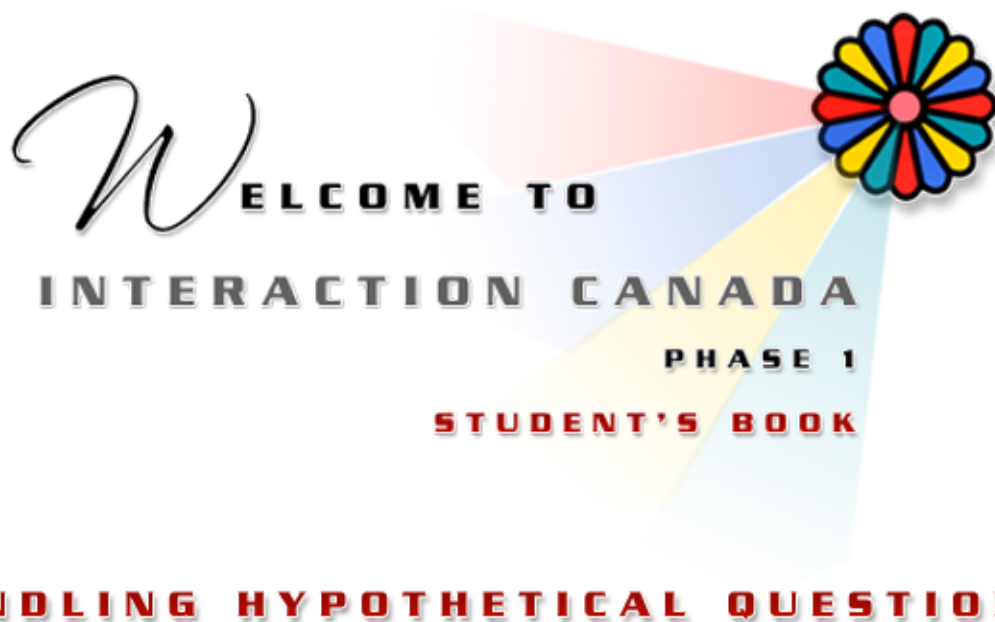




ÉCOLE DE LA FONCTION
PUBLIQUE DU CANADA
CANADA SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC SERVICE



HANDLING HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

HANDLING HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

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CREDITS

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Language Training Centre
Canada School of Public Service

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Handling Hypothetical Questions

STUDY 1a

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS – PRESENT AND FUTURE

When a hypothetical situation refers to **present** or **future** time, the verbs and modals referring to the situation are in the **subjunctive***. Using the subjunctive tells listeners that you are talking about something unreal, imaginary or that you think may or may not occur. **NOTE:** In two-clause hypothetical questions the **if** clause can be in first or second position; however, **if equivalent clauses** can only be in first position.

Use **question words** (who, what, when, where, why, how, ...) + **past + if + subjunctive**:

Who could Jean consult **if** he **were*** stuck when translating?
If he **were** stuck when translating, **who could** Jean consult?

What would the property companies do **if** they **couldn't** rent their office space?

What would happen **if** people **chose** to work at home on alternate weeks?

How would people react **if** they **weren't** allowed to meet regularly with their colleagues?

Use equivalents for **if** to introduce the hypothesis first, then ask the question:

Let's say (that) everyone **had** to work at home, what **would** happen?

What say we all **worked** at home, how **would** this affect our lives?

What if we **chose** to work at home, who **would** mind the office?

Suppose people **decided** to not stay home, then what **could** we do?

*Note: In hypothetical questions and statements English uses a subjunctive in the **if** clause. This subjunctive form is the same as the past form except for the verb BE where **were** is used for all subjects: e.g. "**If I were** you,...," "**If she were** here,...," "**If it were** possible,...," "**If you were** here,...". You will often *hear* the simple past: "**If I / he / it was**...." Some consider this usage substandard. In formal writing "**were**" is preferable.

