



École de la fonction
publique du Canada

Canada School
of Public Service

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of *Interaction Canada: Phase 3 Level C* is to provide you with many opportunities to practise the functions, grammar and strategies you learned in the first two phases of the program.

DESCRIPTION

This book is divided into five sections, one for each Second Language Exam (SLE) objective:

- Explaining/Describing
- Supporting Opinions / Defending Points of View
- Counselling/Advising
- Handling Hypothetical Questions
- Handling Complex Work-Related Situations

In addition, an appendix lists exponents for each of the functions mentioned in the sections.

Each activity section consists of an introductory page and 20 independent activities. Each activity contains four boxes.

The first box presents a situation, drawn from work or personal life, which will allow you to practise one of the SLE objectives. The next two boxes present functions and grammar to use in each activity. The functions are also found in the appendix. The fourth box presents vocabulary.

In separate files you will find Templates, a Feedback sheet and a Self-Performance Checklist that should be adapted to your needs, then printed or copied and used with each of the activities. The templates allow you and your teacher to set target language for each practice of a situation. Feedback sheets are used to monitor your progress and help you to focus on areas to improve. The checklist is provided to help you assess how well you believe you have mastered the functions, grammar and vocabulary focussed on in each activity.

Interaction Canada: Phase 3 Level C is designed for maximum flexibility. You can use it in many different ways. Each SLE objective section and each activity is independent; you can work on any one without having completed work on any of the others. This means that you can choose your own route through the materials; for example, you might want to focus only on those sections dealing with the SLE objectives which are difficult for you; within those sections you could work on any or all of the situations in the order they are presented or in any order you choose.

In addition, you are encouraged to adapt any situation to bring it closer to your own experience.

The activities are designed for use with a *partner*. In each activity, you could be either the major or the minor speaker. Specific instructions for the major speaker appear in each situation; general instructions for the minor speaker appear only in the introductory part to each section (see note later for more detail).



To get the most out of each activity, you may wish to tape the interaction and later review the tape to pin point where you need improvement.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The activities are designed to give you practice speaking with the proficiency and fluency consistent with the performance standards for Level C. In specific terms, this level of performance requires you to:

- use precise vocabulary to convey exact meaning;
- link sequences of events in time;
- link facts in logical sequence;
- link sentences effectively to convey complex ideas;
- discuss a broad variety of topics;
- expand on topics with ease.

At the same time, you are expected to:

- hesitate rarely, except for ideas;
- have natural delivery;
- understand readily and accurately what is said to you;
- be easily understood.

Since all the activities could be performed at a B level of proficiency, it is up to you to make the extra effort required to bring your performance up to a C level. Use the above information to guide your planning, performance and subsequent self-evaluation of each activity you tackle.

A reminder of Level C performance standards appears on the introductory page of each section.

HOW TO PROCEED

Find a partner. With your partner choose a situation and decide who will be the major and minor speakers. Partners can be a native speaker or your teacher during one-on-one oral interaction practice sessions.

MAJOR SPEAKER:

The approach you choose at this point depends on your learning style.

1. To begin you may prefer to prepare each step carefully, following these steps:

- think about the situation;
- discuss the possibilities with your partner;
- study the functions listed:
 - decide which functions you will focus on and set them as targets on your template;
 - check the appendix for exponents and add them to your template;
- study the grammar listed:
 - decide which structures you will need and note them on your template;
 - review these structures, if necessary;

- study the vocabulary listed:
 - decide which words you will use and set targets on your template;
 - think of any other words you might need or want to use and add them to the template;
- if you decide to record, turn on your tape recorder;
- do the activity with your partner.

When you are finished:

- if you recorded the activity, listen to your recording;
- analyze your performance, using the evaluation checklist to determine your strengths and weaknesses;
- (if you have done the activity as a one-on-one with your teacher, he or she should give you feedback using the Feedback sheets);
- try to improve any weaknesses:
 - check the appendix for additional exponents for the functions you need;
 - review any necessary grammar;
 - review any necessary vocabulary.

You can redo each activity as many times as you feel you need to. Modify the situation to make it more interesting. Change your language targets on your template. Add functions and vocabulary to help you improve your performance and keep the activity interesting and challenging.

Now REPEAT the activity and see if you can do better this time.

2. You may also want to deep-end an activity from time to time (i.e. attempt the activity without preparing first), follow these steps:
 - think about the situation;
 - glance at the functions, grammar and vocabulary;
 - if you decide to record the activity, turn on your tape recorder;
 - do the activity with your partner.

Again, repeat the activity until you feel you are comfortable and happy with the result.

Minor speaker:

You will take the part of the secondary person in the situation. This person may be the boss, a colleague, a friend, an interviewer or a workshop participant.

Your job is to help your partner speak English at the Level C standard.

The introductory page for each SLE section provides suggestions for eliciting more language from your partner.

Study this page while your partner prepares. If you need to review exponents for the functions listed on this page, turn to the appendix pages for those functions.

