

MTHEL131

Writing Assignment

This assignment provides you the opportunity to develop your writing abilities, a skill greatly valued by both co-op and permanent employers.

Your assignment will address **three** separate topics (to be selected below).

Choose **two** topics from “Pool A” and **one** topic from “Pool B”

For all topics, use **plain language** that could be easily understood by non-actuaries.

Write using **full sentences and paragraphs**. You may use bullet points **sparingly** to summarize key points in your assignment.

The **first draft** of your assignment is due by **3:00pm on October 23 (Week 7)** and is worth 10% of your final grade. Your response to each of the selected topics should be no more than 800 words long, and double spaced, using a 12 point font. In total, your assignment, including all three topics, should not exceed ten pages.

Do not bring your assignment to class; submit it electronically by following the detailed submission instructions below.

During the week of **November 4th (week 9)**, your first draft will be returned to you with a grade, and feedback/suggestions for improvement.

The **final version** of your written assignment (the “revised” version, incorporating the feedback from your first draft) is due by **3:00pm November 20th (Week 11)** and is worth 15% of your final course grade. Submit your final version electronically, in the same way you submitted your initial draft.

Penalty for late submission: Submission of your assignment in a timely manner is very important, as late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per hour. For example, if the assignment is two hours late, the grade (out of 100) will be reduced by 20 marks.

Important Note: As with any professional writing assignment, it is critical that this report represent your **own** work. Cutting and pasting material into your assignment from any textbook or web site is unacceptable, and violates university

rules on academic integrity. In addition, for you as a future actuary, such actions contravene the ethical conduct expected of individuals in your profession.

Pool “A” Topics (worth 30% each)

Choose any **two** of these three topics. Each memo should be no more than 800 words long and double spaced using a 12 point font.

1. Life insurance sales in your company have been declining over the past few years. As an actuary in the Marketing Department, you have been asked to write a memo outlining the benefits of life insurance to consumers, especially families. This memo will be distributed to your company’s salespeople.

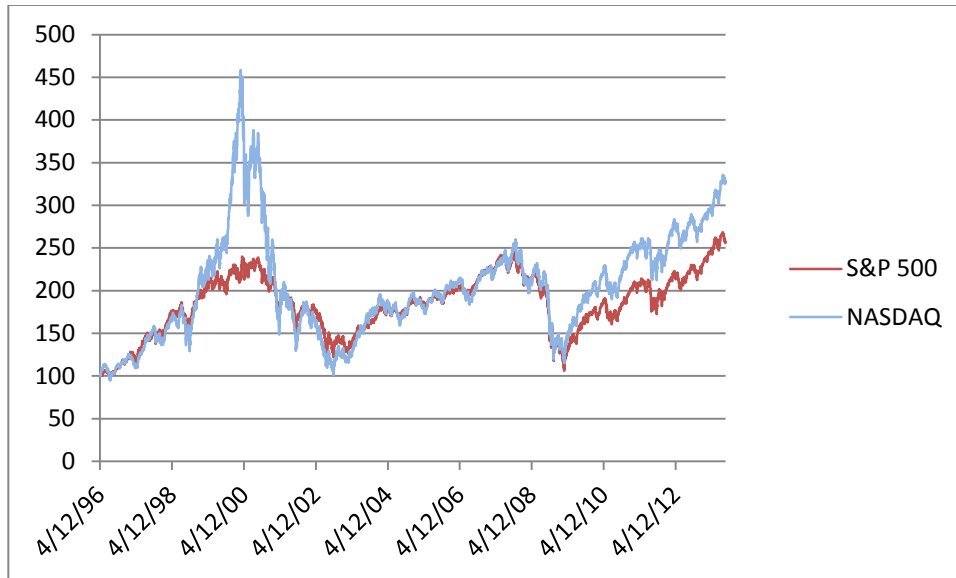
2. As an actuary with Leading Life Insurance Company, you have just attended a conference at which you heard presentations on an innovative new insurance product called Universal Life. Prepare a memo to be sent to your boss, the VP of Product Development explaining how this new product works, and why it would be attractive to customers.

3. ABC Company has been operating successfully for ten years, and is now interested in putting a pension plan in place for its 200 employees. As a member of the company’s Benefit’s Committee, you have been asked to prepare a memo for the owner of the company outlining the differences between a Defined Benefit pension plan, and a Defined Contribution pension plan. Identify any risks each plan would present to either the employer or the employees.

Pool “B” Topics (worth 40%)

