

5

Start that job

Starting a new job brings demands. These may include having to read, write and communicate in new and different ways.

Joseph is one of six new trainees working for Sport4All, a chain of sports shops.

Sport4All provides a general induction and training course for its new employees. Joseph's training course is led by Ruth, who must ensure that Sport4All branches have chosen their trainees wisely. Trainees must demonstrate that:

- they have the right attitude for the job
- they have good interpersonal skills (they can communicate well with others)
- they have good literacy skills.



Joseph and the others will be put in unfamiliar situations. You will tackle some of the tasks yourself.

What you will do

This unit contains speaking, listening, reading and writing tasks set in the context of work. These are the skills you will practise. Which are the most useful for you? Tick the boxes.

Listening and speaking

| Skill | Skill code |
|--|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning to make effective contributions in discussions | SLd/L2.1, 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning to be focused in tasks you are set | SLlr/L2.2, 4 |

Reading and writing

| Skill | Skill code |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning to identify the main ideas in information you are given | Rt/L2.3, 8; Rw/L2.1, 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning about the different ways writing can be presented and how to plan and draft your work | Wt/L2.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7; Ww/L2.2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning about grammar and punctuation | Ws/L2.1, 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning about spelling | Ww/L2.1 |

Project work

By the end of the unit, you will have completed many spoken, written and reading tasks and summarised your skills to help with applications for paid or voluntary work. You will find it useful to keep a log or diary of the work you complete together with the relevant dates.

Induction course

Activity A • Speaking, listening and reading

The first task the trainees are set is to create an A–Z list of the personal qualities needed to excel at working with customers. Ruth will assess their ideas and their interpersonal skills. Complete this task in a small group, focusing on how you would perform. Here are a few ideas to help. On a separate sheet of paper, continue the list to Z.

- A Adaptable
- B Bold
- C Courteous
- D Decisive



Activity B • Writing

On the right side of the table below, write an assessment of your own contribution to the task.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 Ideas I contributed to the discussion | |
| 2 How I expressed myself | |
| 3 My ability to support and encourage others | |

Take note of what you wrote in the table above and strive to develop further your interpersonal skills. No matter which job you apply for, good communication skills are essential and classroom exercises can help you gain the confidence and skills required.

Activity C • Listening, writing and speaking

Sometimes trainee employees are expected to show they can make decisions under pressure. Ruth gives the group trainees five minutes to reduce their list of important qualities to ten, in order of importance. Listen to the audio clip of Joseph and the others discussing the A–Z activity and then explain what you think went wrong.

What went wrong?

.....

.....

.....

Remember!

Everyone should have an opportunity to put forward a viewpoint. Sometimes this needs to be stated as a ‘right’ in a set of ground rules.

Activity D ● Speaking and writing

It's always useful to have full in-depth discussions but sometimes this means that tasks aren't completed. At work, people are expected to act decisively. In your group, write a set of 'ground rules' that would help you to focus more on the task than Joseph's group. If you wish, you can use some of the ideas below to help you.

| Rules for effective group discussion | |
|---|--|
| Do... <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Decide on your strategy for gaining results● Appoint a chair● Allow everyone a chance to speak | Do not... <ul style="list-style-type: none">● |

Activity E ● Writing

When you have your own group 'ground rules', tackle the task that Ruth set the trainees (Activity C). Your teacher will allocate a time limit. Use the table below to write the ten most important qualities needed for working with customers.

| Ten most important qualities needed for working with customers | |
|--|----|
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 9 |
| 5 | 10 |

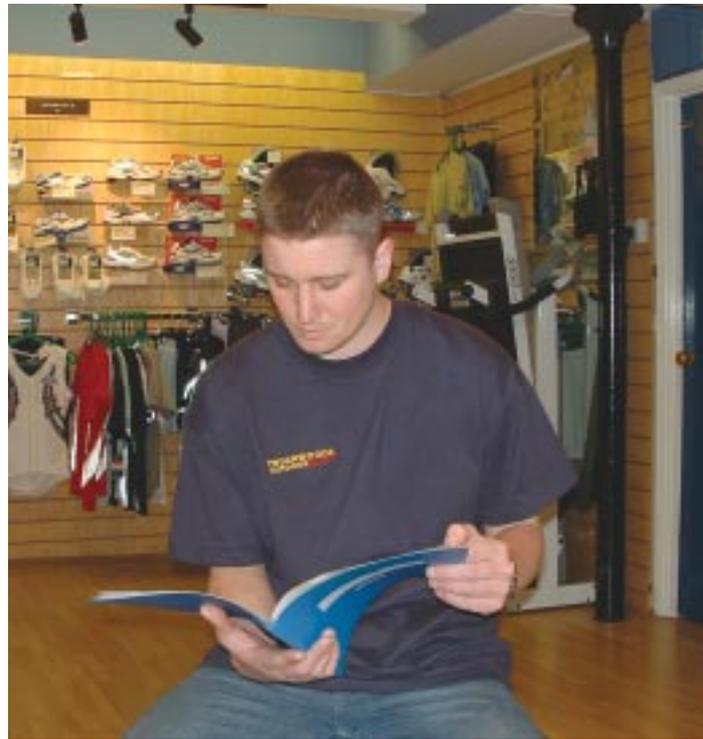
Staff handbook

Activity A • Reading and writing

On the second day of training, Joseph's group is getting to grips with the staff handbook, but it's not easy to understand. It is a long document containing a lot of difficult and detailed information.