TEMPLATES AND FEEDBACK SHEETS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Situations can be used as they are presented in Phase 3 or adapted using a template to better reflect the students' realities. The templates for Phase 3 are intended to give students and teachers the opportunity to customize each suggested situation for oral interaction practice to each student's real-life situation and language needs. Students and teachers should select target functions, grammar and vocabulary to practise rather than try to do everything suggested in each situation in Phase 3. Situations can be used several times by readapting them and by adding to or changing the target language for each additional practice.

For a first practice, students and teachers should both have a copy of the template of the situation and the targeted language. Students use their sheet as a “cheat sheet” to remind them to include the language they have targeted. For a second practice, perhaps on another day, another sheet could be developed including some of the original targets that need the most practice plus a few new ones. For a third or any subsequent practices, only the teacher would have a copy of the template; the student would now rely on memory and knowledge.

Feedback sheets are intended to give students an idea of how well they did during their practices and to point out areas for improvement. Space is provided for general comment as well as for targeted functions, grammar and vocabulary.

On the next few pages you will find examples of two templates and one feedback sheet for a situation from EXPLAINING AND DESCRIBING.

Students and teachers are encouraged to adapt templates and feedback sheets to fit student's needs. Print the sheets for use during one-on-one oral interaction practice sessions.

Student: _____

Date: ____/____/____

SITUATION: (WRITE YOUR OWN SITUATION OR COPY AN ADAPTED SITUATION HERE):

FUNCTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO USE: CHOOSE THE FUNCTIONS YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON FOR DESCRIBING PRESENT REPEATED ACTIONS.

GRAMMAR: CHOOSE THE GRAMMAR YOU WANT TO TARGET FOR THIS PRACTICE.

VOCABULARY: CHOOSE VOCABULARY YOU WISH TO PRACTISE.

YOU AND YOUR WORK

It is always a good idea to keep resumes updated. Your workplace has sponsored a seminar designed to help participants update their resumes. You are a participant in this seminar. Work with another participant. You will help each other elicit relevant information about your educational and training backgrounds and your work experience. (Remember to include both your work and volunteer experience; explain how this background relates to the job(s) you now do.)

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Talk about: the past, the present

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect / present perfect continuous tenses

I've loved computers since I was a child and I've been working with them for years.

Past/ past continuous tenses

During high school and university, I took every computer course I could and while I was studying as a student, I was always able to find computer-related work.

Gerunds/infinitives

Finding work has never been a problem. It seemed natural for me to look for employment in computers.

Time connectors: when, after, while; first, next, afterward, then; during, since, for

When I started with the government, I supported networks. During that time, I became fascinated by network management.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you explain what exactly it was that fascinated you about computers?

What exactly was it that fascinated you about computers?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

administer
allocate
analyze
arrange/ make arrangements for
be responsible for
be in charge of
be the head of
control
co-ordinate
describe
deal with
draft/edit/write
entertain
explain
handle requests/complaints
host
implement
maintain
make speeches at
make purchases
manage
monitor
organize
oversee
plan
process
produce
provide services/information
participate/ take part in
regulate
represent my division at
supervise

YOU AND YOUR WORK

Compare a job or position you had before this one with your current job or position. Include duties, responsibilities, challenges, working atmosphere, advantages and disadvantages,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Compare/contrast

Talk about similarities and differences

Talk about causes and results

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Comparison

My job now is more challenging and faster paced; the people are less sociable than my other colleagues were.

Habitual past action

I used to work in a team and we would always get together after work socially.

Cause/result connectors: as a result, so

I work more on my own now. As a result, I feel more isolated.

Noun clauses

What you have to remember is that everything has advantages and disadvantages.

Present

In some ways all jobs are similar – ups and downs, politics, personality quirks.

Modals: have to, can

Both jobs have pros and cons. You have to find a happy medium

Connectors for contrast: although, but, however

My hours in both jobs are the same, although my salary is higher now.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you explain what the advantages were in your last job?

What were the advantages in your last job?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

compare
contrast
differ
differentiate
equate
resemble

Nouns

pace
politics
personality quirks
the same as

Adjectives

challenging
different from
isolated
similar to
sociable

Adverbs

equally
socially

Idioms

a happy medium
pros and cons
ups and downs

YOU AND YOUR WORK

What would you do differently in your choice of career or in your work life, if you had it to do again? Why?

If you had known when you started to work for the government what you know now, would you have handled any situation(s) or decisions differently? Which ones? What would you have done differently?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Explain/describe

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation, probability

Give: reasons, results, examples

Compare

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition:

If I had the chance to choose a career again, I would probably look at a wider variety of possibilities than I did before.

Condition: Past continuous + modal

If I were starting my work life again, I might try to keep more options open.

Past unreal condition

Had I known before what I know now, I would have been more philosophical and less bothered by trivialities.

