



On the Job

QLWG
Individual Life Skills
Unit 20

QLWG Skills for Life

Acknowledgements

Published by: Quebec Literacy Working Group:

Central Québec School Board:	Patti L. Moore
Eastern Shores School Board:	Debrah Adams
Eastern Townships School Board:	Ilze Epnerns
English Montreal School Board:	Mario Pasteris and Mary Gouskos
Kativik School Board:	Carmelle Castonguay
Lester B. Pearson School Board:	Denise Llewellyn
Littoral School Board:	David Roberts
New Frontiers School Board:	Maria Gudzio
Riverside School Board:	Linda Martin
Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board:	Darlene Brown
Western Québec School Board:	Warren Halligan

Project Coordinator:

Patti L. Moore

Author:

Vicki-Ann Huegeli

Project Supervisor:

PROCEDE (Provincial Organization of Continuing Education Directors – English)

Proofreading:

Vérification Anglaise: Karen Ingalls

Cover Design:

Creative Solutions Créatives: Vilnis Epnerns

Additional Expertise:

Teachers, Tutors, Students and Local Animators from the following groups who field-tested the units:

Central Québec School Board	Littoral School Board
Chateauguay Valley Literacy Council	Lester B. Pearson School Board
Eastern Shores School Board	New Frontiers School Board
Eastern Townships School Board	Quebec City Reading Council
English Montreal School Board	Riverside School Board
Gaspésie Literacy Council	Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board
Kativik School Board	South Shore Reading Council
Laurentian Literacy Council	Western Quebec Literacy Council
The Learning Exchange	Western Québec School Board
Literacy in Action	Yamaska Literacy Council
Literacy Unlimited	

ISBN Number: 978-0-9812349-0-8

© Copyright *QLWG Skills for Life Series*, 2008

QLWG Skills for Life Series

THEMATIC UNITS

Competency-based learning meets the needs of all learners. It is important to keep in mind, however, that all learners are different. In order to address the needs and interests of all learners, units have been divided by *Essential Life Skills* and *Individual Life Skills*.

Essential Life Skills are important for everyone, while *Individual Life Skills* address the needs and interests of different learners. Once learners have completed the “Essential” units, they may choose a unit that is applicable to their interests and lifestyle.

Essential Life Skills Units	Individual Life Skills Units
1. Orientation Unit 2. Around the Home 3. My Community 4. Being a Canadian Citizen 5. What’s for Dinner? 6. Managing My Money 7. Smart Shopping 8. My Health 9. All About Me 10. Communication Skills 11. Living in Quebec 12. Strategies for Reading 13. Strategies for Writing 14. Strategies for Grammar 15. Strategies for Numbers 1: Understanding Numbers 16. Strategies for Numbers 2: Adding & Subtracting 17. Strategies for Numbers 3: Multiplying, Dividing & Fractions	18. My Hobbies and Leisure Time 19. Employment Skills 20. On the Job 21. My Family 22. Entertainment (music and film) 23. Fitness and the Great Outdoors 24. Getting Around (travel and transportation) 25. Career Exploration 26. Getting My Driver’s Licence 27. Learning in Quebec 28. Living Green 29. Handling Legal Concerns 30. The Retirement Years

QLWG *Skills for Life Series*

On the Job

Unit # 20

Table of Contents

	page
WELCOME LEARNER!.....	(i)
Introduction.....	1
What I Already Know	2
Habits for a Happier and Healthier Workplace (article).....	4
Job Safety: Your Basic Rights and Responsibilities.....	7
How to Handle My Rights	9
Safety for Different Jobs.....	10
Following Instructions	12
Being Professional	15
Communication.....	19
How are you doing?.....	21
Writing Messages and Requests	22
Thank-You Letters.....	30
Thank-You Notes.....	36
Teamwork	38
Memos.....	40
How to Impress the Boss	45
Problem Solving.....	47
Attitude	51
Summary of Key Skills for Work	52
On the Job and Me.....	54
What I Know Now.....	57
On the Job: Learning Checklist	59

WELCOME LEARNER!

This workbook is meant to help you develop important life skills. As you work on different activities, try to see the purpose in what you are doing, stay motivated and enjoy!

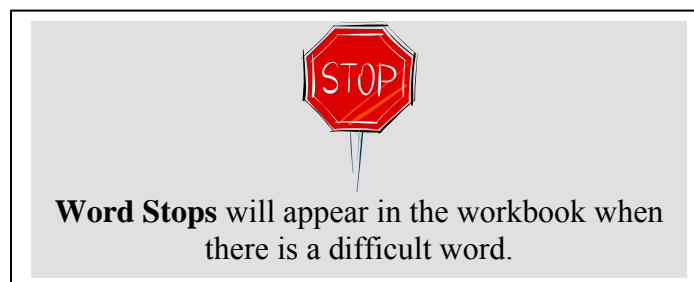
Things to Look for:

Checkpoints

You will finish every unit of study with a Checkpoint (in blue). Once you have completed the Checkpoint questionnaire, you will send this document to your distance education tutor. Make sure you fill in the **date, your name, your phone number** and the **distance education tutor's name** on the cover of this document.

Word Stops

Word Stops will explain more difficult words. Look for words in bold print (example: **bold**). A **Word Stop** will follow to tell you what that word means.