STUDY 1b

HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS – PRESENT AND FUTURE

Hypothetical statements usually contain two clauses or parts: a clause introduced by **If**, or an **equivalent**, which contains the hypothesis, and a clause containing the main verb which states the consequences of the hypothetical situation. Hypothetical statements use the **subjunctive** in the **if** clause.

If we **worked** at home, the winter **wouldn't** seem so long.
The winter **wouldn't** seem so long **if** we **worked** at home.

Suppose we **worked** at home, the winter **wouldn't** seem so long.

If I **were** free to choose, I'd prefer to go in to the office every day.
I'd prefer going to the office **if** I **were** free to choose.

Let's say that I **were** free to choose, I'd prefer going to the office.

If we **lived** in a small town, I **would** bicycle to work.

IF EQUIVALENTS FOR HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS

Suppose (that)...	On the supposition
Assuming (that)...	that...
Allowing that...	On the assumption
	that...
	Let's say (that)

SHOULD OR WERE INSTEAD OF IF

Should +subject+base form...	Were +subject+infinitive...
By the way of hypothesis, should we** work ...	
By the way of hypothesis, were I** to live ...	

*Note the inverted word order "...should we...", "...were I..."

PRACTICE 1

Your teacher will give you instructions for this speaking practice exercise.

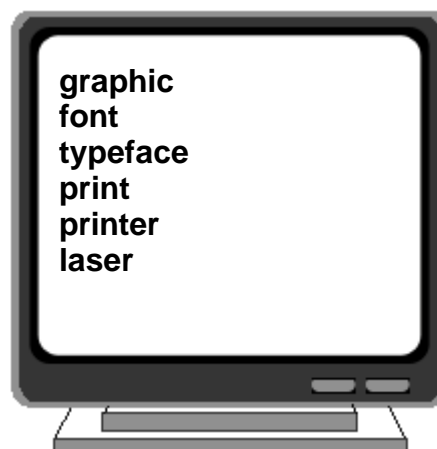
PRE 2a - Computer Vocabulary

Write the English equivalent on the line beside the French term.

matériel (informatique)	_____	graphique/illustration	_____
logiciel	_____	police (d'impression)	_____
moniteur	_____	caractère	_____
réseau	_____	imprimer	_____
modem	_____	imprimante	_____
terminal d'utilisateur	_____	laser	_____
poste de travail	_____	démarrer/lancer	_____
(ordinateur) portatif	_____	formater	_____
ligne directe / numéro d'urgence	_____	installer	_____
RLE (réseau local d'entreprise)	_____	exécuter	_____
lecteur	_____	charger	_____
disquette	_____	transférer	_____
répertoire	_____	archiver	_____
fichier	_____	sauvegarder	_____
SED (système d'exploitation de disque)	_____	planter	_____
mémoire vive	_____	dépanner	_____
mémoire morte	_____	entrer (des données)	_____
courriel	_____		

STUDY 2a

COMPUTER-RELATED TERMS



STUDY 2b

MORE COMPUTER-RELATED TERMS

French – English

agrandir – maximize	moteur de recherche – search engine
barre d'état – status bar	navigateur – browser
barre d'outils – tool bar	naviguer – surf
barre de défilement – scroll bar	numériseur – scanner
barrière de sécurité – firewall	numériseur – digitizer
casque d'écoute – headphones	ordinateur – computer
clavardage – chat	outil de recherche – search engine
clavier – keyboard	page Web – Web page
configurer – configure	page d'accueil – home page
défiler – scroll	pare-feu – firewall
écran – screen	pirate informatique – hacker
émoticon – emoticon 😊 😞	pourriel – spam
fenêtre – window	réduire – minimize
forum – newsgroup	restaurer – restore
fournisseur d'accès – access provider	scanneur – scanner
frimousse – smiley 😊	serveur – server
fureteur – browser	signet – bookmark
hameconnage – phishing	site Web/Internet – Website, Web site
hyperlien – hyperlink	souris – mouse
icône – icon	télécharger – download
internaute – cybernaut	témoin (de connexion) – cookie
intranet – intranet	touche – key
lien – link	virus – virus