Ruth has given each of the trainees one section of the staff handbook to study. She expects the trainees to digest the information and present it to the group. Joseph has been given Sport4All's Employee Complaints Procedure to summarise and then present. Your teacher will give you a copy of the Employee Complaints Procedure.

Skim read the text and use a highlighter pen to mark the main ideas. Aim to get an overall sense of what the document contains and, in particular, the most important ideas (key points).



Checking you have selected the key points

Look back at the words you have highlighted and make sure that you have picked out the key words or sentences. Your highlighted text should be able to tell you:

- who the Employee Complaints Procedure is for
- what it can be used for
- who can help the employee lodge a complaint
- what the three stages in the complaint procedure are
- at what stage a complaint becomes 'formal'
- who can give support to the employee in a formal complaint procedure.

Activity B • Reading and writing

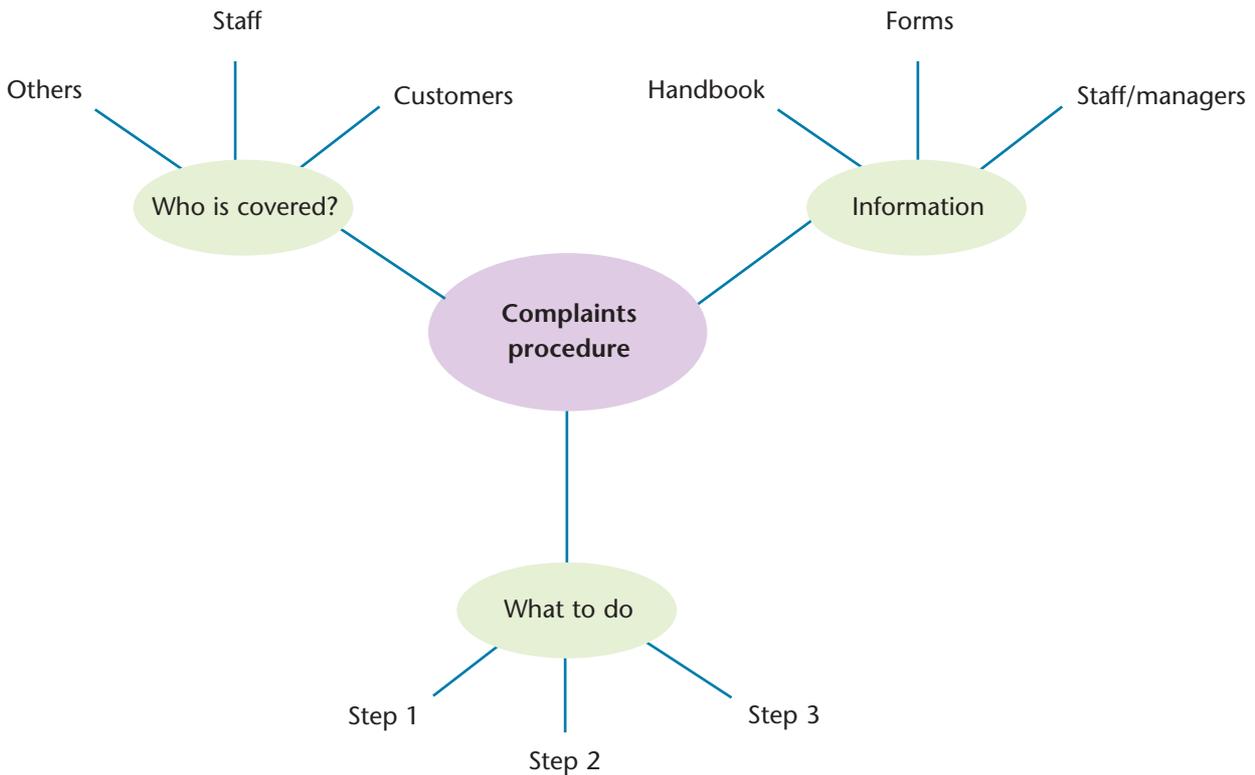
Another way of making sure you digest information from complex texts is to 'mind-map' the contents. To produce a 'mind-map', follow these steps:

- 1 Draw a small central picture to represent the overall theme (as a town is represented on a map).
- 2 Every time you identify an important idea in the text, draw a line from the picture of your central theme (like a main road going off from the town).
- 3 If the main ideas (roads) need to be subdivided because they contain smaller ideas, then give the main road branch roads that lead off from it.
- 4 Put key words and short phrases or symbols on your roads to help you remember the ideas.
- 5 Make sure all the roads connect to the picture somehow – this helps your brain to remember the links.