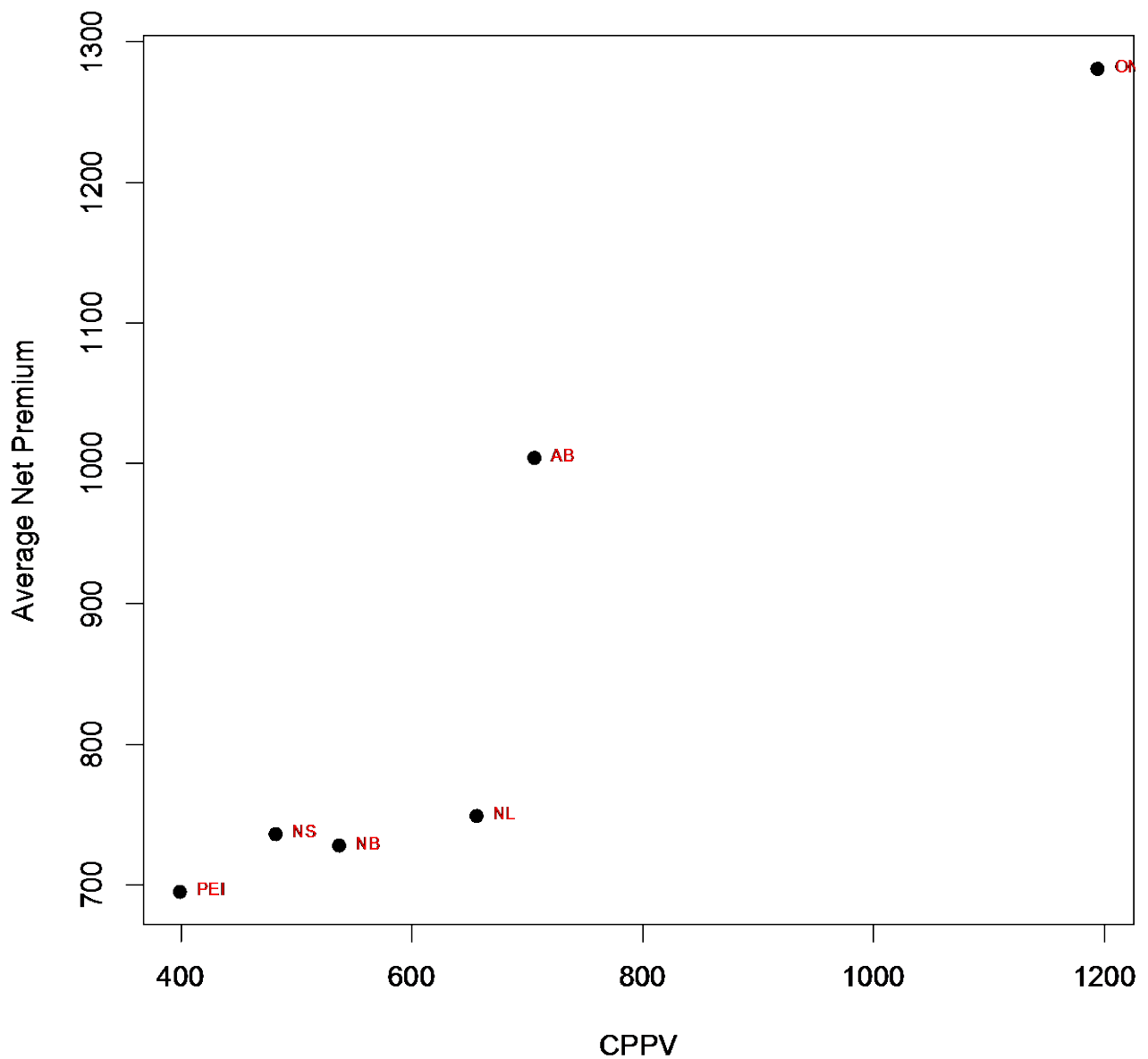
Choose **one** of these two topics. Your response should be no more than 800 words long and double spaced, using a 12 point font.

1. The following chart presents the histories of the S&P 500 and NASDAQ composite indices from April 12, 1996 to August 30, 2013 (both indices have been adjusted to have initial value 100).



Describe the history of the S&P 500 index over this period. Identify any periods of stress related to significant declines in the market, and *briefly* describe the events surrounding these market declines. Discuss the extent to which the two indices move together. Identify any periods during which the indices have behaved significantly differently, and suggest possible reasons for this divergence.

2. The following plot gives the Average Net Auto Insurance Premium and the Claim Cost per Private Passenger Vehicle (CPPV) for a set of Canadian provinces for 2009.



Describe the relationship between the two variables depicted in the above plot. Explain whether the relationship is consistent with your expectations based on what you have learned about property and casualty insurance in this course. Briefly describe some factors that might affect the values of these variables and could explain the differences across provinces.

MTHEL 131
Writing Assignment
Marking Rubric

	Draft Version (10% of grade)	Final Version (15% of grade)
Content	25%	10%
Organization	25%	10%
Writing Style / Clarity	25%	15%
Grammar and Spelling	25%	15%
Incorporation of Suggestions*	n/a	50%
Total	100%	100%

* this grade represents the degree to which suggestions/feedback from your **first draft** have been incorporated into your final version.

How to Submit Your Written Report Assignment

Prior to submitting your assignment, save it as a Microsoft Word file (.doc/.docx).

The Week 7 Assessment (first draft) must be submitted online using the **Week 7 Assessment** dropbox. Dropboxes can be accessed by clicking **Assessments** and then **Dropbox** on the course navigation bar.

The Week 11 Assessment (final version) must be submitted online using the **Week 11 Assessment** dropbox. Dropboxes can be accessed by clicking **Assessments** and then **Dropbox** on the course navigation bar.

You may only submit **one file for Week 7 and one file for Week 11 assignments** (i.e., combine your responses to **two** topics from “Pool A” and **one** topic from “Pool B” into one file).

If the file you submit is incorrect, please let the course staff know via email [[Sean Scott sm3scott@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:Sean.Scott.sm3scott@uwaterloo.ca)] so that we can reset the dropbox for you. The Week 7 and Week 11 Assessments will be returned to you online via the **Week 7 and Week 11 Assessment** dropboxes.

For instructions on how to submit to dropboxes, check here:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students/dropboxes>

General Guidelines for Submitting Assignments in LEARN

- Review [Preparing your Assignment to be Sent](#).
- Be sure to save your assignment in an appropriate folder or on your desktop for easy retrieval.
- Ensure that the name of your file does not include special characters such as symbols or punctuation. Such characters may cause problems if you are going to be uploading your file.
- Submit only one file per assignment (i.e., combine all documents into one file).
- Do not zip your files.