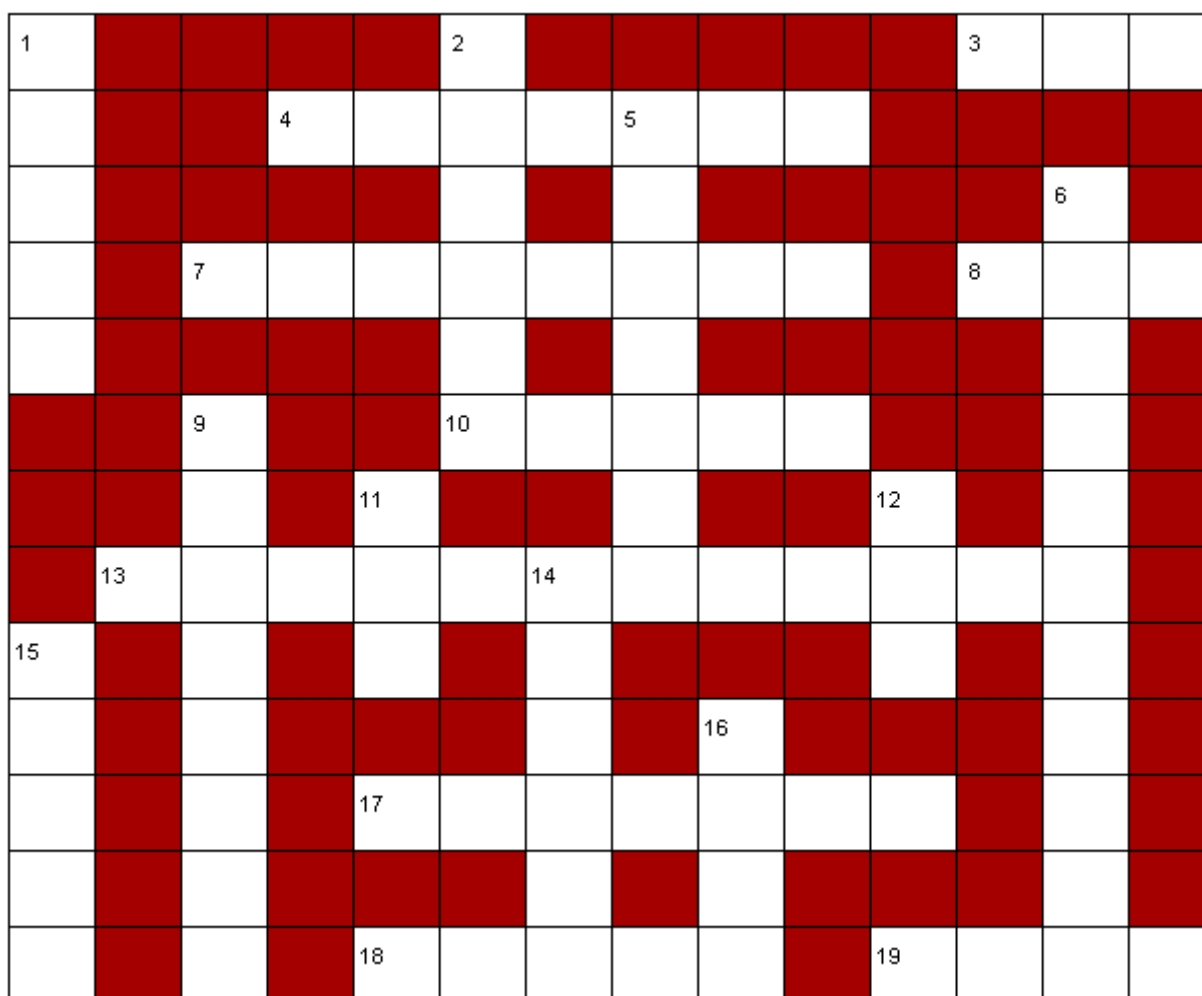
English — French

access provider — fournisseur d'accès	maximize — agrandir
bookmark — signet	minimize — réduire
browser — fureteur	mouse — souris
browser — navigateur	newsgroup — forum
chat — clavardage	phishing — hameçonnage
computer — ordinateur	restore — restaurer
configure — configurer	scanner — numériseur
cookie — témoin (de connexion)	scanner — scanneur
cybernaut — internaute	screen — écran
digitizer — numériseur	scroll bar — barre de défilement
download — télécharger	scroll — défiler
emoticon — émoticône 😊 😞	search engine — moteur de recherche
firewall — pare-feu	search engine — outil de recherche
firewall — barrière de sécurité	server — serveur
hacker — pirate informatique	smiley — grimasse 😊
headphones — casque d'écoute	spam — pourriel
home page — page d'accueil	status bar — barre d'état
hyperlink — hyperlien	surf — naviguer
icon — icône	tool bar — barre d'outils
intranet — intranet	virus — virus
key — touche	Web page — page Web
keyboard — clavier	Website, Web site — site Web/Internet
link — lien	window — fenêtre

PRACTICE 2

Complete the puzzle with the English equivalents of the French computer-related terms given below using STUDY 2a.

PUZZLE



CLUES

Across:

- 3. Mémoire vive
- 4. Graphique
- 7. Disquette
- 8. Mémoire morte
- 10. Imprimer
- 13. Régler des problèmes, dépanner, détecter
- 17. Réseau
- 18. Entrer des données, l'entrée
- 19. Police (d'impression)

Down:

- 1. Modem
- 2. Copie de sécurité / sauvegarde
- 5. Ligne directe
- 6. Poste de travail
- 9. Terminal
- 11. Exécuter
- 12. Système d'exploitation de disque
- 14. Portatif
- 15. Être en panne, planter
- 16. Démarrer

KEY page 164

PRACTICE 3

Use terms from STUDY 2b to complete the sentences.

1. Just click on the _____ to open the program. (NOTE: There are three possible answers. Write all three.)