If you do not understand, follow these steps:

1. Look at titles and pictures. Do they tell you anything?
2. Try to find the general meaning.
3. Look for Word Stops.
4. Use a dictionary.
5. If you still do not understand, contact your distance education tutor.

Before you contact your distance education tutor:

1. Prepare your questions. What do you want to ask?
2. Give the page number and section title to your tutor so they know where you are.

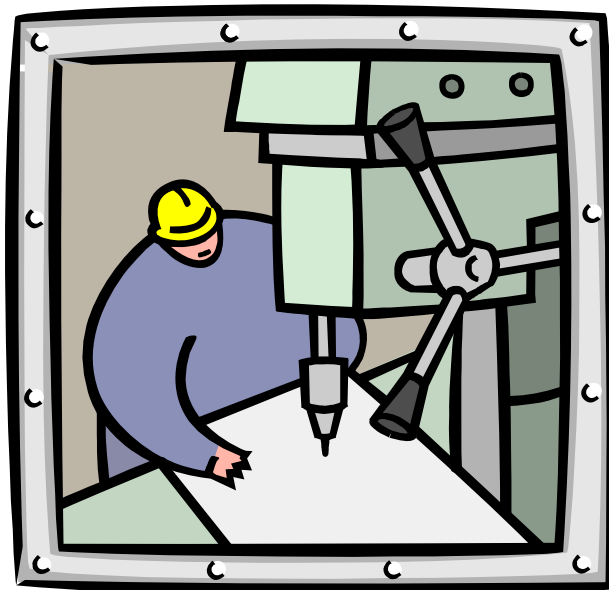


“Act the part; walk and talk exactly as if you were already the person you want to be.”

~Brian Tracy

On the Job

"The true way to render ourselves happy is to love our work and find in it our pleasure." ~Francoise de Motteville



Introduction:

Skills for work are the skills you need to start, stay in and progress in the workplace. In this unit, you will discover ways to develop skills for work. These skills will help you to enjoy your job and impress your employer.

In this unit, you will:

- read an article about job success.
- think about job safety.
- practice reading instructions.
- think about how to be an impressive worker.
- think about your rights as a worker.
- practice writing messages for the workplace.
- practice writing workplace requests.
- practice handling workplace problems.
- reflect on skills for work.

What I Already Know



Explain what you already know about skills for the workplace. This list will help you to keep track of what you learn.

ACTIVITY:

Read the article, “Habits for a Happier and Healthier Workplace” (on the next page).

STEP 1:

Prepare yourself for reading. Look at the title and picture of this article. What do you think this article is about?

STEP 2:

Use your reading strategies to help you read the article.

PURPOSE:

This article will get you thinking about the importance of happiness in the workplace.

**PREPARING FOR READING:**

What do the title and picture tell you about this article? What do you think it is about?

Habits for a Happier and Healthier Workplace

Discover the secrets to happiness at work

by Victoria Wolfe

It's no secret - North Americans are overworked. According to recent statistics, on the average, we work 9 full weeks more a year than Western European workers. Although Canadians on the whole have it slightly better than our neighbours to the south, we are still working more now than a generation ago and we are feeling the pressure of time stress and hurried lifestyles in record numbers.

With much of our adult lives being spent on the job, people are trying more and more to find ways to make their workplaces happier and healthier places. Here are just a few ways to make your working life a little bit easier.

Keep up your spirits. Having an upbeat and positive attitude will go far in making your workday better. Not only will you feel better yourself, your positive attitude will affect your co-workers. You may not notice a difference at first, but keep trying. Being in a "right state" of mind makes an individual more willing to help, trust and encourage others. The likelihood that you will, in turn, get similar treatment is high.

Laugh! It's good for you. Studies prove that laughing is a significant part of physical wellness. Dr. William Fry of Stanford University found that laughing 200 times burns off the same amount of calories as 10 minutes on a rowing machine. Another study found that after a bout of laughter, blood pressure drops to a lower, healthier level than before the laughter began.

Appreciate the small things - a co-worker who compliments you on your stylish new shirt, a supervisor who brings you a

homemade cookie, a subordinate who thanks you for your hard work training them. Small blessings add up to big dividends at the end of the day. With all the usual stress we face in our every day work, taking time out to appreciate the many little good things that happened during the day can really add up.

Don't let setbacks sour you. Everyone, even seasoned professionals make mistakes from time to time. Instead of fuming, take what you learned from your errors and make it into an educational moment. If you can take negative events, both in and out of the office, and turn them into lessons learned, then you will be less likely to have a victimized outlook on the world.

What do all these tips have in common? They start and end with you. You have the power to make your workplace a happy or unhappy one. With a slight change of attitude, you can make a huge difference in how you think and feel about your workplace. In time, your positive attitude will start to affect those around you. If changes don't materialize right away, be patient. You'll be well on your way to a healthier and happier workplace.



REFLECTING ON READING:

1. What is this article about?

2. What are some new words that you discovered in this article?

3. How did you find the meaning of these words?

4. What are some ways that the article suggests to be happier at work?

5. Why should you laugh?

6. How should you handle setbacks at work?

7. Can you use some of the tips suggested in the article? Which ones?



Job Safety

Your Basic Rights and Responsibilities

REFLECTION:

What do you already know about a worker's safety rights and responsibilities?

1. Who is responsible for ensuring job safety?

2. What rights do workers have?

3. What responsibilities do workers have?



"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen."

~[Frank Lloyd Wright](#)

Now, look at the table below and compare a worker's rights and responsibilities with what you wrote on the previous page.