Causative: let someone do something

I wouldn't have let people step on my toes. I probably should have been more assertive.

Infinitives/gerunds

To avoid some of the problems I ran into, I should have considered learning the ropes earlier.

Relative clauses

No matter how much you plan, life is full of the unexpected.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering what other field you might have enjoyed.

What other field might you have enjoyed?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

apply for
benefit from
brush up on
check into
check out
look around

Nouns

career
opportunity
option
triviality
variety

Adjectives

assertive
career
conscientious
creative
hard-working
philosophical

Idioms

be bothered by
keep one's options open
learn the ropes
run into problems
step on someone's toes
take risks

YOU AND YOUR WORK

How did you get into government work? Why did you choose to work for the government? Compare working in the public service with working in the private sector. In your opinion, what are the benefits and the advantages of each? Compare salaries, benefits, quality of life, perks,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Express and support opinions

Compare/contrast

Talk about similarities and differences

Talk about causes and results

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past tense

I fell into my job in the government by accident. I happened to see an opening posted on the Internet and I applied.

Gerunds

After waiting a while, I got an interview.

Comparison

The hours are more regular and the benefits are better than in my job in the private sector.

Modals: can, have to, might

In my job, I have to work hard but I can leave the work behind when I go home.

Connectors for contrast: although, despite the fact that; however, but

Despite the fact that the salary is less, the quality of life is better.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering what kind of work you did in the private sector.

What kind of work did you do in the private sector?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

apply (for)
happen to
leave (something) behind

Nouns

benefits
hours
interview
opening
salary
sector

Adjectives

private
public
regular

Idioms

by accident
fall into something
quality of life

YOU AND YOUR WORK

You are participating in a government recruitment fair, designed to encourage "the best and brightest" to join the Public Service. Explain to your audience:

- the mandate of your Ministry/Department;
- the aspects of this mandate that are the responsibility of your Branch, Directorate, and Division;
- how your job fits into this context;
- what your job entails and what the responsibilities are;
- the qualifications needed for doing your job;
- the qualities/characteristics a person needs to carry out your job successfully;
- what you like about doing this kind of work;
- the problems you encounter, how you fix them,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Express: necessity, obligation, possibility, ability

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR WHICH MAY ARISE

Relative clauses

I work for the Department of ____ whose mandate is _____. What my Directorate does is ____ and what I do is _____.

Infinitives/gerunds

To do my job, you need to like travelling because I visit all the regional offices regularly.

Modals

In my job you have to be able to work with people but you should also be able to work on your own. Also, you may sometimes need to be able to tolerate ambiguity.

Present/ present continuous tenses

I like this work because I am never bored; I am always meeting new situations and challenges.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you explain the kind of problems you encounter?

What kind of problems do you encounter?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

challenge
encounter
entail
tolerate

Nouns

ambiguity
branch
context
department
director
division
encounter
mandate
ministry
qualifications
region

Adjectives

efficient
regional
stressful
tolerant

Idioms

a happy medium
be cut out for something
bear in mind
work on one's own

YOU AND YOUR WORK

Brief the person who will be taking your place during a period of leave. Include details of current projects, what needs to be done, how to proceed, who to go to for help; give your replacement tips about how best to survive in and enjoy your work place.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Counsel/advise

Express: necessity, ability, obligation

Enumerate/sequence

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present tense

We have a good working group and, on the whole, things run smoothly.

Infinitives

The most important thing is to try to keep on top of everything.

Present real condition

Once you let things slide; it's hard to catch up.

If you run into any problems, feel free to get hold of me in the evenings.

Modals

You can count on the team leaders; they should give you complete project updates, but you'll have to keep an eye on deadlines as they approach.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering what your priorities are.

What are your priorities?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

catch up
count on
record
run into

Nouns

deadlines
priority
record
update

Adjectives

counter-productive
efficient
productive
troublesome
unproductive

Idioms

feel free to
get hold of someone
keep an eye on
keep on top of
let things slide
run smoothly

YOU AND YOUR WORK

Describe training you received at work, either formal courses or informal instruction. Include details (content, delivery, duration, usefulness) and suggest improvements.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Compare

Talk about the past

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Make suggestions

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Causative: have something done

When we first had computers installed, I received both formal and informal computer training.

Gerunds/infinitives

The informal training wasn't too successful because the person demonstrated the process without giving us a chance to have hands-on experience.

Noun clauses

The trainer assumed that we understood simply because we had watched her demonstrate.

Passive

The formal course was more successful. The process was broken into consecutive steps.

Modals

We had to master each step before proceeding to the next but we could practise each step as often as we needed to until we got it.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you tell me how long the formal training lasted?