2. I hate having to buy new _____ because the headband breaks... and sometimes the sound from the old ones was better.
3. Use the _____ to digitize the photos and then save them as bmp or jpg files.
4. The _____ helps protect our computers by keeping some information from getting through.
5. To _____ to the next page just turn the wheel on your mouse.
6. It is forbidden to _____ software from the Internet onto our work computers.
7. Have you met people using a _____ group?
8. I have to buy a new _____ because one of the _____ is stuck.
9. Does your _____ have a cord or is it remote?
10. I like this site. I think I'll _____ it so I can come back to it easily.

PRACTICE 4

Your teacher will give you instructions for this speaking practice.

STUDY 3

LESS DEFINITE HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS – SPECULATION

To be less definite or more speculative about hypothetical situations, use the modals **could** and **might**, the past forms of **can** and **may**, in the main clause to express possibility.

If we wasted less paper, we **might** save some money.

If there weren't so many out of town meetings, we **could** cut the travel budget.

Using adverbs of possibility with these modals makes statements even more speculative.

If we wasted less paper, **perhaps** we **might** save some money.

If there weren't so many out of town meetings, **maybe** we **could** cut the travel budget.

ADVERBS OF POSSIBILITY

maybe, possibly, conceivably, feasibly, perhaps

SPECULATING

If we wasted less paper, **it's (just) possible (that)** we **might** save some money.

If we wasted less paper, we **could conceivably** save some money.

If we wasted less paper, **there's a chance** we **could** save some money.