Worker's Rights	Worker's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be taught safety rules. ● To work in a safe, clean environment. ● To have safety training: fire drills, first-aid stations, rules for handling chemicals, etc. ● To have proper equipment: tools, desks, chairs, etc. ● To know about any risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To follow safety rules. ● To report all hazards. ● To pay attention. ● To apply safety training. ● To handle equipment with care. ● To be careful.

What have you discovered?



How to Handle My Rights

Important Points:

1. You have the right to know about all dangerous material or machinery at work. *Do not be afraid to ask questions.*
2. You have the right to have safety training. *Do not be afraid to ask questions.*
3. You have the right to refuse to do something if you feel it puts you at risk. When you have a good reason, *do not be afraid to say no.*



"Give to every human being every right that
you claim for yourself."

~Robert Ingersoll

Safety for Different Jobs



Different jobs have different safety measures. Safety measures depend on the risks that come with each job.

Examples:

- A nurse puts his/her back at risk because he/she has to help lift patients. He/she must know the safest way to lift people.
- An electrician works with electricity. He/she must know how to safely handle electricity.
- A cook works around a hot stove. He/she must know how to prevent and treat burns.

ACTIVITY:

Think of the kinds of risks and safety procedures that are involved in three other jobs. Include your own job.

Job:

Risks:

How to be safe:

Job:

Risks:

How to be safe:

Job:

Risks:


How to be safe:



“Safety is something that happens between your ears,
not something you hold in your hands.”
~Jeff Cooper

Following Instructions:

Workers must often read and follow **instructions**. Safety instructions are found on equipment, on products, in safety manuals, etc. In this section, you will discover some key words that will help you to follow instructions.



WORD STOP

1. **instructions** (in-strukt-shuns): the steps or rules to do something.

Key Words:

Instructions appear in order. Look for words that describe *when* to do something:

immediately	first	second
third	before	next
after	last	finally

Instructions tell you what to do. Look for *action* words (verbs):

place	wash	check
protect	rinse	prevent
follow	flush	give

Instructions tell what to either do or not do. Look for *warning* words:

do not...	always	never
must	make sure	important



Labels:

Labels should be on any chemical-based products used in the workplace. Labels should contain the following:

- Product name
- Description of risk
- How to avoid problems with the product
- First aid instructions

First Aid Instructions:

The following instructions are samples of first aid instructions found on a workplace cleaning product.

If it touches the skin:

Immediately wash with plenty of soap and warm water. Get medical attention if skin is irritated.

If it gets in the eyes:

First, flush eyes with running water for at least 20 minutes while holding eyelids open. Next, get medical attention.

If swallowed:

Do not induce vomiting. If victim is conscious, first give 1-2 glasses of water to a conscious victim. Never give anything by mouth to an unconscious victim. Get medical attention.

ACTIVITY: Identify the key words in the first aid instructions (previous page):

STEP 1:

Highlight or underline all of the order words, action words and warning words.

STEP 2:

Write the words in the correct column below.

PURPOSE:

This activity will help you to identify key words in instructions.

Order words	Action words	Warning words

FOLLOW-UP:

In your own words, explain what you would do if this product...

touches the skin:

gets in the eyes:


is swallowed:

Being Professional

Professionalism is the word used to describe an accepted way of behaving at work. If you always behave in a **professional** way, your conduct can never be criticized.

How to be professional:

1. Care about how others see you.
2. Use good manners.
3. Use your competencies.
4. Be trustworthy.
5. Be respectful.
6. Act mature.



WORD STOP

1. **professional** (pro-fesh-un-ul):
to show a high level of skill
and respect to others.

ACTIVITY: Think of ways to be professional in your workplace.

STEP 1: Examine the examples below.

Sara is a sales clerk at a clothing store. She has reflected on precise ways to be professional at work.

How to be Professional	Precise Ways to Be Professional
Care about how others see you	<i>I should always look well-dressed by wearing clean, ironed, professional clothes.</i>
Be mannerly	<i>Always say please and thank you, smile and think about the words I use.</i>
Use your competencies	<i>Talk with people and encourage them to buy things in a friendly way.</i>
Be trustworthy	<i>Always tell the truth. Do not talk about co-workers.</i>
Be respectful	<i>Think about how I would like others to treat me and treat them in the same way.</i>
Act mature	<i>Pay attention to customers. Accept what my boss asks me to do without complaining.</i>

STEP 2: Now, think about precise ways that you can be professional at work. Fill in the table below.

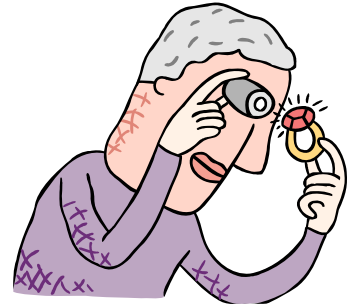
How to be Professional	Precise Ways to Be Professional
Care about how others see you	
Be mannerly	
Use your competencies	
Be trustworthy	
Be respectful	
Act mature	

REFLECTION:

Why should you be professional at your work? Explain.

Why being professional is important:

Being professional on the job will not only make you a better worker, it will gain for you the respect of your co-workers and boss. Most people feel they can count on people who act professionally.



ACTIVITY:

Analyze examples of professionalism (or lack of it).