How long did the formal training last?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

assume
break something down
demonstrate
get (understand)
install
last
master
proceed

Nouns

demonstration
process
step

Adjectives

consecutive
formal
informal
successful
unsuccessful

Idioms

be in over one's head
be thrown by something
hands-on
practice makes perfect

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: TIME MANAGEMENT ADVICE

You are a **team member**. A colleague on your team whose workload is similar to yours seems to be having time management problems and has come to you for advice. Given that you have a number of different duties and responsibilities at work that you cannot deal with simultaneously, explain how you balance, organize, and prioritize your time and give this person some time management advice.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Counsel/advise

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

Enumerate

GRAMMAR WHICH MAY ARISE

Modals: have to, must, can, could, should, might

First, you have to recognize that you can't do everything. You must set priorities.

Present continuous / present tenses

When you are setting priorities, you need to evaluate the importance of each task and the deadline.

Causative: let something cause something

Don't let keeping in touch with people get the better of you; put aside some time each day for telephone calls and e-mail and don't go beyond those time limits.

Gerunds/infinitives

Have you considered wearing ear-phones to cut out distractions?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

get the better of someone
keep in touch with
put aside
set priorities
cut out

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: TIME MANAGEMENT ADVICE

You are a **team member**. No matter how hard you try, you never have enough time to get all your work done, especially given the number of distractions you constantly face; e.g. people who drop in to chat, frequent phone calls from home, loud conversations which drift through the open concept space in which your unit works. One of your colleagues doesn't seem to have these problems. Ask this colleague for some advice about handling your time.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Get information/advice

Ask for confirmation/clarification

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Yes/no questions

Do you get a lot of personal calls at work?

Wh-questions: who, what, when, why, where, how, which,...

How can I deal with people who drop by to chat? Don't I have to be sociable?

Indirect questions

Could you be more specific about how I should handle working in this open-concept space?

Gerunds/infinitives

What do you mean by "tuning out"? How do you manage to do that?

Noun clauses

What I don't understand is how you always seem so calm, cool and collected.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

cool, calm and collected
drop by
get the better of someone
keep in touch with
tune out

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: HOW TO FIT IN

You are a **team leader**. A new employee is joining your unit. Give this person advice about the work to be done, the hierarchies to observe, the personalities to be wary of, the way to fit in and integrate with the work group,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

Talk about causes and effects

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Infinitives/gerunds

It's a good idea to go out with everyone for lunch on Fridays. That's the time we set aside for catching up.

Modals: have to, can, should, may, might

You'll have to read between the lines when our manager talks to you.

Connectors: cause – because, since; opposition – even though, although, despite the fact that

Since our job is client services, you've got to keep your cool, even though the client's demand seems impossible.

Imperatives

Don't ever miss deadlines. Our manager is a stickler for punctuality.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Nouns

deadline
punctuality
a stickler for

Idioms

go out (for lunch)
catch up
keep one's cool
read between the lines

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: HOW TO FIT IN

You are a **new employee**, joining a unit you do not know. Try to find out what you need to know about the work to be done, the hierarchies to observe, the personalities to be wary of, the way to fit in and integrate with the work group,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Get information/advice

Ask for confirmation/clarification

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

GRAMMAR WHICH MAY ARISE

Yes/no questions

Is there a strict chain of command?

Wh-questions: who, what, when, where, why, how, which...

What do I have to do socially to fit in to the culture of this group?

Indirect questions

Could you be more specific about clients' demands that seem impossible?

Gerunds/infinitives

What do you mean by reading between the lines when the manager talks to me? How can I manage to do that?

Noun clauses

I was wondering about what my actual assignments will be.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be responsible for
be responsible to

Idioms

chain of command
fit in to
fit in with
keep one's cool
read between the lines

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: WHO WILL GET THE ACTING POSITION?

You are a **team leader**. Your manager, who will be on secondment for six months, is considering who should replace her/him in an acting position. Convince your manager that you are the right person to assume the acting position. Consider how your experience has prepared you for this role, how your personal characteristics will help you perform the duties, how you would go about maintaining the momentum of the group,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinions

Explain

Compare

Enumerate

Give: examples, reasons, results

Persuade

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Comparison

Since I've worked here the longest, I'm the most familiar with all the work.

Result connectors: so, as a result, therefore

My management style is very similar to yours, so it will be less disruptive.

Present perfect /present tenses

I've attended management training courses; I get along well with everyone.

Noun clauses

This is an opportunity to try out what I have learned in training courses.

Gerund/infinitive

I hope you will consider giving me this chance to develop my management skills.

Present real condition

If I take on the acting position, we won't waste time while everyone gets adjusted.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

get along with
get adjusted
try out

Adjectives

disruptive
familiar with
management (style/skills)
similar to

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ROLEPLAY: WHO WILL GET THE ACTING POSITION?

You are a **manager** who will be on secondment to another department for six months. You are meeting with a number of people in your unit to establish who is the most qualified to replace you in an acting position. Ask the employees why they consider themselves best for the role, how their experience has prepared them, how their personal characteristics will help them perform the duties,....

FUNCTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO USE

Get information/advice

Ask for confirmation/clarification

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

GRAMMAR WHICH MAY ARISE

Yes/no questions

Do you think you have enough experience to manage the division?

Wh-questions: who, what, when, where, why, how, which,...

Why are you the best choice for this position?

Indirect questions

I was wondering what you think your strengths and weaknesses are.

Modals: may, might, have to, would

You may have to put in longer hours; would you be willing to do that?

Present perfect /present tenses

Have you considered how you will deal with the other team leaders when you become their boss?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

adjust to
get along with

Nouns

choice
discipline
experience
strength
weakness

Adjectives

disruptive
familiar with
management (style/ skills)

YOU AND YOUR WORK

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

You are participating in the government program of visits to high schools and universities to encourage young people to consider a career in the public service. Explain:

- a. why you decided to enter the management trainee program. Include your interests, qualifications and qualities, the benefits this kind of work offers,...;
- b. the requirements for your program;
- c. the application and competition processes;
- d. the content of the training period;
- e. what you hope to accomplish.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Give: examples, reasons, results

Hypothesize

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past/present tenses

I decided to join the program because it offers so much: professional development courses, hands-on work experience, as well as language training.

Modals

As a pre-requisite, you have to have a master's degree.

Gerunds/infinitives

When applying, you are asked to send an essay about your leadership skills.

Passive

The test is scored on the basis of grammar, spelling, punctuation, style and coverage of content.

Present real condition

If you pass the initial screening, you are invited to take part in the next phase, an assessment of your leadership skills.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you tell me if you earn any salary while you are a trainee?

Do you earn any salary while you are a trainee?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

apply
assess
decide
join
offer
score

Nouns

assessment
bachelor's/master's degree (BA/MA)
course
essay
experience
phase
screening

Adjectives

initial
leadership (skills)
pre-requisite

Idioms

find fault with
from the word go
on the basis of

YOU AND YOUR WORK

In an attempt to meet trainees' expectations, an advisory committee has been established to interview trainees. Explain to the committee representative the characteristics of your ideal work placements; e.g. the departments, the kind of tasks you would hope to be assigned to, the amount of supervision and training you would expect, the kind of feedback you want,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Hypothesize

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Express: possibility, ability, necessity

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present real condition

If I get placements that really are in the areas of my expertise, I'll be pleased.

Present unreal condition

If most of my assignments were unrelated to my field, I'd be very disappointed.

Hope + future

I hope I will get regular mentoring, supervision and feedback.

Modals: have to, can, may, might

I hope I can take a crack at some challenging projects.

Gerunds/infinitives

I love thinking up strategy so I'd like my supervisor to include me in planning sessions.

Causative: let someone do something, get someone to do something

I want my manager to let me have lots of hands-on experience; I'd hate if the manager got me to do only busy-work.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you expand on the kind of assignments you want.

What kind of assignments do you want?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

assign
plan strategy
supervise

Nouns

assignment
busy-work
expertise
discipline
feedback
field
mentor
mentoring
placement
strategy
supervision

Adjectives

disappointed
pleased
related
unrelated

Idioms

hands-on experience
take a crack at something
take something in one's stride

YOU AND YOUR WORK

What personality characteristics should a management trainee have? Why are these characteristics important? What is it about you that makes you a good management trainee? What experiences have you had which prepared you for this type of work?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Express: necessity, obligation, ability, possibility

Give: examples, reasons

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Modals: have to, must, can, should

You have to show that you are committed to developing a professional career in the federal Public Service.

Gerunds

I love travelling so I don't mind that you have to be willing to relocate and remain mobile during and after the program.

Infinitives

I have stamina and you need that to complete the recruitment process which is very rigorous.

Relative clauses

Among the qualities that are listed for management trainees are good interpersonal and communication skills; I'm good at those things.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering what the language requirements are.

What are the language requirements?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be committed to something
be willing to do something
develop
relocate

Nouns

commitment
communication
flexibility
interaction
recruitment
stamina
teamwork
visioning
willingness

Adjectives

interpersonal
communication (skills)
management (career/skills)
mobile
recruitment (process)
rigorous

Idioms

be cut out for something
be good at something
be in the running

YOU AND YOUR WORK

You have been asked for feedback about the application and competition processes for the Management Trainee Program. Express and explain your opinions and suggest improvements.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express opinions

Support opinions

Give: examples, reasons, causes, results

Explain

Express: necessity, obligation, ability, possibility

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past tense

I thought the tests really assessed all aspects of the candidates' capabilities and competencies.

Result connectors: so...that; as a result, therefore; so

The whole process takes so long that it put some people off.

Reason connectors

I liked the Career Fair because you could speak with many departmental reps and network with other trainees.

Modals: have to, can, could, may, might

You almost have to put your life on hold, while you wait for the next stage of the process.

Noun clauses

I think that the government loses a lot of excellent candidates because of the length of the process.

Gerunds/infinitives

While waiting for the results of each set of tests, you don't know what to do.