Use images, symbols and colour to make your mind-map as individual as you.
This will help you to remember the detail.

For more information on mind-mapping visit: www.Mind-Map.com or a similar site.

Ruth asks the trainees to produce mind-maps to support their presentations. Here is Joseph's mind-map in its first stages.



Using a separate sheet of paper, draw a similar mind-map but with more key words, symbols and roads so that, when Joseph presents his mind map to the other trainees, he can easily remember how to explain:

- the rights of employees at Sport4All
- when the Sport4All complaints procedure cannot be used
- the three stages of the Sport4All complaints procedure.

Customer complaints

In most jobs, it is important to be able to listen carefully to people giving you information and to get the facts right.

Activity A • Listening

Many jobs that involve listening carefully are concerned with customers or clients. Ruth sets up a task for the trainees to assess their listening skills, using a recording of an interview between a salesperson and a difficult customer, Mrs Redding. From a rambling, troublesome dialogue, the trainees have to work out what the customer is complaining about.

Listen carefully to the audio clip and try to jot down the customer's key words and phrases. This could help the salesperson to identify the complaint. You may need to listen to the audio clip more than once.



Activity B • Listening and writing

Here are some key sentences that give clues to what Mrs Redding's complaint was all about. You may have noticed that in the midst of all her complaining, there were three problems that needed to be dealt with. Summarise each of the three problems in the table below.

| The complaint | What Mrs Redding says |
|---------------|--|
| 1 | "I asked him for help with it, you see, and first he said he didn't have any and then he said to find them myself." |
| 2 | "You've got hockey sticks but if you've ever tried playing without gloves then you'll know that one is useless without the other." |
| 3 | "These you gave me last week are no good. Baseball gloves? Do you think you're in the middle of New York?" |

Activity C • Writing

Mrs Redding wanted her complaint to be put in writing and Ruth asks the trainees to practise doing this on the customer complaint form below. In Activity B, you were given some of the actual words Mrs Redding spoke (this is called 'direct speech'). Now you are going to simply report on what she said (this is called 'reported speech'). Ensure you clearly identify the three complaints. Keep your language objective and factual, giving no opinions. Your report should be fair to both Mrs Redding and the assistant she has accused of being rude.

Direct and reported speech

When we have to write what someone has said, we have two choices.

- 1 You often find direct speech in a story or autobiography.
- 2 When we report what was said, in a report, essay or case study, we often use reported speech.

Example of direct speech

"What exactly is your complaint?" the salesperson asked Mrs Redding.

She replied, "Get the manager for me... I don't think you've listened to a word I've said."

Example of reported speech

The salesperson asked Mrs Redding exactly what her complaint was. She said that she wanted to see the manager because she felt that the salesperson had not listened to a word she had said.

SPORT4ALL

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT FORM

Customer's name

Customer's address and tel. no.

.....

Full details of the incident

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Activity D • Speaking and listening

Ruth gives her trainees background information about Mrs Redding and the sales assistant.

Mrs Redding had refused to accept that the store had no hockey gloves in stock. She had insisted that the salesperson should continue to look for some although he had already checked. In exasperation, the salesperson had told Mrs Redding that if she insisted that the store had hockey gloves, she would have to find them herself. This had led to a written complaint about the salesperson and he had eventually received a critical appraisal relating to the incident from the store manager.

Close friends or family can often be brutally honest when criticising us: this is often easier to accept from people we know well. However, it is far more difficult to take criticism in a work situation. In all circumstances, it is important to be able to accept constructive criticism with a positive attitude. Here are some tips to help you do so!



Handling constructive criticism

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Check that you have understood the criticism correctly. You may have missed the point. | ✓ Remember that the criticism is not about YOU as a person, just about something that you said or did. |
| ✓ Listen for the whole message – don't home in on just the negative parts. | ✓ Put forward ideas for putting things right. |
| ✓ Think before you respond. | ✓ Be polite! |

With these points in mind, role-play the conversation between the manager and the salesperson. With another person, take a turn at both roles. When it is your turn to take the salesperson's role, try to receive the manager's criticism with a positive attitude.

Writing a leaflet

Ruth has to provide Sport4All with a report on the trainees' ability to write, so she sets them a written task. You will now undertake this task. It involves reading, planning, drafting and editing.

Sport4All has just purchased a new exerciser, a piece of exercising equipment that it will sell at all its branches. You have been asked to write the text for a leaflet to advertise the exerciser. You will be given factual information about the product, an image (a picture of the exerciser) and some phrases to help you to turn the facts about the exerciser into a leaflet that will persuade people to buy it.