STEP 1:

Look at the following examples of behaviour on the job and:

1. consider whether the behaviour is professional.
2. consider what happens when people see each kind of behaviour.
3. if the behaviour is not professional, explain what the person should be doing.

Scenario 1:

You are at the grocery store and your cashier, who is loudly chewing gum, does not smile or say hello. Instead, he takes a minute to turn around and talk to another cashier about what he did last night.

a) Is this professional? Why or why not?

b) What happens when people see this sort of behaviour?

c) What should this person be doing?

Scenario 2:

Jill is a cook at a new Italian restaurant. When she gets to work, she greets her co-workers with a smile, puts on her apron, ties her hair back and then washes her hands. Before she gets started, she checks the menu and ingredients to make sure everything is in order.

a) Is this professional? Why or why not?

b) What happens when people see this sort of behaviour?

c) What should this person be doing?



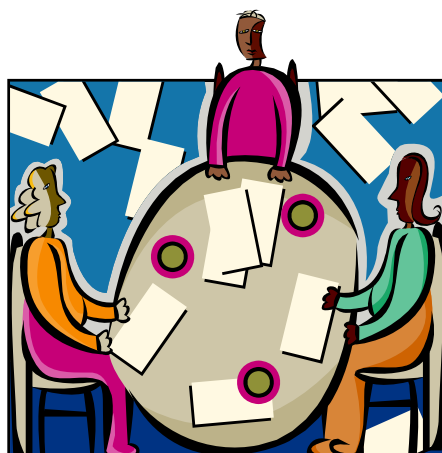
Communication

To share ideas and information, we must be able to communicate. Communication is more than just speaking. We also communicate through:

- ✓ reading and writing.
- ✓ listening and asking questions.
- ✓ body language.

Communicating allows us to share ideas and work together. Follow these steps to communicate well.

1. Listen to what a person is saying.
2. Ask questions if something is unclear.
3. Think about what you want to say.
4. Speak (or write) clearly and confidently.
5. Look people in the eye when you are speaking face to face.
6. Smile.
7. Use the name of the person you are communicating with.



How to Remember Names

1. Pay attention to people.
2. When you learn a name, repeat it in your head several times.
3. Write down names and go over them.
4. Don't be afraid to ask. It's better to check than to use the wrong name.

REFLECTION:

- 1. Do you usually communicate effectively at work? Explain what you do or do not usually do.

- 2. What can you do to communicate more effectively?



"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

~Anthony Robbins

How are you doing?



Complete the questionnaire to keep track of your learning.

1. Have you completed all reading and activities to this point? (*Circle your answer.*)

Yes

No

2. If you answered “No”, explain what you did not complete and why.

3. What was easy and why?

4. What was difficult and why?

5. General comments. (*Do you have any comments on the work that you have done?*)

Writing Messages and Requests

There are many jobs that require a written record of ideas, problems, activities, and/or requests. In this section, you will practice reading and writing messages and requests for your job.

Writing Phone Messages

Most workers have phones or cellphones. Sometimes, your employer or co-workers may depend on you to take a message for them. Messages should be short and clear. When you take a message, write down the most important details.

Messages should include the following information:

1. The date and time the message was taken.
2. The person who the message is for.
3. The person who left the message.
4. The details of the message.
5. The name of person who took the message.



SAMPLE MESSAGE:

<u>Date:</u>	<i>March 3rd</i>
<u>Time:</u>	<i>1:00 p.m.</i>
<u>Person:</u>	<i>Homer</i>
<u>Phone:</u>	<i>555-1234</i>
<u>Message:</u>	
	<i>Mr. Burnes called to cancel your appointment. Call back to reschedule.</i>
	<i>Sara</i>

This message includes:

The date and time the message was taken:

- *March 3rd, 1:00 p.m.*

The person who the message is for:

- *Homer*

The person who left the message:

- *Mr. Burnes*

The details of the message:

- *Appointment cancelled, call to reschedule*

The name of person who took the message:

- *Sara*



ACTIVITY: Practice writing phone messages. Read each scenario and then write a message.

- 1. It is August 25th at 4:35 p.m. The phone rings and you answer it. It is someone from Happy Auto. He asks for your co-worker, John, who has just left for a dental appointment. The person from Happy Auto asks you to tell John that his new car parts are in. He can call back at (418) 555-9876 if he has any questions.*

Now, write the message in the box below. Remember to only include the most important details.



While You Were Out

date: ▶

time: ▶

name: ▶

company: ▶

phone #: ▶

message: ▶

2. *It is 9:00 a.m. on October 5th. You have just arrived at work when the phone rings. It is your co-worker Shelly calling to tell your boss, Mrs. Grocheez, that she has the flu and will not be in that day. She will be staying at her sisters for the day; if Mrs. Grocheez needs to talk to her, she can call (514) 555-7085.*

Now, write the message in the box below. Remember to only include the most important details.



While You Were Out

date: ▶

time: ▶

name: ▶

company: ▶

phone #: ▶

message: ▶

Writing Requests

Writing requests is also important at work. Such letters are used to:

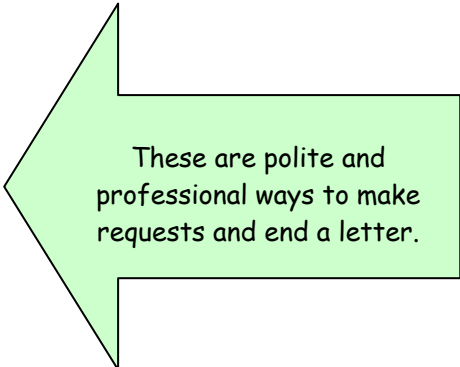
- request permission to do something.
- request information.