Indirect and direct questions

Can you tell me what you thought of the matching process?

What did you think of the matching process?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

assess
match
network

Nouns

aspect
candidate
capability
network
process
stage

Adjectives

efficient
matching (process)
streamlined

Idioms

put an end to
put people off
put your life on hold

YOU AND YOUR WORK

You have been contacted by a person interested in becoming a management trainee. Based on your own experience and the experience of others in the program, advise this person about how to survive the competition process.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Hypothesize

Express: necessity, obligation, ability, possibility

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present tense

There are a lot of stages and the whole process takes a very long time.

Present real condition

If you aren't committed enough to go the whole course, don't even bother starting.

Modals: must, have to, can, may

To begin, you have to write an essay about your leadership skills and write a test which assesses your ability to use reasoning skills.

Infinitives/gerunds

It's a good idea to free up your time; being prepared to travel to a major centre for one of the tests is part of the deal.

Subjunctive

I'd recommend that you talk to as many trainees as you can to get their impressions.

Present perfect

I've enjoyed my experience in the MTP so my advice is "Go for it!"

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like more details about what exactly the MTP is.

What exactly is the MTP?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

assess
be committed to something
bother

Nouns

ability
process
reasoning
selection
stage

Adjectives

cognitive
reasoning (skills)
proficient
selection (process)

Idioms

free up
go for it
go the whole course
take (a long) time

YOU AND YOUR WORK

FOREIGN SERVICE TRAINEES

You are participating in a government program of visits to high schools and universities to encourage young people to consider a career in the public service. Explain:

- a. what a foreign service officer does (the kinds of assignments you might get, the jobs you would have to perform, the challenges you might face);
- b. why you decided to enter the foreign service. Include your interests, qualifications and qualities, the benefits this kind of work offers,...;
- c. the requirements for your program;
- d. the application and competition processes;
- e. the content of the training period.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Give examples, reasons, results

Hypothesize

Express: necessity, obligation, ability, possibility

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Gerunds/infinitives

Working in the Foreign Service allows me to do challenging work while living in a variety of interesting countries.

Modals

You have to be adaptable and flexible. You should also be open-minded.

Passive

The exact work you are assigned depends on your area of expertise, for example, international trade or immigration.

Present real condition

If you pass the written exams, you get to the interview phase where you have many problem-solving simulations.

Indirect and direct questions

Would you tell me what the written exams are about?

What are the written exams about?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

allow someone to do something
assign
challenge
depend on
pass (an exam)

Nouns

adaptability
challenge
empathy
expertise
flexibility
problem-solving
simulation
variety

Adjectives

adaptable
challenging
flexible
non-judgmental
open-minded
problem-solving (simulations)

Idioms

have a sense of humour
have one's heart set on something
have what it takes

YOU AND YOUR WORK

What personality characteristics should a foreign service officer have? Why are these characteristics important? What is it about you that makes you a good candidate for the foreign service? What experiences have you had which prepared you for this type of work? As a foreign service officer, what do you hope to accomplish?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Express: necessity, obligation, ability, possibility

Give: examples, results, reasons

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past/ present perfect tenses

Ever since I was a youngster, I have wanted to work in this field; I knew I would enjoy it.

Modals: have to, must, can, should

Foreign service officers have to be good listeners; they should be empathetic and non-judgmental.

Gerunds

I love travelling and meeting new people and situations so I think this suits me for Foreign Service work.

Infinitives

I have stamina and you need that to face so many unknown or ambiguous situations.

Relative clauses

One thing which has prepared me for this type of work is that my parents are with the military; as a result, I am used to living in different countries.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know why flexibility and adaptability are important characteristics.

Why are flexibility and adaptability important characteristics?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be used to
face
suit

Nouns

adaptability
ambiguity
empathy
expertise
flexibility
problem-solving
sense of humour
stamina

Adjectives

adaptable
ambiguous
empathetic
flexible
non-judgmental
open-minded

Idioms

get along with
get into the swing of things
get one's teeth into

YOU AND YOUR WORK

In an attempt to meet trainees' expectations, an advisory committee has been established to interview trainees. Explain to the committee representative the characteristics of your ideal postings; e.g. the countries you would prefer, the kind of tasks you would hope to be assigned to, the amount of supervision and training you would expect, and the kind of feedback you would want,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Hypothesize

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Express: possibility, ability, necessity

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present real condition

If I get a placement anywhere in Africa, I'll be pleased.

Present unreal condition

If my assignments were in the West only, I'd be very disappointed.

Hope + future

I hope I will get constructive mentoring, supervision and feedback.

Modals: have to, can, may, might

I hope I can take a crack at some challenging projects.

Infinitives/gerunds

It will be important for me to meet the local people. Learning the language will be helpful.

Causative: let someone do something, get someone to do something

I want my superiors at the post to let me have lots of hands-on experience; I'd hate if they got me to do only busy-work.

