



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.

COUNSEL/ADVISE

1. Tell a management trainee / a new manager what you have learned about the best ways to handle giving bad news. Think about situations in which you have received bad news or situations in which you had to give someone bad news e.g. cancellation of a project, reduction in funding for training, inability to extend a contract of a determinate employee, negative factors during a performance appraisal,...
2. A colleague is very upset about the ineffectiveness of the meetings he/she has been chairing. Based on your own experience, give this person advice about how to lead a successful meeting.
3. What tips can you provide on effective coaching? (e.g. explanation, demonstration, amount of practise, feedback; importance of pace, clarity of instructions, breaking task into parts, confirmation of mastery...) What do you do with the person who "doesn't get it" despite your attempts at coaching?
4. A colleague has asked you what to do about an employee who feels people on her team don't pay attention to her opinions; as a result, she has become withdrawn, is quiet in meetings, and doesn't stand up for own views. Although she appears calm, she is simmering with resentment.
5. Advise a team leader whose team is having problems with both productivity and morale. (Consider setting realistic goals, positive reinforcement for achievement, involvement of team members in decision making, providing work that is both meaningful and challenging, encouraging activities which enhance "bonding"...))
6. Two team members always seem to clash no matter what project or activity they are involved in together. The team leader has appealed to you for advice. What recommendations can you make to help resolve these conflicts? (talk to each separately, talk to them together, help them identify what triggers them, establish strategies to overcome these triggers, send them each on conflict resolution training...)
7. An employee is showing signs of extreme stress and burnout. This employee has always felt he can and should handle his problems on his own. You believe outside help necessary. Advise him that it is time to turn to the Employee Assistance Program.
8. A colleague is introducing a new computer system. There are a number of people in his unit who are very resistant to change. Give your colleague some advice about how to get people to approach change more positively. (e.g. explain the benefits of the new system, allow enough time to become familiar with it, provide training, involve them in decision making about use, implementation...)
9. Advise a group of project leaders about how to orient new team members who will be joining their teams. This is the first government job for these new employees. Consider what should be done the first day, the first week, during the first month...
10. A colleague has asked you about how to handle performance appraisals more productively. He says his usual practice is to give each employee feedback once a year at appraisal time. He is surprised by how badly the interviews go. Give your colleague advice. (Consider importance of open communication, on-going feedback, reinforcement of good performance, on-the-job coaching, employee input, collaborative goal setting...)