why**

Let’s go a bit further than the “three minute” exercise. Here are five more words and phrases you need to delete, along with an explanation for why you shouldn’t use them.

1. **Amazing**

In an unscientific poll I conducted by…well, observing the conversations around me, I have concluded “amazing” is the most overused word in our vocabulary.

Why? A word that means everything actually means nothing.

*“Man, that show was so amazing last night. What an amazing crowd and the guitar solo at the end? Amazing.”*

See my point?

Words to use instead of “amazing”: fascinating, astounding, breathtaking, spectacular, terrific, magnificent and unbelievable. Need more? Grab a thesaurus.
2. Definitely

Like “amazing,” the word “definitely” has become a filler term. You can remove “definitely” and the sentence retains its meaning.

“I am definitely glad Susan was at the happy hour to help with the awkward conversation.”

Becomes…

“I am glad Susan was at the happy hour to help with the awkward conversation.”

Same difference.

Also, no more “definately.” There’s only one correct spelling.

3. Literally

“This is literally the funniest thing I’ve ever seen…”

“You have literally got to be kidding me…”

“Are you literally about to do this?”

“Literally” has also become a filler word, an uninspiring adverb with zero flavor or style.

Delete whenever possible. The word literally does nothing for you.

4. In Order

The words “in order” may turn up in our writing for three reasons:

- We try to make our sentences more professional.
- We use them out of habit.
- We assume the two words need to be there.

For example, “I wrote this line in order to show you how to use less words.”

If we remove “in order,” the meaning stays the same.

“I wrote this line to show you how to use less words.”

5. Such As

A tiny phrase, sure, but “such as” screams out, “I’m trying to impress you!”

For example, “My internship taught me a range of skills such as project management, problem solving and time management.”

People rarely use “such as” in normal conversation. So why write it?
Instead, use “like” as in “My internship taught me a range of skills like project coordination, problem solving and time management.”

When you finish writing and start the revision process (hint: print out the page to spot errors), make sure you search the document for “such as.”

Remember: when it comes to documents like job applications, the reader is the only one who matters.

How to remove big sections of text

Now that we have covered easy ways to remove words and short phrases, let’s turn our attention to big ideas and chunks of words.

Cover letter, presentation, speech, formal work document — you should edit EVERYTHING you write. Before you consider a document “finalized,” be tough on yourself and chop it down.

No one will ever say, “This person’s document is way too short. Now what am I supposed to do with all my free time?”

I created a chart to help tighten your writing. Are the rules hard and fast? No. They are a reminder to give people exactly what they need and not a word more.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Document</th>
<th>Number of Words to Remove</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300 words</td>
<td>50–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 words</td>
<td>75–85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 words</td>
<td>100–110</td>
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<td>200–210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 words</td>
<td>225–235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000+ words</td>
<td>At least 250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask as You Remove Words

- Is each sentence — or part of the sentence — absolutely necessary to make your point?
- Do any sentences repeat a point already made?
- Which sections are least essential?
- If you HAD to remove a paragraph, which one would it be?
- Does it “feel” like a section drags or slows down the pace?

#1 Rule: Never fall in love with a particular line.

Let’s look at three examples to understand how we delete chunks of words.

1. Two paragraphs of a personal statement for graduate school

“Too long” version:

My career path so far has been unconventional but valuable every step of the way. Yes, I could have gone the usual route like my peers: graduate college, dive into a regular 9-to-5 job, wear a suit and tie and battle every day in traffic, but that life doesn’t appeal to me. It might be a great option for others, but I had different plans. After graduation, I decided to go down a road few people would consider, and it’s made all the difference in my life. I joined a service organization and spent two years in a village in Madagascar.

When I arrived in the village, I wanted to turn around and run home. I felt so alone and out of my comfort zone. Sure, in college I had traveled a good amount. I studied abroad in Barcelona, which is where I learned to speak Spanish fluently. But now I was in Africa and my Spanish skills wouldn’t be much use. With the help of a local fisherman named Haja, I integrated into the culture of the village and…

OK, that’s enough. As you read those two paragraphs, did you notice how they wander and lose focus? The writer repeats the same ideas and includes information that distracts from the main point: why the experience in a service organization makes the person an ideal fit for the graduate program.
Key sections to delete:

Yes, I could have gone the usual route like my peers: graduate college, dive into a regular 9-to-5 job, wear a suit and tie and battle every day in traffic, but that life doesn’t appeal to me. It might be a great option for others, but I had different plans.

Wonderful for you but not essential information. Delete.

Sure, in college I had traveled a good amount. I studied abroad in Barcelona, which is where I learned to speak Spanish fluently. But now I was in Africa and my Spanish skills wouldn’t be much use.

Not necessary to include. Delete.

The “much shorter” version:

After graduation, I decided to go down a road few others would consider, and it’s made all the difference in my life. I joined a service organization and spent two years in a village in Madagascar.

When I arrived in the village, I wanted to turn around and run home. With the help of a local fisherman named Haja, I integrated into the culture of the village and…

Faster, sharper, more focused. In the second version, the writer eliminates information that’s redundant or unnecessary. Ask yourself:

- Do I stray from the main point?
- Do I provide extraneous information?

Be tough on yourself. Be critical.
2. One paragraph of a big email to coworkers

“Too long” version:

I want to address what happened last night at the gala, why the evening became chaotic and how our team needs to improve to make sure what happened never happens again. I have received numerous complaints either in person or over email from people who were upset with the food, our service and how we mixed up entrees for over 50 people. In all my years of event planning, I have never been so embarrassed by a team’s performance, and again I hope this email can help us improve, especially because we have another big dinner on Saturday night, and we need to be at our best. Now, the first problem we need to correct is communication between the kitchen and the servers. It’s a simple process: talk with the chefs before dinner service begins and make sure they understand how many meals to cook that are fish, chicken or vegetarian. That’s a basic, fundamental part of the night for us. All you need to do is keep an open dialogue, and we won’t have these food screw-ups. The second issue is…

Whew. Are you exhausted from that paragraph? I am. And I wrote it!

Can you pick out the sentences with redundant information? Did you choose these three?

I want to address what happened last night at the gala, why the evening became chaotic and how our team needs to improve to make sure what happened never happens again.

I have never been so embarrassed by a team’s performance, and again I hope this email can help us improve, especially because we have another big dinner on Saturday night, and we need to be at our best.