



Write On! We're in Agreement

## Writing a Contract

Whether you think actors and athletes are paid too much or not, the one thing they all have in common is a **contract**. Their agents try to get the best deal they can for their client. Once everyone agrees on wages and **responsibilities**, they sign a contract. Contracts are not just for the rich and famous. They are for everybody. Contracts are agreements between two or more people to do certain things. You might sign a contract if you rent an apartment, buy a car, get a job, or purchase insurance. It is important to read a contract carefully. It is also a good idea to get a lawyer's help if you have any questions.

In some cases, you may want to make a simple contract with someone you know. Maybe you agree to do some work for them for a certain wage. Maybe you are exchanging services. You will do something for him and he does something for you. In this lesson, you will learn how to write a simple contract.

Here is an example of a simple contract.

This is a contract between Sam Adams and Martha Stuart.

1. Martha agrees to pay Sam \$500.00 for fixing her horse fence.
2. Martha will pay for all the materials.
3. Sam will bring his own tools.
4. Sam will complete the job by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
5. Martha will pay Sam by August 8<sup>th</sup>.
6. If Sam has not completed the work by August 1<sup>st</sup>, he will lose \$25.00 a day.
7. If Martha does not pay Sam by August 8<sup>th</sup>, Sam will be able to take Martha to Small Claims Court. Martha will pay for all the court costs.

Both parties agree to the terms of this contract.

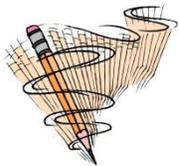
*Martha Stuart*                      July 1, 2015

*Sam Adams*                         July 1, 2015

### Instructions for Writing a Simple Contract

If you follow these six steps, you will be able to write a simple contract:

1. Write the name of the people entering into the contract.
2. Write a sentence or two about what each person's responsibilities are. Who is doing what in return for what? Be very specific. For example, Hector will pay me \$500 for my motorcycle. He will make five \$100 payments on the first day of the next five months – June, July, August, September, and October.
3. Write any special conditions. For example, Jorge will paint my house using Benjamin Moore®, Sky Blue #24 paint.
4. Include a statement of what the consequences will be if the contract is broken or the job is delayed. For example, for every day the job is delayed, the payment will be reduced by \$25.00.
5. Write a statement that each party agrees to the conditions in the contract.
6. Each party should sign and date the contract. It is a good idea to have a witness sign it, too. A witness verifies that both parties are in agreement.



### Your Turn

Using the guidelines, let's write a couple of simple contracts. Use the following passage to create your first contract.

Jack and Christina like to grow vegetables. They always plant too many. Javier and Rosa have four children and it costs a fortune to feed them. Christina complains to her friend, Rosa, that she always loses vegetables from her garden because they can't eat them fast enough. Rosa tells Christina to can them. Christina doesn't know how to do that. Rosa agrees to preserve all the tomatoes in Christina's garden if she can keep half of them for her family. Christina agrees to this. Rosa says she will buy all the jars and tops and will not charge Christina for them. She says that she will have all the canning done by the end of September. Together the women look at the tomatoes in Christina's garden. They agree that there are probably enough tomatoes to preserve 24 jars full. Christina says she will pick the tomatoes as they ripen and



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**Finishing Up**

Base the contract you will write on the information in the next passage.

Yvonne wants her house painted, but to hire a company will be very expensive. Her brother, Daniel and his friend Ramon, offer to paint her house for her. She knows that her brother is very busy and may start the job, but won't be able to finish it. She doesn't want to fight with her brother. Yvonne thinks it is a good idea to write a contract so they both know what is expected. Daniel says he can get the painting done in two weeks. Yvonne gives him the whole month of July to complete the project. Her brother wants to use Sherwin-Williams® paint. She wants Benjamin Moore®, exterior satin, Kennebunkport Green. She wants white trim and tells her brother he can use the Sherwin-Williams® paint for that. Yvonne will buy all the paint and any paint brushes that Daniel and Ramon want to use. Daniel and his friend will bring their ladders and his spray gun. Daniel said he and his friend will do it for free during their spare time. Yvonne wants to make sure it gets done so she offers to pay them \$500 each. If it isn't done by the end of July, however, Yvonne will subtract \$50.00 a day. If it is not done by August 15<sup>th</sup>, she will hire someone to finish it and Daniel and his friend will not get any money. Yvonne's friend, Eva, is there when Yvonne makes the contract with Daniel and Ramon.

Write a contract for Yvonne, Daniel, and Ramon.

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**Remember:**

**Add details about  
dates and money to  
be paid.**

Did you follow the six steps? Go back and reread the contract. Did you include all of the important information? Did Yvonne, Daniel, and Ramon sign and date the contract? Did you use Eva as a witness to the contract?



**Check it Out!**

***Can You See the Future***, in the **Reading on the Move** lesson series may also help you with writing your contract.

Find it on the Internet at

[www.migrant.net/migrant/publications/index.htm](http://www.migrant.net/migrant/publications/index.htm)

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Can you predict what might happen if you don't have a contract with another person? What are some possible outcomes?

- They might cheat you out of your money.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

It's a good idea to always have a contract.  
Use this format in the future to write a simple contract.

### **Writing a Contract Checklist**

- Each person's responsibility is written into the contract.
- Specific details such as last day of work and money to be paid are included.
- All parties signed and dated the contract.

### Writing Traits Scored in this Lesson

	<b>Great Job</b> 5 points	<b>Almost There</b> 3 points	<b>Keep Working</b> 1 point
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a strong beginning.</li> <li>• Points are in order.</li> <li>• The message is clear.</li> <li>• There is a strong conclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a beginning.</li> <li>• There is a middle, but it runs together.</li> <li>• There is no conclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no beginning, middle, or end.</li> <li>• The message is not clear.</li> </ul>
<b>Word Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a variety of colorful and descriptive words.</li> <li>• Words are not repeated too often.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some colorful and descriptive words are used.</li> <li>• Some words are repeated too often.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorful and descriptive words are lacking.</li> <li>• Sometimes wrong words are used.</li> <li>• Several words are repeated too often.</li> </ul>

### Words to Know

**contract:** a written agreement between two or more people

**responsibility:** accountability and obligation