Activity A • Reading and writing

Image and facts

Look at the image above. It shows a man exercising on a machine that is made of steel. The machine enables the user to run or walk. The user can use handle bars for support.

Here are some facts about the exerciser. The exerciser:

- costs £199 in Sport4All; competitors sell it for between £179 and £269
- has a rubber tread mill enabling the user to run or walk
- can provide aerobic exercise if used effectively
- comes with a booklet which explains how to assemble and make use of it
- is delivered to a customer's home free of charge and can be trialled before being purchased
- is accompanied by a free electronic computer displaying the calories consumed, and the speed, distance and time travelled, if purchased within 14 days of the trial period
- has to be ordered on a freephone number from Sport4All (0800 0148359), and the customer has to produce his/her credit card number, credit card expiry date and home address.

Use the table overleaf to make brief notes in the relevant spaces. Note all the important details for your leaflet.

| The facts | Notes |
|---------------------|-------|
| Design | |
| How it works | |
| Cost | |
| Ordering and paying | |

Activity B • Reading and writing

You are going to plan your leaflet. Here are some tips to help you.

- 1 Give the product an attractive name. 'Exerciser' doesn't distinguish it from the other exercisers on the market.
- 2 A leaflet needs an eye-catching title to draw the reader's attention. Between them, the title and the image should convince the customer that the text is worth reading.
- 3 People don't read large chunks of text; it puts them off. The leaflet should be split into sections, each headed by an eye-catching sub-heading. Keep your words to a minimum.
- 4 Before you begin writing your text, plan it on paper. Take an A4 sheet to plan the position and size of a strong visual image, allowing surrounding space for text.
- 5 Organise the remaining space with your text written in sections. Give each section a title. A suitable title, for example, might be, 'In just a few minutes a day, get fitter, healthier and slimmer'. Beneath the title, you could write a few sentences to convince potential customers that their body shape can be transformed quickly and easily by using the exerciser.

Plan the sections of your leaflet by drafting the headings and the information that sits under each section. You can either use the table opposite to help you or work on a plan of your own on paper. In the table opposite, the first section has been completed as an example.

| Sections of the leaflet | Eye-catching title | Notes |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Cost of exerciser, how to order, trial period, what you get for the price, etc. | £199 at Sports4All – Save £70 | Title near image. Other retailers charge more for same product. Good value – cheaper than joining a gym. Free trial. Only involves quick phone call to order. Free electronic computer if purchased within 14 days of trial period. |
| Description of it, how it works, how it's better than other exercisers on the market | | |
| What the exerciser can do for your family's health | | |
| What the exerciser can do for your shape | | |

Activity C • Reading and writing

Through the power of language, you are hoping to convince the customers to buy Sport4All's exerciser. Here are some persuasive phrases you could use or adapt for your leaflet to help persuade the reader to buy.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Taken Australia by storm | No more bone jarring | Fitter, healthier, slimmer |
| Stronger abdominal muscles | Direct to your door | Just burns off calories |
| Like walking or jogging on clouds | Sturdy, stable | Comfort of your own home |
| Superbly engineered | Special introductory low price | |
| Quiet, rhythmic, fluid action | A few minutes a day | Tough, steel construction |
| Professional gym model | Easy to move and folds away | Free fitness programme |

Write additional persuasive phrases on the lines below.