Most written requests for work use a set business letter format. Such letters should be typed. When you prepare a written request for work, include the following:

- Today's date.
- "Dear" plus the name of the person the letter is for.
- Polite phrases like "I would like to request", "thank you for your time", etc. (see below).
- An explanation of the request.
- A closing like "Yours truly" or "Sincerely" followed by your signature.

Ways to Make Requests:

1. *I would like to ask you if...*
2. *If possible, I would appreciate...*
3. *It would be a help to me if I/you could...*
4. *I would I appreciate it if...*
5. *I would be grateful if...*
6. *It would be nice to do...because...*
7. *Could you possibly...?*
8. *Please be so kind as to...*
9. *I request that you...*



These are polite and professional ways to make requests and end a letter.

Ways to End Your Letter:

1. *Thank you in advance for your time.*
2. *I appreciate you taking the time to consider this matter.*
3. *I would be happy to supply any further information you may require.*
4. *Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.*
5. *I look forward to hearing from you.*

Sample Request #1

This request is to ask for a morning off work. Notice the use of polite expressions.

Tuesday, May 5, 2010

Dear Mrs. Grocheez,

My son, Johnny, has an appointment with a specialist on Thursday, May 14th, at 11:00 a.m. If possible, I would appreciate having the morning off so that I can take him to his appointment.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Jonathon Lee

Sample Request #2

This request is to ask for a meeting to discuss one's future in a company. Such a request would likely impress a boss because it shows a desire to do more.

October 31, 2008

Dear Mr. Banaram,

I am writing to request a meeting with you so that we may discuss my future plans in the company. I am very interested in making greater contributions in the workplace. I would be grateful if you arranged a time for us to meet so that you may hear some of my ideas.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Sherry Biddiscombe

ACTIVITY: Practice writing a request to your boss.

STEP 1:

Think of a something that you may request of your boss. Look at the list below of things that people often request from a boss to help you decide what you will request.

- Vacation Time
- A day off / an afternoon off
- More training
- Safety information
- A meeting to discuss your future

STEP 2:


Now write your letter on the next page. Remember to use the correct format. Use your writing strategies to check for spelling and style.

STEP 3:

Type a good copy of your letter. Print two copies. Keep one copy for yourself; **send the other copy to your tutor** with your Checkpoint questionnaire.

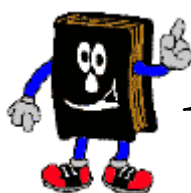
PURPOSE:

Putting things in writing makes something more **official**. This exercise will prepare you to make formal requests at work. Keep your letter on file - you will have a model to follow should the need arise.



WORD STOP

1. **official** (oh-fih-shul): formal and on the record.



Always keep a copy of written requests for yourself.

My Written Request

Put today's date

Put the name of your employer. Use "Mr.", "Mrs." or "Ms."

Dear _____,

Make your request.

Include a thank you for considering your request.

Yours truly,

Put "Sincerely" or "Yours truly" and then sign your name.

Thank-You Letters

Writing a thank-you letter is a great way to impress people in the workplace. Thanking others for giving you their time (for any reason) is a courteous and professional practice.

Why send thank-you letters?

1. They show that you are polite and professional.
2. They allow you to stand out in the mind of a supervisor or employer.
3. They give you a chance to promote your good points.

How to send a thank-you letter:

1. Email (but keep it professional).
2. Typed and delivered by mail.
3. Typed and delivered personally.



Times when you should send a thank-you letter:

- Whenever anyone does a service for you.
- When your boss takes the time to discuss something with you.
- After an interview.

Some ways to say thank you:

1. *Thank you for...*
2. *It was really kind of you...*
3. *I would like to thank you for...*
4. *I am writing to express my thanks for...*
5. *My most sincere thanks...*
6. *I would like to express my gratitude...*



"Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone."
~G.B. Stern

Sample Thank-You Letter #1

This is a formal letter. It follows a standard business format.

Brendina Hogan
123 Hillyvale Rd
Springfield, Quebec
G2G 0M0

November 23, 2010

Homer Sampson,
Solid Steel Inc.
901 Elm Street, 8th Floor
Springfield, Quebec G42 Z4T

Dear Mr. Sampson,

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to meet with me this past Monday. I really enjoyed our conversation. It was nice to hear the advancements that Solid Steel Inc. has been making in steel production. I would love to take on more responsibilities within the company. .

Please do not hesitate to call my references so that you may get a better sense of my commitment to your company. If there are any further steps that I should take for a promotion, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Brendina Hogan
Brendina Hogan

1. Your Name
2. Street, City, Province and Postal Code
3. Phone # and Email

Today's date

1. Name of Receiver
2. Company Name
3. Company Address

Your signature

Sample Thank-You Letter

This is a less formal letter. It does not follow a business format – there are no addresses.

March 14, 2008

Dear Mr Georgini,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me and explain the agenda for this year's Cotton Fair. I appreciate your time at such a busy time of year.