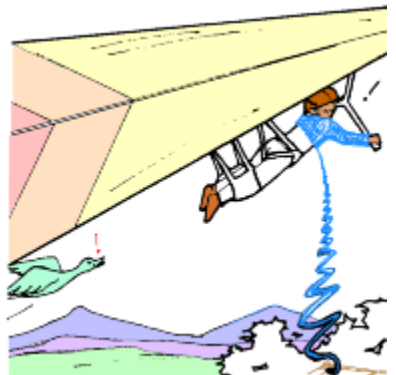
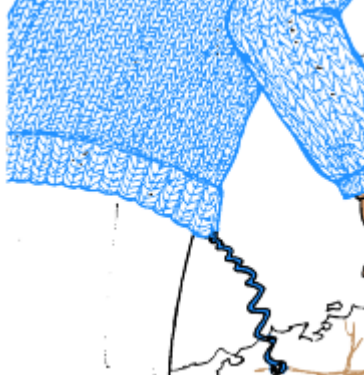
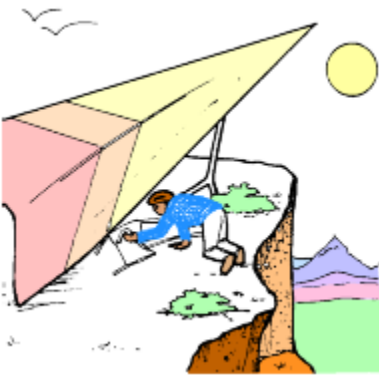
If there weren't so many out of town meetings, **it could/might be that** we'd save some money.

If there weren't so many out of town meetings, **it (just) might be feasible to** save money.

If there weren't so many out of town meetings, **feasibly** we (just) **might** save some money.

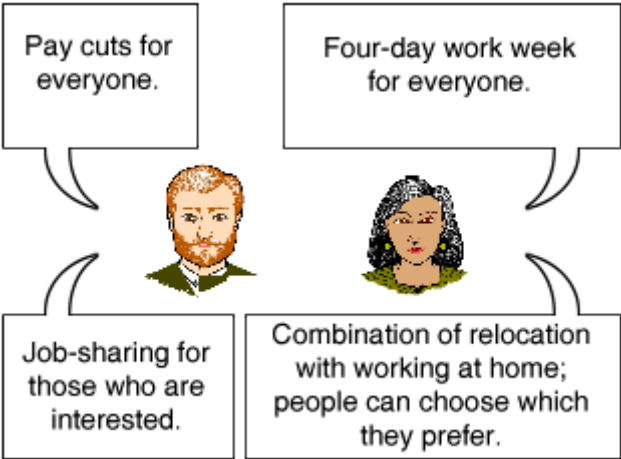
PRACTICE 5

Work with a partner. Look at the people in the pictures below. With your partner, write down as many potential solutions to the predicaments as you can think of. When writing solutions, use as many of the possibility expressions from STUDY 3, page 151, as you can. Use the correct verb tense. Share your solutions with the other pairs.



PRACTICE 6

Look at the illustration. Ian and Keisha are brainstorming ways their department could save money. Work in small groups of three or four to brainstorm more ideas for saving money. Write your suggestions in the empty speech bubbles. The more ideas you come up with the better. Use extra paper if needed. Present your ideas using expressions from STUDY 3, page 151.



MULTI-STEP MAXI-ROLEPLAY

Scenario

Your organization, which has been having financial problems, has recently engaged consultants to suggest ways to cut costs without cutting any jobs. The consultants have presented their report.

STEP 1 – E-mail

Read the e-mail, on the next page, informing employees of the consultants' proposed cost-cutting strategies.

Mail to:				
From:	Chair for the Task Force on Cost Reduction	CC:		
To:	All Staff	BC:		
Subject:	Consultants' Proposals for Cost Reduction			
Message:	<p>As you know, we are faced with the difficult task of redesigning our operations in such a way that the required 35 percent cut in our costs is achieved without any loss of jobs.</p> <p>Our consultants have made two proposals that could allow us to achieve our objective: working at home and relocation. These possibilities are described briefly on the attached sheets. A series of meetings will be scheduled over the next few weeks to allow you to present your reactions.</p> <p>Meanwhile, to prepare for the meetings, we hope that you will explore the effects of each of the proposals with your colleagues and families. Please feel free to explore other possibilities which might enable us to achieve our objectives.</p> <p>The changes would affect all of you in many different ways. No decisions will be made until you have had the opportunity to evaluate the proposals and give us your input.</p> <p>Thank you for your co-operation.</p> <p>Carlette Mundy</p> <p>Att. 3</p>			
Start				Mail to:

Send
X
Cancel
Address
X
Attach

STEP 2 – Working at Home

Attachment 1

Read the proposed Working at Home Policy.