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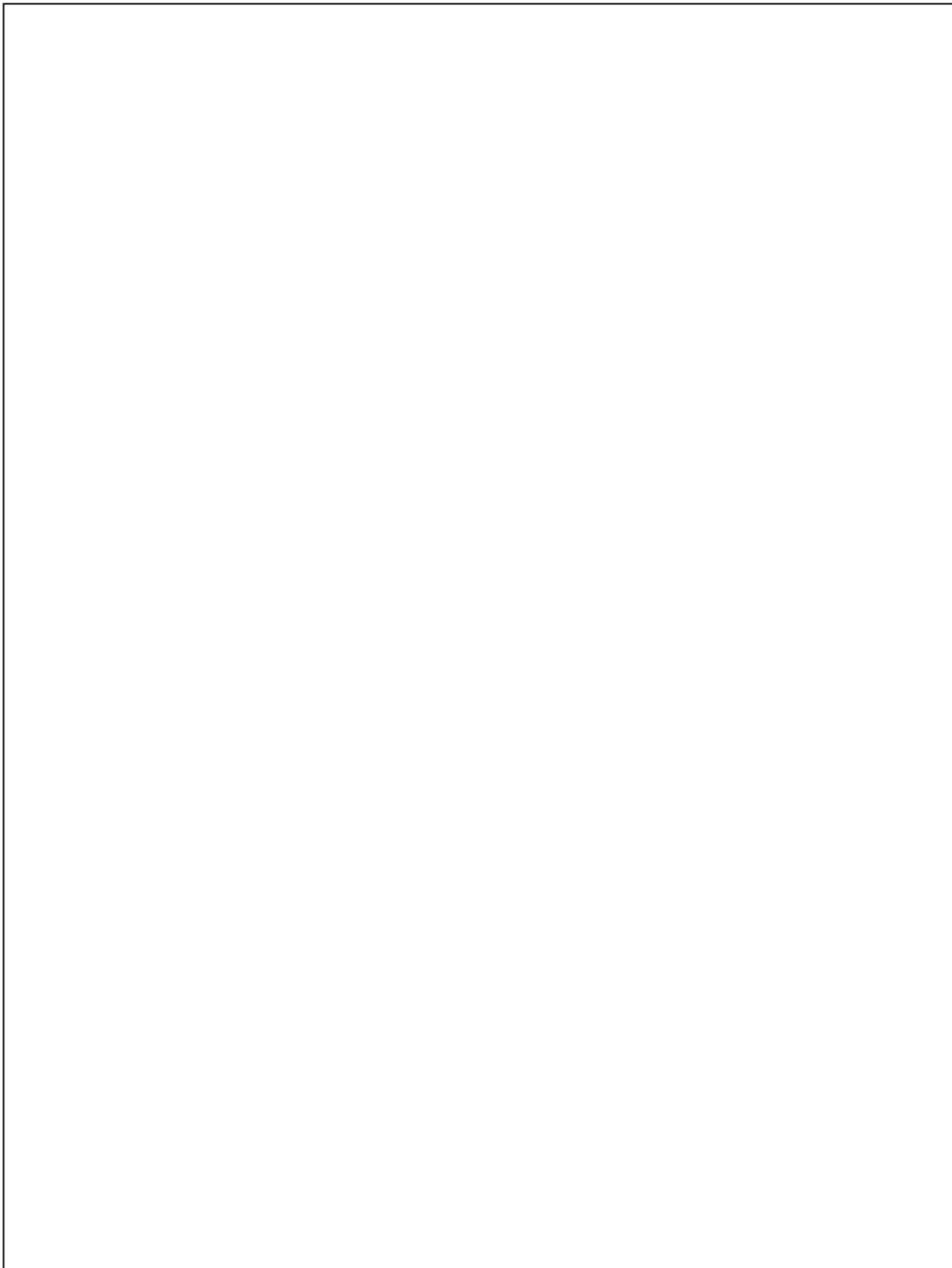
.....

Activity D • Writing

You have already:

- made notes about the factual information the leaflet should contain
- planned the design of your leaflet in sections and made notes about what each section should contain
- thought about the type of language the leaflet needs, to persuade customers to buy the product.

Write a first draft of your leaflet. Your teacher will then advise you on how to re-draft it so that it is an accurate, persuasive piece of text.



Grammar and punctuation

Activity A • Reading and writing

A common mistake people make when writing is to insert a comma at the end of a sentence, in place of a full stop. One reason for this is that they do not always realise that they have written a complete sentence, especially when it is a short, 'simple' sentence.

A simple sentence

A simple sentence is one that contains one main clause. Here are some examples:

I like chocolate biscuits.

My cat is frightened of birds.

The boy bought apples.

Many people mistakenly think that these cannot be proper sentences because they are short and they therefore put commas after them.

How can we tell when we have written a simple sentence? Understanding grammar can help.

A sentence:

- contains a verb (a word or words telling us what the subject is doing, feeling, experiencing or being)
- contains a subject (who or what is responsible for the action, feeling or experience conveyed by the verb).

In the six sentences below, underline all the verbs with a pen and the subjects with a pencil.

- 1 Birds fly.
- 2 I read newspapers.
- 3 Children love scary movies.
- 4 Shakespeare wrote plays in the sixteenth century.
- 5 Khalid is sixteen years old.
- 6 Mary will be at my house tonight.

The verb 'to be'

The words 'am', 'is', 'are', 'was' and 'were' are also verbs and come from the verb 'to be'.

Tip

If you are not sure whether you have written a full sentence or not, give it the 'subject + verb' test. If it has a subject and a verb and makes sense, then you have written a simple sentence, as long as it is followed by another whole sentence. See the example below.

My mother went to town. She bought a new coat.

'My mother' is the subject. 'Went' is the verb. 'My mother went to town' is followed by another sentence with a subject and verb. These are both examples of simple sentences.

Activity B • Reading and writing

Simple sentences can be very effective in writing. However, lots of them together can become repetitive. Simple sentences can be made more interesting by adding conjunctions to join simple sentences together. Conjunctions make compound sentences. Here's an example:

The school spent its lottery grant on library books. Most parents were pleased.
One governor complained. He thought a new minibus was more important.
(Four simple sentences)

The four simple sentences can be turned into two compound sentences, using conjunctions.