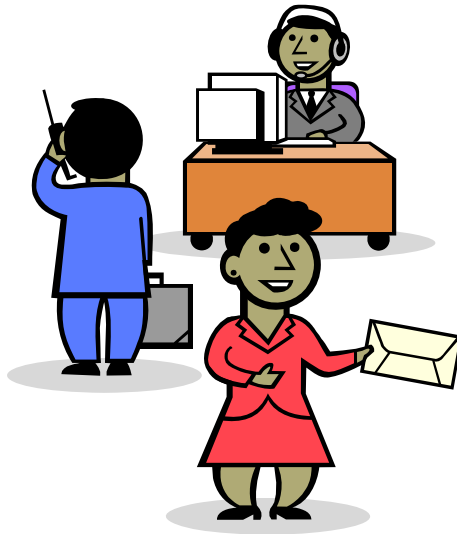
Sincerely,

Henry Ocho
Henry Ocho



ACTIVITY:

Write a thank-you letter.

**STEP 1:**

Closely examine the two sample thank-you letters.

STEP 2:

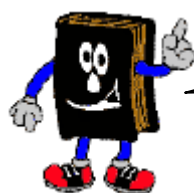
Decide whom you will write a thank-you letter to and for what reason. Remember, a thank-you letter can be written to anyone who has done something for you or given you some of their time.

STEP 3:

Write your letter (on the next page).

PURPOSE:

Knowing how to write a thank-you letter will help you to impress different people in the workplace.



Don't forget to use your writing strategies to write your letter!

My Thank-You Letter

1. Your Name
2. Street, City, Province and Postal Code
3. Phone # and Email

Today's date

Dear _____,

Say thank you and explain for what.

Close your letter. Add any other important details.

Yours truly,

Put "Sincerely" or "Yours truly" and then sign your name.

Thank-You Notes

A handwritten thank-you note is not just for family or friends. They are also a very friendly and polite way to impress people in the workplace.



To whom should I write thank-you notes?

You can write a thank-you note to anyone who helps you with something or does something for you.

On what should I write thank-you notes?

You can write a thank-you note on a nice piece of notepaper or in a small note card.

Sample Thank-You Note:

Kelly,

Thank you very much for filling in for me yesterday. I really appreciate it.

John

ACTIVITY:

Practice writing thank-you notes.

STEP 1:

Look at the sample thank-you note and review the ways to say thank you.

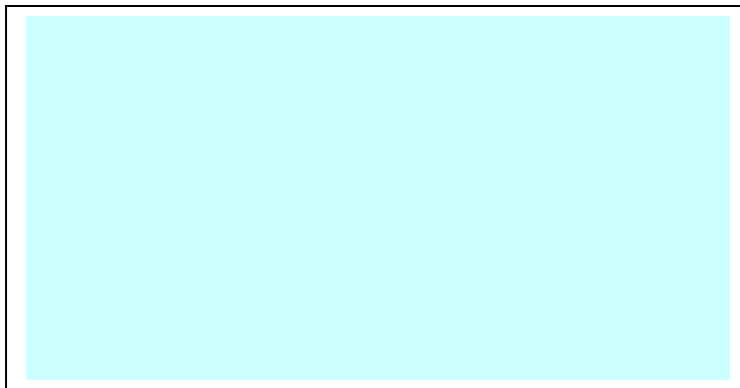
STEP 2:

Write your thank-you notes in the boxes below. Reasons for the thank-you note are provided.

PURPOSE:

People are always glad to receive a thank-you note. They are a quick and easy way to show thanks and impress others.

Practice 1: Write a thank-you note to Bob for helping you with your work.



Practice 2: Write a thank-you note to Jason for giving you a birthday gift.

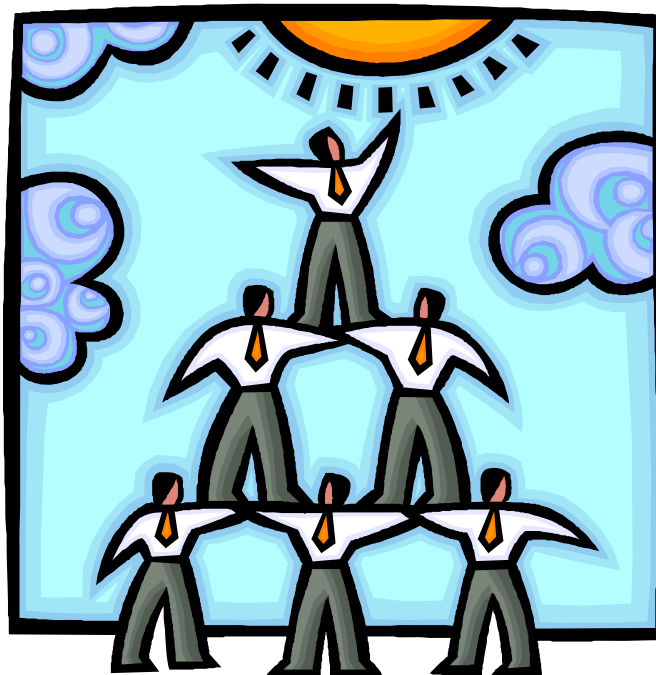


Teamwork

We learn early on in life that we must spend much of our time getting along with others. Being able to work as part of a team is a skill that will help you to learn, get things done and enjoy your time at work.

The Four Steps to Good Teamwork:

1. Figure out what needs to be done.
2. Decide who will do what.
3. Decide how you can work together for the best results.
4. Communication with and encouragement for one another.