WORKING AT HOME POLICY

- a. All employees would be provided with computers linked by an Intranet. All necessary office equipment or furniture to complete the task or project would be supplied.
 - b. Employees would work mainly from their homes.
 - c. Employees would come in to the office for short periods on a regular basis. A rotational schedule reflecting operational needs for liaison would be established.
 - d. Only a small central office would be maintained. Office facilities would be shared.
-

STEP 3 – Working at Home

Explore the Implications 1

Make notes of your responses to the following questions, for later use, on the next page.

Work with a partner. Together, consider the implications for your jobs if the solution chosen were to be working at home. Consider the following questions **or any others that you may think of:**

1. How could you work at home? What are the logistics? What would help you feel comfortable and enable you work efficiently and effectively?
2. What specific equipment and furniture would you need to do your work?
3. How could the work of others in your section, especially work that supports yours, be done at home as well?
4. Do your jobs require interaction with people? If so, how could the interactions be adapted for working at home?
5. Explain what the potential for error would be if all your tasks and those of others were done at home?
6. What would the cost of fixing any errors be?
...in approximate money terms?
...in human terms?
7. What would the consequences be if the Intranet system crashed? How could you continue to work anyway?
8. How often do you feel you would need to go in to the office other than the required rotational stint? How often and why would you actually like to go in to the office?

Working at Home?

STEP 4 — Relocation

Attachment 2

Another proposal was to relocate to a less expensive urban centre. Two small cities were identified as possible, suitable locations: Fremantle Falls and Hunterston. Read the descriptions of the two cities provided by each city's chamber of commerce.

FREMANTLE FALLS

Location: 400 kilometres north, 5 kilometres from provincial park boundary

Population: 175 000

Economy: Resource extraction (forestry, mining, hydro), tourism, retail, service industries

Further educational facilities: Two community colleges, university campus

Recreational activities: Skiing, swimming at beach, white water rafting within 40 kilometres