The school spent its lottery grant on library books **and** most parents were pleased.
One governor complained **because** he thought a new minibus was more important.

Here are some examples of conjunctions: 'and', 'but', 'because', 'so that'.

Re-write the following sentences, adding conjunctions between them so that they still make sense.

- 1 Ella Fitzgerald was an international singer and composer. She sometimes performed in England.
.....
- 2 Simple sentences can be useful. They can also make writing sound boring.
.....
- 3 Most people think Henry Bogart comes from a family of actors. His father was a doctor.
.....
- 4 I will put the ornament on the highest shelf. The children will not be able to reach it.
.....
- 5 I went to town. I bought some fruit from the market.
.....

Activity C • Writing

Using a range of simple and compound sentences, write a paragraph about an experience of work that was particularly memorable and explain why. If you have no experience of paid work, you may wish to concentrate on a work task you have performed at home or elsewhere.

.....
.....
.....
.....



Spelling

One of the most common suffix sounds is 'shun'. It is also one of the hardest to spell because there are so many different ways to spell it.

A suffix

A suffix is a word part added to the end of a word to change its meaning.

e.g. music → music**ian**

One way of spelling 'shun' at the end of a word is '-cian'. Remembering this spelling is straightforward, because all '-cian' words have something important in common.

Look at these examples of '-cian' words.

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| politician | musician | paediatrician |
| electrician | optician | statistician |
| magician | physician | obstetrician |

Activity A

- 1 All the examples above are nouns and describe a person in terms of the **job** or **skill** they perform. Can you think of any more examples of '-cian' words? Do they also describe a person's job?

Another feature of '-cian' words is that they are all formed from nouns. The word they are formed from is called the base word.

With other 'shun' endings, such as '-tion', the base word is often a verb.

- 2 Demonstrate this for each of the '-cian' words by writing a definition that uses the base word. The first one has been completed as an example.

- A **politician** is a person who participates in **politics**.
- An **electrician** is
- A **magician** is
- A **musician** is
- An **optician** is
- A **physician** is
- A **paediatrician** is
- A **statistician** is
- An **obstetrician** is



The '-cian' rule

Notice that often there is already a 'c' or 'cs' at the end of the base word.

The rule is:

- If the base word ends in a -c just add -ian: **music** → **musician**, **electric** → **electrician**.
- If the base word ends in -cs remove the -s before adding -ian: **politics** → **politician**, **physics** → **physician**.

There are some '-cian' words that don't end in 'c' or 'cs': e.g. **technique** → **technician**, **beauty** → **beautician**.

Activity B

One way of improving spelling is to concentrate on the meaning of words or **semantics**.

Reducing a word to the base word usually makes it easier to spell.

You can learn whole families of words by making links based on the meaning.

For example:

electric electrical electricity electrician electronic electrocute

Look at the '-cian' words again and list as many related words as possible.

| | Related words |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| politician | politics, political, politically |
| musician | |
| paediatrician | |
| electrician | |
| optician | |
| statistician | |
| magician | |
| physician | |
| obstetrician | |



Integrated skills

So far in this unit, you have successfully practised a range of speaking, listening, reading and writing tasks. It would be useful to have a written record of these completed tasks in case you wish to apply for a paid job, voluntary work or another course at some stage in the future.

Audit of skills

When completed, the table below will identify the tasks that you have completed, the date you carried them out and the skills that you demonstrated.

Work through each activity below and check the skills that were expected of you, underlining or ticking the skills you think you have successfully demonstrated. Use your notes or diary to help you complete the table by adding the dates on which you completed the exercise.

| The unit | The activities | Date | Skills required to complete the task successfully |
|-----------------------------------|--|------|---|
| Induction course Activity A | A–Z task: qualities needed to work with customers | | Able to express ideas, listen carefully, speak confidently, respond and give support to others (interpersonal skills) |
| Activity B | Evaluating own performance on task | | Able to be self-critical and self-aware |
| Activity C | Listening to an audio clip of a group activity and analysing what went wrong | | Able to listen carefully and analyse (analytical skills) |
| Activity D | Writing ground rules for discussion | | Able to express ideas, understand how groups work, speak confidently and show good interpersonal skills |
| Activity E | Completing a task under pressure – important qualities in customer work | | Good interpersonal skills: able to produce ideas under pressure |
| Staff handbook Activity A | Highlighting key points in the Staff Complaints Procedure | | Able to read difficult texts (reading skills) |
| Activity B | Making a mind-map | | Able to digest difficult information |
| Customer complaints Activity A | Listening to an audio clip of a customer complaint | | Able to listen carefully and actively |
| Activity B | Identifying a precise complaint | | Able to select what is and what is not important information |
| Activity C | Writing down a complaint | | Able to record factual information in writing |
| Activity D | Role-playing and receiving criticism | | Able to take criticism in a positive way |
| Writing a leaflet Activity A | Reading information about the exerciser and making notes | | Able to extract key factual information and take notes |
| Activity B | Reading and learning about layout in persuasive texts | | Able to plan the layout of a leaflet |
| Activity C | Reading and learning about language in persuasive texts | | Able to use persuasive language |
| Activity D | Bringing facts and persuasive language together | | Able to plan, draft and edit persuasive writing |



Self-evaluation

Under the following headings, make notes about the skills that you have demonstrated throughout this unit and any other units or courses that you have successfully completed.