"A group of people committed to a shared vision can accomplish the impossible."
~Author unknown

REFLECTION: “Two Heads Are Better Than One”

1. Think about when you have to work as part of a team. Make a list of such times. **Example:** *Organizing the office together.*

2. What can you do to be a better team player?



Memos

A memo is a workplace document to be read and passed along quickly. Most memos give directions or update workers on new policies. They are either printed and circulated or sent by email.

Memos should be brief and use standard rules of writing. The sample memo below will give you a good idea of what a standard memo looks like.



Sample Memo:

MEMO

Date: June 30, 2012
To: All staff
From: Mr. Harry, Head Honcho
Subject: Lunch Room Recycling Bins

In order to cut back on undue waste and to do our part for the environment, we have put recycling bins in our staff lunch room. You will find the bins to the right of the fridge. Everyone is encouraged to dispose of recyclable items in the proper bin.

Contents of a Memo

To start, a memo has:

- ❖ the date.
- ❖ name of the person (or people) to whom the memo is being sent.
- ❖ name and position of the sender.
- ❖ a subject line that says what the memo is about.

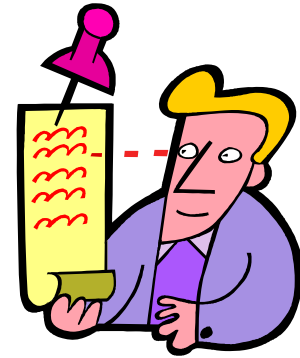
Date: June 30, 2012
To: All staff
From: Mr. Harry, General Manager
Subject: Lunch Room Recycling Bins

Next, a memo has:

- ❖ a written text that explains the reason for the memo. This text gives information or directions to the reader.

<p>In order to cut back on undue waste and to do our part for the environment, we have put recycling bins in our staff lunch room. You will find the bins to the right of the fridge. Everyone is encouraged to dispose of recyclable items in the proper bin.</p>
--

Because memos need to be brief, they often contain **acronyms**. Below, you will find a list of acronyms that you may see in a workplace memo.



Common Memo Acronyms:

ASAP = as soon as possible

CC = carbon copy (which means that the memo has been copied for others)

CEO = chief executive officer

COD = cash on delivery

EOD = end of day

ETA = expected time of arrival

FAQ = frequently asked question(s)

FYI = for your information

TBA = to be announced

TBD = to be decided

Use of "Re" in a Memo:

Re = Latin word meaning "about" that is often used in the place of "Subject".



WORD STOP

1. **acronym** (ak-ruh-nim): a word formed from the first letters of words. Example: CEO = chief executive officer.

ACTIVITY:

Read and answer questions about a memo.

STEP 1:

Read the sample memo (below). Review the memo abbreviations if necessary.

STEP 2:

Answer the questions (on the next page) about the memo.

PURPOSE:

Memos are common workplace documents. Workers should be comfortable finding information in a memo.

MEMO

Date: December 4, 2012
To: All Staff
From : Sam Appleton, Manager
Re: Change in Staff Meeting Schedule
CC: Harry Head Honcho, CEO

Please note, there has been a change in our regular staff meeting schedule. Starting next week, meetings will be held on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. rather than Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. All staff members are asked to make note of this change and show up at the new time.

Memo Questionnaire

1. To whom is the memo sent?

2. Who is Harry Head Honcho?

3. What is the memo about?

4. When will staff meetings now be held?

5. What is the staff expected to do?



How to Impress the Boss

There are certain characteristics that a boss looks for in his/her workers. The following characteristics and skills will help you to move up in the workplace.

1. Be adaptable:

- Be open to learning and trying new things.

2. Have a positive attitude:

- Show people that you are happy to be there. Don't complain.

3. Be professional at all times:

- Always think about what you say and do.

4. Get along with others:

- Be patient and respectful with others. Smile! 😊

5. Be organized:

- Get to work on time. Be prepared for different tasks.

6. Show initiative:

- Take on new challenges.



REFLECTION:

Look at the list of characteristics and skills on the previous page. Now, describe in your own words how you can develop or demonstrate these characteristics in *your* workplace. Provide concrete examples.



"It's important to know that words don't move mountains.
Work, exacting work moves mountains."
~Danilo Dolci

Problem Solving

Workers, employers and managers are faced with problems every day. Problems are simply a fact of life. While you cannot prevent all problems from happening, you can control how you handle them. The ability to solve problems is an important skill that all workers should have.

Common Problems at Work:

1. Conflict with a co-worker.
2. Negative attitudes.
3. Dividing tasks amongst co-workers.
4. Taking orders from the boss.
5. Workplace gossip.
6. Unhappy customers or clients.
7. Someone breaking the workplace rules.
8. Losing information.



Steps for Problem Solving

Problem solving is a skill that can be learned. While there is no one right way to solve a problem, you can follow these useful steps:

1. UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

Ask yourself:

- Can I define the problem?
- What do I need to know?

2. MAKE A PLAN

Ask yourself:

- How has this problem been handled in the past?
- What do I want to happen and how can I get there?

3. CARRY OUT THE PLAN

Ask yourself:

- Have I followed each step in my plan?

4. LOOK BACK

Ask yourself:

- What has happened?
- Is the problem resolved?
- What else could be done?

ACTIVITY:

Practice solving work-related problems.

STEP 1:

Read over each scenario on the next page.

STEP 2:

Explain how you would solve each problem. Don't forget to use the steps for problem solving.

PURPOSE:

Problem solving is an important skill that you may apply at work.