Indirect and direct questions

Can you tell me what kind of tasks you will need to do?

What kind of tasks will you need to do?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be accountable for something
be accountable to someone
take on (something)
take over (something)

Nouns

busy-work
feedback
mentoring
supervision

Adjectives

constructive
disappointed
hands-on
local
pleased

Idioms

put one's mind to something
put people off
put someone's nose out of joint
put two and two together

YOU AND YOUR WORK

At an official function in the host country, guests are interested in hearing details about life in Canada. Explain aspects of Canadian life which you think would be of interest; e.g. multiculturalism, education, regional diversity, favourite pastimes,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain/describe

Give: examples, reasons, causes, results

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present tense

We have a multiculturalism policy which fosters the many different nationalities which now form the Canadian mosaic.

Connectors for reason: because of, due to, on account of

Sometimes there are misunderstandings between different parts of the country because of regional differences in resources, industry and commerce.

Past/present tenses

While medicine, law and dentistry used to be male strongholds, women now enter these fields equally.

Infinitives/gerunds

It has been a challenge to maintain a separate identity, while living as a neighbour to a strong country like the U.S.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know how you fund education in Canada.

How do you fund education in Canada?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

comprise
foster
form
fund
misunderstand

Nouns

commerce
dentistry
identity
industry
law
medicine
misunderstanding
mosaic
multiculturalism
nationality
neighbour
region
resources
stronghold

Adjectives

multicultural
regional

Idioms

in one's best interest
in some respects
in the long run

YOU AND YOUR WORK

What do you understand "culture shock" to mean? What aspects of culture shock do you think will be the most challenging for you? Why? What do you plan to do to prepare for these eventualities?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Explain/describe

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Express: possibility, ability, necessity, certainty

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Relative clauses

To me, culture shock covers everything that will strike me as different from what I am used to.

Modals: can, could, have to

One could be thrown by anything from how people eat to their concept of personal space.

Infinitives/gerunds

I plan to learn as much as possible about the country and its ways of doing things as soon as I get my assignment.

Connectors for contrast: while, although, despite the fact that, however, but

While you think you are non-judgmental and open-minded, you never know for certain what will throw you.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if there were other steps you were planning to take to avoid culture shock.

Are there other steps you plan take to avoid culture shock?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

avoid (doing something)
be used to
cover
prevent someone from doing something
strike

Nouns

concept
courtesy
personal space
punctuality
taboo(s)

Adjectives

banned
forbidden
non-judgmental
open-minded
prohibited

Idioms

be thrown by
take something in one's stride
(something) throws (someone)

YOU AND YOUR WORK

In your opinion, what are some of the stresses facing a foreign service officer before a posting, on arrival, and during the posting? How can these stresses be handled?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Hypothesize

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Express: possibility, ability, necessity, certainty

Express sequence of time

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Time clauses

Before you leave, you worry about the travel arrangements, the goodbyes, packing things up.

Modals: have to, may, might, can

All the uncertainties about what awaits you may also weigh heavily on your mind. You have to psych yourself up to be ready.

Gerunds

When you get there, there's all the hassle of settling in, meeting new people, finding out about your actual work.

Present/ present continuous tenses

Once the dust settles, reality sets in. Then, you're dealing with culture shock and the nitty-gritty of daily life.

Indirect and direct questions

Can you tell me how you plan to handle these stresses.

How do you plan to handle these stresses?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

adapt to
adjust to
await
settle in
worry about

Nouns

class system
environment
hassle
nitty-gritty
stratification
uncertainty

Adjectives

accommodating
environmental
local
official
social
unaccommodating

Idioms

(once) the dust settles
psych oneself up
weigh heavily on one's mind

YOU AND YOUR WORK

You are at your post in the host country. Canadian members of Parliament have been planning a visit to the country at which you are posted. However, political problems have erupted and it seems a visit at this time may be dangerous for the Canadians. Since the host country officials have been looking forward to this visit for a long time, cancellation is not a good idea. What would you do? Think about postponing the visit, arranging a meeting elsewhere, checking the local government's perspective, checking the security possibilities,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation, ability

Give: examples, reasons, results

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition: past + modals

Only if we had the approval of the Canadian government, could we proceed.

Unless I had the go-ahead from above, I wouldn't investigate alternative options, such as meeting in a neighbouring country.

Provided that we could assure the safety of the visitors, we might go ahead.

Infinitives/gerunds

In the event that the visitors were at risk, my first priority would be to ensure the safety of the visitors, while placating the local government officials.

Noun clauses

If I were in that situation, what I would do is investigate whether or not the visitors could face actual danger.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering how you would handle the local officials.

