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Global Learning for Operational Leaders



COMMUNICATION AND WRITING SKILLS | CWS-023

Executive Summary and Briefing Note Writing

Contact

+31 85 7444446
info@aractech.com
https://aractech.com

Address

Waarderweg 50, 2031 BP Haarlem - Netherlands.

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Course content

Why Attend

Senior leaders read under constant time pressure. They need to grasp an issue, its implications and the decision required within a minute or two, often between meetings or on a mobile device. Executive summaries and briefing notes that bury the message, wander through background or fail to recommend a clear course of action waste that time and weaken the writer's credibility.

This Executive Summary and Briefing Note Writing training course teaches participants how to write concise, decision-focused documents that busy executives value. Participants learn how to identify the core message, structure content using the pyramid principle, write for different decision types, present options and risks objectively, and edit ruthlessly for brevity and clarity.

Course Methodology

• The course is practical and writing-intensive. Participants analyse good and poor examples, then draft summaries and briefing notes from realistic source material, receiving individual feedback from the trainer and peers. Each day builds on the previous one, so participants see measurable improvement in their writing.

Course Objectives

• Explain what senior readers need from summaries and briefings

• Identify the core message and purpose before writing

• Structure documents using the pyramid principle and top-down logic

• Write clear issue statements, options and recommendations

• Present risks, costs and implications objectively and concisely

• Adapt briefings for information, decision and urgent action

Target Audience

• Managers and team leaders who brief senior executives

• Policy officers and analysts

• Executive assistants and chiefs of staff

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Course content

• Project and programme managers

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Course outline

Detailed course outline

Day-by-day outline for Executive Summary and Briefing Note Writing.

Day 1 - Writing for Senior Readers

- 09:00-09:34 | How executives read and what they look for first
- 09:34-10:08 | Common reasons summaries and briefings fail
- 10:08-10:42 | Defining purpose, audience and the decision required
- 10:42-11:00 | Finding the single core message before drafting
- 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break
- 11:30-11:46 | Finding the single core message before drafting (continued)
- 11:46-12:20 | Differences between summaries, briefing notes and cover papers
- 12:20-12:53 | Tone and credibility in writing for senior leaders
- 12:53-14:00 | Exercise: diagnosing weaknesses in sample briefings

Day 2 - Structuring the Message

- 09:00-09:30 | The pyramid principle and putting the answer first
- 09:30-10:00 | Grouping supporting points logically and consistently
- 10:00-10:30 | Situation, complication and resolution as an opening structure
- 10:30-11:00 | Writing headings that carry the message
- 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break
- 11:30-12:00 | Deciding what to leave out or move to annexes
- 12:00-13:00 | Building a one-page summary from a long report
- 13:00-14:00 | Workshop: restructuring a long document into a summary

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Day 3 - Options, Recommendations and Risks

- 09:00-09:34 | Writing a clear and neutral issue statement
- 09:34-10:08 | Presenting options with balanced pros and cons
- 10:08-10:42 | Making a firm, well-justified recommendation
- 10:42-11:00 | Summarising financial, legal and reputational implications
- 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break
- 11:30-11:46 | Summarising financial, legal and reputational implications (continued)
- 11:46-12:20 | Presenting risks and mitigations in plain language
- 12:20-12:53 | Stating next steps, owners and deadlines clearly
- 12:53-14:00 | Exercise: drafting a decision briefing note

Day 4 - Concise and Clear Language

- 09:00-09:34 | Writing short sentences and active constructions
- 09:34-10:08 | Removing jargon, filler and unnecessary qualifiers
- 10:08-10:42 | Choosing precise words over vague expressions
- 10:42-11:00 | Presenting numbers and evidence clearly in text
- 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break
- 11:30-11:46 | Presenting numbers and evidence clearly in text (continued)
- 11:46-12:20 | Using bullet points and tables without losing meaning
- 12:20-12:53 | Editing techniques to cut length by a third
- 12:53-14:00 | Workshop: editing drafts for brevity and clarity

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Day 5 - Special Situations and Final Practice

- 09:00-09:39 | Urgent briefings and situation updates during incidents
- 09:39-10:18 | Briefing notes for meetings, visits and speeches
- 10:18-10:57 | Writing summaries for mobile and email reading
- 10:57-11:00 | Handling sensitive or bad news in briefings
- 11:00-11:30 | Coffee break
- 11:30-12:06 | Handling sensitive or bad news in briefings (continued)
- 12:06-12:44 | Quality checking before sending to executives
- 12:44-13:22 | Final writing assessment with individual feedback
- 13:22-14:00 | Personal action plan for executive writing

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Seminar dates

Available seminar dates

Live dates and pricing for Executive Summary and Briefing Note Writing generated from the course details page.