Shopping: Three shopping centres with major department stores

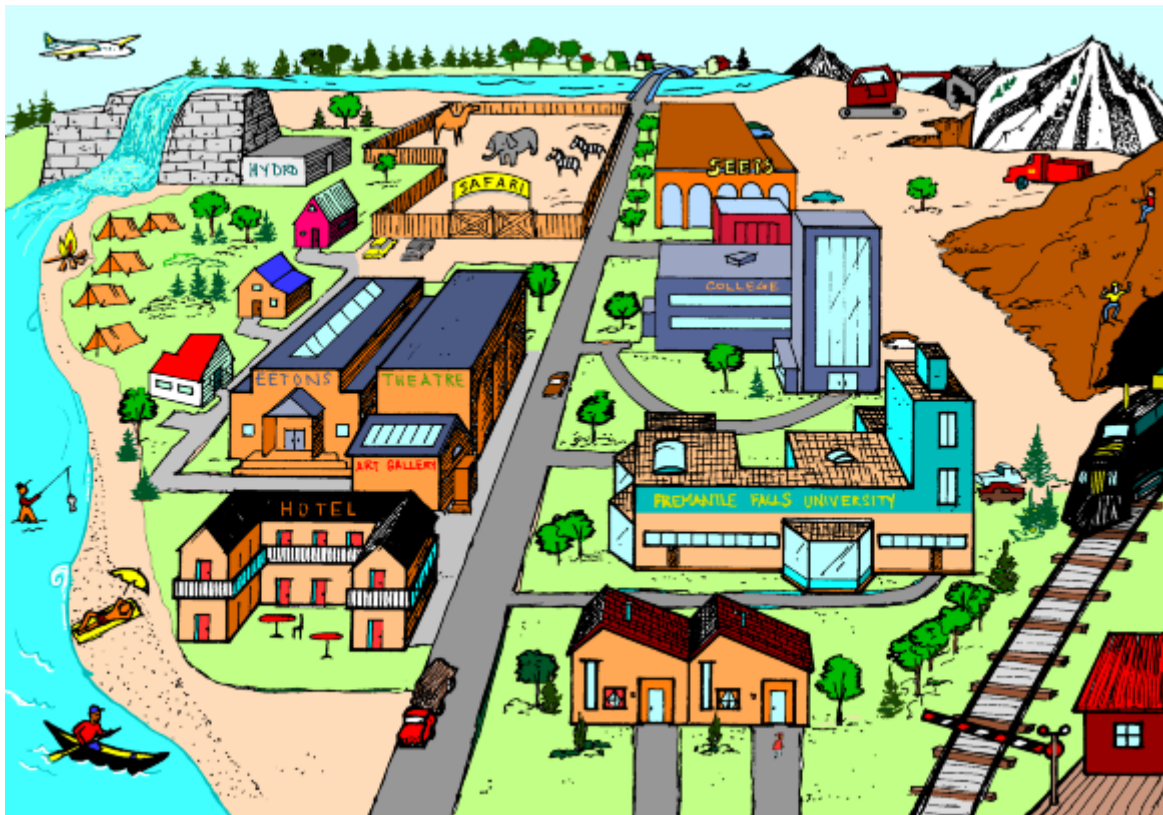
Sports facilities: Three indoor pools, year-round tennis courts, rock-climbing centre

Transportation: Airport (16 kilometres), train station

Cultural attractions: Art gallery, professional theatre company

Tourist attractions: Winton Safari Park, Lost River Silver Mine, hunting, fishing, wilderness camping/canoeing

Accommodation: Average three-bedroom single-family home: \$232 000. Two-bedroom, downtown apartment rent: \$1 150 a month



HUNTERSTON

Location: 130 kilometres south, on edge of 66-kilometre lake

Population: 36 000

Economy: Manufacturing (plastics, micro-electronics), high technology, tourism, retail, service industries

Further educational facilities: Community college, art school

Recreational activities: Horseback riding, sailing, ballooning, spelunking

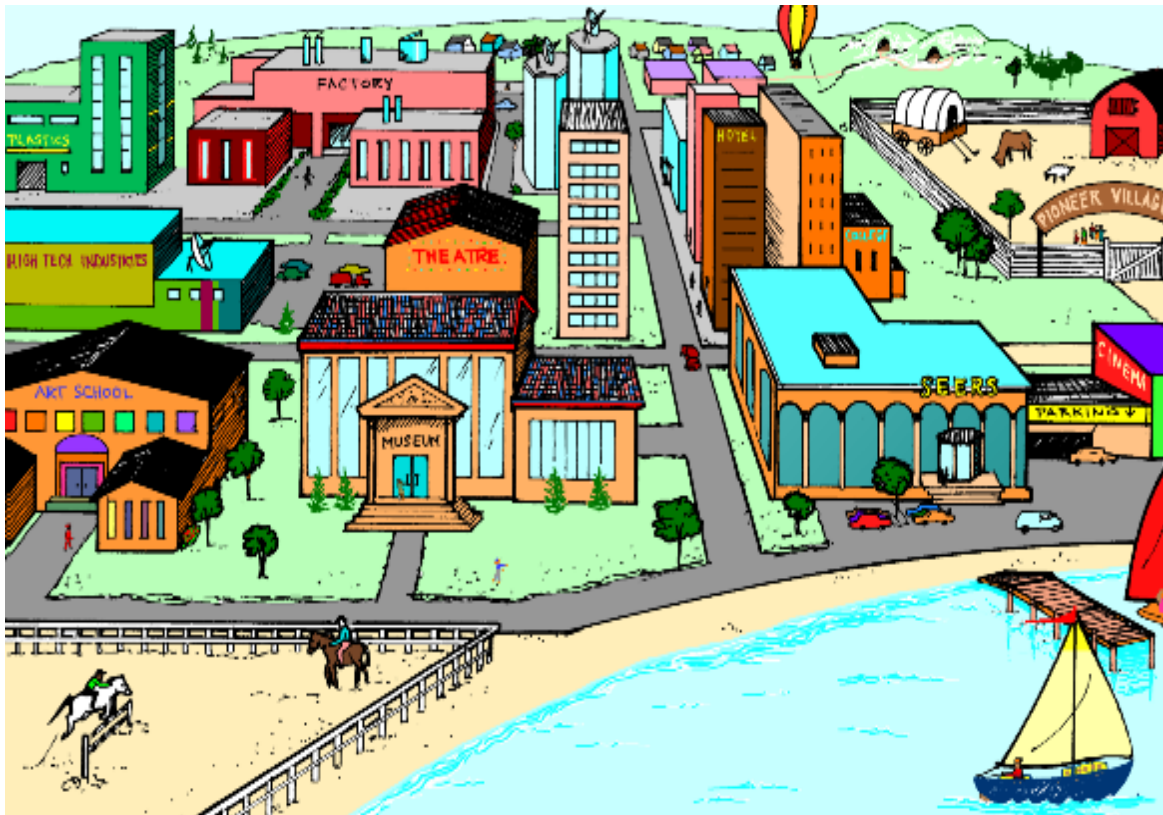
Shopping: Shopping centre with cinema complex and major department store, several factory wholesale outlets