My interpersonal skills

My writing skills

My reading skills



Check it

- 1 Write a paragraph about your ability to work on speaking and listening tasks. The paragraph should talk about:
 - how confident you feel about different tasks
 - your ability to express your ideas
 - your ability to listen to and support others
 - your ability to respond to others, including accepting criticism.
- 2 Write a paragraph about your ability to write. The paragraph should comment on your ability to:
 - to take notes
 - plan, draft and edit your writing
 - write persuasively
 - present information in writing.
- 3 Write a paragraph about your ability to read and understand texts. The paragraph should discuss:
 - strategies you have learned for reading and digesting information in difficult texts
 - your ability to read and understand factual and persuasive information and blend them together in writing.

Your teacher will help you proofread and edit these three paragraphs. When they are accurate, join them together for a final version and keep them safe. They could prove extremely useful if you decide to apply for a paid or voluntary job or another course of study.

Review

Look back at the skills listed on page 1 and complete the sentences below.

I am confident with

I need more practice with



Answers

Page 15 Activity A

- b An electrician is a person who works with electricity.
- c A magician is a person who performs magic.
- d A musician is a person who makes music.
- e An optician is a person who is trained in optics.
- f A physician is a person who practises medicine (known in old English as 'physic').
- g A paediatrician is a doctor who specialises in paediatrics.
- h A statistician is a person who compiles and interprets statistics.
- i An obstetrician is a doctor who specialises in obstetrics.

Page 16 Activity B

| | Related words |
|---------------|---|
| politician | politics, political, politically |
| musician | music, musical, musicality, musically |
| paediatrician | paediatrics, paediatric |
| electrician | electric, electricity, electrical, electrically |
| optician | optic, optics, optical, optically |
| statistician | statistic, statistics, statistical, statistically |
| magician | magic, magical, magically |
| physician | physic, physics, physical, physically |
| obstetrician | obstetrics, obstetrical |



Audio scripts

Page 2 Activity C • Audio script 1

- Ruth: OK then, you know what your task is. You've got a long list of the qualities you think are needed for working with customers. Now reduce your list to the ten most important and rank order them. So off you go. I'm going to let you get on with it. You only have five minutes, right? I expect to see it completed by the time I get back. Try to come to a group consensus of agreement. You can feed back to me when I return.
- [Silence for about 20 seconds].
- Natalie: OK then, I'll start you off. What does she mean by rank order?
- Joseph: The one you think is most important comes first and so on, so that number ten is the least important. How do you want to go about it? We could go through the list and bring it down to about 20 by throwing out the ones we don't think are that important. What do you think?
- Jennie: Sounds good to me.
- Himesh: Yeah, that's cool.
- Ravina: Okay, the first one's A then, and we've got 'A' for 'Adaptable'. I think that's probably one we'd end up keeping in the final ten.
- Natalie: 'Adaptable' is important, Ravina, but not one of the most important things. I think it can go.
- Dev: You can't get rid of 'adaptable' just like that, at least not if we're only trying to get the list down to 20 in the beginning. Personally I think we should get the list down to less than 20 because it's going to take too long to go through the list twice. First get it to 20 and then ten.
- Ravina: So is 'adaptable' going or staying for the moment? What do you think, Joseph?
- Joseph: I think 'adaptable' is a good quality and should stay, but what are we doing now? Are we going for 20 or for ten?
- Natalie: Okay, I don't mind sticking with 'adaptable' for now if we're keeping 20 but not if we're keeping ten.
- Jennie: So you are saying that 'adaptable' should go, either sooner or later, aren't you? But everyone else might think it should stay in the top ten. I think it could even be in the top five.
- Dev: Let's take a vote on 'adaptable'? How many people think it needs to stay?
- Himesh: In the top ten or top 20?
- Dev: In the top ten. C'mon, put your hands up.
[They all put their hands up except Natalie]
- Jennie: Right, that's five out of six, so 'adaptable' is one of the top ten. What number shall we put it at?
- Joseph: Hang on, let's get the list of ten first then decide what order to put them in. The next quality is B for 'bold'. I don't think that 'bold' is a suitable quality at all and one that can go.
- Natalie: So what happens when one person doesn't agree with a decision and we've been told to reach a group consensus of agreement? Doesn't that mean that we all have to agree on the same top ten qualities?
- Ravina: Oh, Ruth didn't say, did she? We should have asked her.
- Joseph: No, we shouldn't have asked her. She is expecting us to be able to be decisive about this, so we'd better decide. What do we mean by a group consensus of agreement? Does it mean we can only include points that we all agree on?
- Natalie: Surely it must do, in which case 'adaptable' stays.
- Himesh: No way, man. You have to go with the majority eventually because you might never get to the point where you all agreed on the same ten things. You have to go with the majority, Natalie.
- Natalie: Whatever!
- Joseph: Yes, I think a group consensus should include Natalie saying, 'Okay, I'm happy to go with the majority on this.'
[Everybody cheers]
- Himesh: Right we've got one then... 'adaptable'. Oh no! we've only got one and she's coming back in two minutes.
- Ravina: Well, let's just grab any nine and let her think we discussed them all properly.
- Jennie: Yes, but, if she asks us to explain how we arrived at a group consensus, we may all end up saying different things because we haven't done the task properly.
- Ravina: Well, if one of us makes it up the rest of us can shut up and nod in agreement.
- Joseph: That won't work. It's better to just continue as we are and not worry about how far we get. She won't mind if we don't finish the task. Hey, you don't think she's watching us with a video camera, do you?
[They all look anxiously round the room]