Date	Location	Format	Fee
14 - 18 December 2026	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
21 - 25 December 2026	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
7 - 11 December 2026	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
4 - 8 January 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
11 - 15 January 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
18 - 22 January 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
25 - 29 January 2027	Istanbul	Classroom	**€2,825**
8 - 12 February 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
15 - 19 February 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
22 - 26 February 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**

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Seminar dates

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Live dates and pricing for Executive Summary and Briefing Note Writing generated from the course details page.

Date	Location	Format	Fee
1 - 5 February 2027	Kuala lumpur	Classroom	**€2,425**
15 - 19 March 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
22 - 26 March 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
1 - 5 March 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
8 - 12 March 2027	Madrid	Classroom	**€3,400**
26 - 30 April 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
5 - 9 April 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
12 - 16 April 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
19 - 23 April 2027	Munich	Classroom	**€2,425**
3 - 7 May 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**

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Date	Location	Format	Fee
10 - 14 May 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
17 - 21 May 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
24 - 28 May 2027	Paris	Classroom	**€2,810**
14 - 18 June 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
21 - 25 June 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
7 - 11 June 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
19 - 23 July 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
26 - 30 July 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
5 - 9 July 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
12 - 16 July 2027	Vienna	Classroom	**€3,425**

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Date	Location	Format	Fee
23 - 27 August 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
2 - 6 August 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
9 - 13 August 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
16 - 20 August 2027	Amsterdam	Classroom	**€3,215**
13 - 17 September 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
20 - 24 September 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
6 - 10 September 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
11 - 15 October 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
18 - 22 October 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
25 - 29 October 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**

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Seminar dates

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Date	Location	Format	Fee
4 - 8 October 2027	Dubai	Classroom	**€2,845**
15 - 19 November 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
22 - 26 November 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
1 - 5 November 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
8 - 12 November 2027	Geneva	Classroom	**€3,315**
27 - 31 December 2027	London	Classroom	**€2,915**
6 - 10 December 2027	Barcelona	Classroom	**€2,275**
13 - 17 December 2027	Frankfurt	Classroom	**€2,175**
20 - 24 December 2027	Istanbul	Classroom	**€2,825**
14 - 18 December 2026	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**

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Date	Location	Format	Fee
21 - 25 December 2026	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
7 - 11 December 2026	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
4 - 8 January 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
11 - 15 January 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
18 - 22 January 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
25 - 29 January 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
8 - 12 February 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
15 - 19 February 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
22 - 26 February 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
1 - 5 February 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**

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15 - 19 March 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
22 - 26 March 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
1 - 5 March 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
8 - 12 March 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
26 - 30 April 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
5 - 9 April 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
12 - 16 April 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
19 - 23 April 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
3 - 7 May 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
10 - 14 May 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**

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17 - 21 May 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
24 - 28 May 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
14 - 18 June 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
21 - 25 June 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
7 - 11 June 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
19 - 23 July 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
26 - 30 July 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
5 - 9 July 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
12 - 16 July 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
23 - 27 August 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**

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2 - 6 August 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
9 - 13 August 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
16 - 20 August 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
13 - 17 September 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
20 - 24 September 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
6 - 10 September 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
11 - 15 October 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
18 - 22 October 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
25 - 29 October 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
4 - 8 October 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**

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22 - 26 November 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
1 - 5 November 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
8 - 12 November 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
27 - 31 December 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
6 - 10 December 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
13 - 17 December 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**
20 - 24 December 2027	Online / Live	Online / Live	**€1,625**