How would you handle local officials?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

approve
assure
ensure
investigate
placate
proceed

Nouns

approval
assurance
go-ahead
officials
options
priority
the safety

Adjectives

actual
alternative
local
neighbouring

Idioms

be at risk
be better off
go ahead
go out of one's way to do something

YOU AND YOUR WORK

ADDITIONAL SITUATIONS

There has been an environmental accident: a Canadian oil cargo ship is leaking at an offshore oilrig within the host country's territory. What would you do first: call a press conference, go on local radio, apologize, contact a Canadian environmental company for clean-up help, contact local officials, get the cargo company to pay for clean up,...? Then what would you do?

The Deputy Prime Minister of Canada is planning a visit to the country at which you are posted. What preparations would you have to make; e.g. notify host country officials, notify Canadian business people in the country, organize press conferences, make appointments with local government officials, arrange accommodations, arrange security, arrange entertainment,...?

A Canadian visitor has been arrested, apparently mistakenly. What would your duties be regarding the Canadian visitor and the local authorities?

A Canadian man on holiday in the country in which you are posted became seriously ill and died. His wife and family contacted your office for advice and help, both while he was hospitalized and later when they had to arrange for his body to be flown back to Canada. They say they got very little support and were often misinformed. If you had been the officer in charge, what would you have done to help this family during this difficult period?

In your host country, a large trade fair was held but the event was a disappointment. It was neither well publicized nor well-attended; those who did participate had many complaints about the meetings, the display facilities, the accommodations, transportation, and the lack of opportunity to visit commercial sites. If you had been arranging this trade fair, what would you have done to avoid these problems?

YOU AND YOUR WORK

GROUP ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will have the opportunity to participate in a meeting about work or a workplace issue. Select one of the topics below or choose a topic of your own.

A **health, environment and safety review** initiative has begun. The aim is to improve conditions in all government work environments. Meet with your class to compile a list of concerns to present to your Health and Safety Representative. Prioritize your concerns and suggest improvements.

Consider the health and safety issues in your own workplace as well as those in your language school. Think about air quality, indoor lighting especially as related to computer use, lighting outside the building in parking areas especially regarding safety in the dark, the ergonomics of desks and chairs, sufficient cleaning of the sidewalks and roads during icy weather,.... You could also consider cafeteria food; e.g. the availability of healthy alternatives,....

Prepare an **action plan for recruiting people to join the Federal Government**. Decide who to target, how to reach these people, which formats are most effective: e.g. job fairs; visits to universities, colleges, high schools, CEGEPs; promotion through ads using various media,....

Your work group suffers from low morale and lack of communication. Develop an action plan to overcome these problems.

Your work group will be moving to a different building; unfortunately, you will have less space than you have now. Meet with your work group to identify your space needs; e.g the number of offices needed considering the number of people who can efficiently share the same office space, a secretarial area, a reception area, a photocopier and printer area or room, meeting rooms, a lounge, a lunch room,.... Decide how you will allocate the space available.

Your own topic:

PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING

Brainstorm on your own or with a partner before the meeting.

Review the functions, grammar and vocabulary.

Select someone to chair the meeting and someone to take minutes.

CHAIRPERSON:

Establish a date and time which is convenient for all.

Decide if a formal agenda is necessary. If it is, compose and circulate the agenda.

Review the language of meetings: Chairperson (informal / formal), in the Appendix.

PARTICIPANTS:

If an agenda had been distributed, read the agenda and think about each of the items.

Jot down your ideas from the brainstorming you did; bring your notes to the meeting.

Review the language of meetings: Participant (informal / formal), in the Appendix.

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Review the language of meetings: Recording Secretary (informal / formal), in the Appendix.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING

CHAIRPERSON:

State the purpose of the meeting and how you plan to proceed.

Elicit participation from everyone.

Keep the discussion on track.

Clarify and summarize the decisions made on each topic.

Assign action to be taken, the date by which action will be taken, and follow-up.

Close the meeting.

PARTICIPANTS:

Present your ideas.

Consider and discuss other participants' ideas.

Reach consensus.

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Keep notes on the topics of discussion, the decisions reached, who is to take action, follow-up,....

Ask for clarification whenever necessary.

Write up and distribute minutes.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express opinions

Support opinions: give examples, reasons, causes, results

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, necessity

Make suggestions

Agree/disagree

State your position: for/against

Concede/ reach consensus

Chair/ participate in a meeting

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present tense

This kind of situation takes a lot of planning.

Modals: should, have to, can, could, may, might

We have to consider a variety of options.

Infinitives

To accomplish what we want, we need input from everyone.

Gerunds

Have we considered polling everyone involved?

Present real conditions

If it's relevant, people will respond.

Subjunctive

I suggest that we move slowly on this.

Causative: get someone to do something, make someone do something

We need to get people to co-operate. We can't make them do something they don't like.

Noun clauses

How much we accomplish depends on how efficient we are.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be responsible for
benefit from
count on
encounter
entail
happen to

Nouns

benefit(s)
option
priority

Adjectives

counter-productive
efficient
productive
unproductive

Idioms

a happy medium
bear in mind
keep one's options open
pros and cons
step on someone's toes