Himesh: Nuh, so why did she say we've only got a few minutes then if not to see how far we can get with a task in a few minutes?

Natalie: Right, we're wasting time. I say 'brave' stays.

Ravina: 'Brave'? We're not in the friggin' army, are we? You hardly need to be brave to talk to a customer.

Natalie: You're joking? Some customers are out to kill. They're out to reduce you to a nervous wreck. My sister works in Marks & Spencer and she once told me about a customer who...

Himesh: Whoa! Please, no stories that take us off the point. Everyone put your hands up if you think 'Brave' stays or goes.
[Three hands go up].

Jennie: Oh, man, we can't agree on anything. Come on, quick. Somebody change their minds and then at least we'll have two.
[Ruth walks in].

Ruth: Okay, five minutes is up. How far did you get?

Joseph: Well, we have come up with one quality that is important for working with customers... 'Adaptability'.

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Mrs Redding: Right, if you've finished serving, you can listen to me and I hope you listen to me better than he does.

Salesperson: Do you mean one of the sales staff, madam?

Mrs Redding: Because I am totally fed up, you see...totally! This used to be a decent sports shop but now that you have taken over it's useless.

Salesperson: Uh, what exactly is the prob—...

Mrs Redding: Honestly. I am not exaggerating. It's totally useless. About as useless as a chocolate teapot. What's the good of it if you don't sell sports equipment or if someone needs help and you give her the wrong equipment or tell her to find it herself?

Salesperson: Um, if you could just tell me what the problem seems to be then I may be able to help.

Mrs Redding: Help? Huh! I tried asking for help before, and look where that got me!

Salesperson: Oh, I am, uh, sorry to hear that, what...

Mrs Redding: I asked him for help with it, you see, and first he said he didn't have any and then he said to find them myself. I mean, if I could find it myself then I wouldn't have

been asking him for them, would I? Isn't that his job, to help me? Or, is he just supposed to stand around looking like a model and chat to his friends? It wasn't as if I hadn't been looking for it myself. I'd looked everywhere for them. You've got hockey sticks but if you've ever tried playing without gloves then you'll know that one is useless without the other. These you gave me last week are no good. My son would have no skin left on his knuckles if he played without them, but none in sight in this shop, and your sales assistant wasn't about to assist at all. Said he didn't know what I wanted and told me to find them myself. I bet it was his fault last week. Baseball gloves? Do you think you're in the middle of New York?

Salesperson: I am really sorry, madam if one of our sales team has been unhelpful. Now if you could just explain....

Mrs Redding: That's him there. The one with that ridiculous hairstyle. Like that footballer, you know. Now if I had asked for a football shirt, I bet he'd have helped. But mine, oh no. Not popular enough I suppose. Not enough profit more like. This is more like a fashion shop than a sports shop and it's just not good enough! Then he tells you to find them yourself.

Salesperson: Uh, I may...

Mrs Redding: So what are you going to do about it? That's what I want to know!

Salesperson: Perhaps you...

Mrs Redding: Standing around chatting and when I asked him to find them he pointed somewhere over there and expected me to find it myself. I have been coming to this shop for over 20 years and never had a problem till you lot took it over. Bought my son his first bike here. Three years old he was. I can remember the lovely woman that sold it to us to this day... not like him. You're wasting my time. I'm not getting anywhere. I want to see the manager. I want this complaint put in writing and I want an apology from the store.

Salesperson: Uh, what exactly is your complaint? I've got a bit confused.

Mrs Redding: I don't think you've listened to a word I've said. Get the manager for me. I think they need to put someone a bit more experienced than you on the sales desk, don't you?