Scenario 1:

Your co-worker, Allison, is often frustrated with you and your co-workers. She thinks that she does most of the work. Her attitude and complaining are affecting the atmosphere at work. What would you do to solve this problem?

Scenario 2:

You work as a cook in a Mexican restaurant. It is Saturday night and you are really busy. You are worried that you will run out of cheese to put on different dishes. What would you do to solve this problem?

Scenario 3:

You are a salesman/woman at a local electronics store. An angry customer comes in with a new stereo that he bought last week. The sound on this stereo is really fuzzy. What would you do to solve this problem?

REFLECTION:

1. Describe a problem that you have already faced in the workplace.

2. How did you handle this problem?

3. What would you change about how you handled this problem?



Attitude

Negative attitudes are easily seen and affect the quality of your work and your relationships at work. This is why you should try to be a friendly worker and make your workplace a friendly environment.

Making Your Workplace Friendlier:

1. Speak well of others.
2. Do not gossip about co-workers.
3. Be patient when dealing with problems with other people.
4. Be honest and tell the truth.
5. Don't spend your time complaining with co-workers.



*"Attitudes are contagious. Are yours worth catching?"
~Dennis and Wendy Mannering*

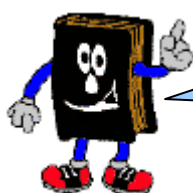
REFLECTION: How do the attitudes of people around you affect the way you feel? Give examples.

Summary of Key Skills for Work

ACTIVITY:

Identify which skills you have already achieved and which ones are still in progress.

Skill	Description	Achieved	In progress
Communication	I can successfully share information through talking and/or writing.		
Teamwork	I can work with others.		
Getting along with others	I can get along with my co-workers.		
Initiative	I can do things without being told to do so.		
Planning	I can plan ahead.		
Organizing	I can organize my workspace and schedule.		
Self-managing	I can handle workplace tasks on my own.		
Professionalism	I can dress and speak appropriately at work.		
Problem solving	I can handle difficult questions.		
Ability to learn	I can develop new skills through experience or study.		
Adaptability	I am willing to change and progress.		



All of these skills will impress your boss. Remember to include such skills on your resumé and cover letter!

REFLECTION:

1. Which skills have you already achieved?

2. How are these skills useful on the job?

3. Which skills do you need to work on?

4. How will you work on these skills?

On the Job and Me

Now that you have thought about ways to improve your life at work, you are ready to observe how your skills for work affect your everyday life.

ACTIVITY:

Pay close attention to the world around you to find examples of how your work skills affect your everyday life.



STEP 1:

Reflect on what you know about the workplace.

STEP 2:

Observe what happens in your place of work for a few days and consider how work skills affect people's lives.

STEP 3:

Answer the questions on the following page. Provide solid examples of what you observed about your skills for work (or the workplace in general).

PURPOSE:

Learning is most valuable when you can apply it to your own life.

Where to find real-life examples:

1. Watch the people you work with and consider the effects of attitude and professionalism.
2. Watch TV to see what kind of messages popular programs share about the workplace and skills for work.
3. Look at people around you and consider how they are affected by their jobs.
4. Observe how you act at work.
5. Consider how you interact or communicate with others at work. What effect does this have?

On the Job and Me

REFLECTION

Provide solid examples of what you have observed in the past few days.
How do skills for work affect your everyday life?

How do you feel about what you observed? Why do you feel this way?



What I Know Now



Go back to the beginning of this unit and look at the list of things you knew before you started. Describe what you know now. What have you learned?

On the Job

Learning Checklist

Check off each item on this list that you can do as “ACHIEVED”. If you feel that you have to improve on something, check “IN PROGRESS”. Review your Learning Checklist with your tutor.

COMPETENCIES What I can do.	IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED
1. I can read an article about work.		
2. I can consider ideas to make the workplace happier.		
3. I can find the meaning of new words.		
4. I can reflect on what I read.		
5. I can compare what I learn from reading with what I already know.		
6. I can say what my safety rights at work are.		
7. I can say what my safety responsibilities at work are.		
8. I can reflect upon what kind of safety is needed for different jobs.		
9. I can identify key words in instructions.		
10. I can read labels.		
11. I can say what professionalism means.		
12. I can be professional at work.		
13. I can explain what professional people act like.		

COMPETENCIES What I can do.	IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED
14. I can explain how to communicate well.		
15. I can follow steps to communicate well.		
16. I can use tips to remember people's names.		
17. I can reflect on my communication skills.		
18. I can write phone messages.		
19. I can write a written request.		
20. I can prepare a typed copy of a written request.		
21. I can say what a memo is.		
22. I can say what a memo contains.		
23. I can understand acronyms in a memo.		
24. I can read a memo.		
25. I can find information in a memo.		
26. I can explain how to work in a team.		
27. I can explain how to impress a boss.		
28. I can work as a team member.		
29. I can follow steps to solve problems.		
30. I can solve problems.		
31. I can explain why a positive attitude is important at work.		
32. I can consider how attitude affects the way I feel.		
33. I can identify my skills for work.		
34. I can identify which skills I want to work on.		

The

QLWG Skills for Life Series

was made possible through funding from a joint
IFPCA funding initiative of the

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

and the

Direction de l'éducation des adultes et de l'action communautaire

with the collaboration of



A production of



Provincial Organisation of Continuing Education Directors – English