Sports facilities: One outdoor, one indoor pool; municipal tennis courts; equestrian centre; sailing club

Entertainment/Cultural activities: Four movie theatres, museum, active artistic community, community music/theatre groups

Tourist attractions: Pioneer Village, Terreblanche Caverns and Hills

Accommodation: Average three-bedroom single-family home: \$175 000. Two-bedroom, downtown apartment rent: \$650 per month



STEP 5 – Relocation

Explore the Implications 2

With a partner, consider the implications for each of you if the solution chosen were relocation to either of the proposed cities. Consider the following questions and make note of your own reasons in the text area provided.

1. What would the effect be on your family life?
2. How might moving change your cost of living?
3. In what ways would your recreational activities have to be modified, if at all?
4. Would there be any change in your cultural activities? Explain.
5. How could your leisure activities be affected for the better and for the worse?
6. What might be the effect on any educational plans?
7. How would moving have an impact on your career plans?
8. How might relocation cause problems with living arrangements?
9. What would the major changes be in your social life?
10. ...

Finally, discuss which place would be best for each of you personally.

Relocation

STEP 6 – MAXI-ROLEPLAY

MAKE A CHOICE

1. In a group, **decide** which solution(s) you would prefer to see implemented. In the discussions, consider the following questions.
 - What would be most cost effective?
 - What would be least disruptive to the work?
 - What would be the easiest to "sell" to the employees?
 - What would their personal preferences be?
 - What would be the easiest for management to control?
2. Should the group favour more than one solution, **rank** choices in descending order of preference.
3. **Report** your views to the rest of the class. Make a final decision.

ANSWER KEY

PRACTICE 2

PUZZLE

¹ M					² B						³ R	A	M
O			⁴ G	R	A	P	⁵ H	I	C				
D					C		O					⁶ W	
E		⁷ D	I	S	K	E	T	T	E		⁸ R	O	M
M					U		L					R	
		⁹ T			¹⁰ P	R	I	N	T			K	
		E		¹¹ R			N			¹² D		S	
	¹³ T	R	O	U	B	¹⁴ L	E	S	H	O	O	T	
¹⁵ C		M		N		A				S		A	
R		I				P		¹⁶ B				T	
A		N		¹⁷ N	E	T	W	O	R	K		I	
S		A				O		O				O	
H		L		¹⁸ I	N	P	U	T		¹⁹ F	O	N	T