



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



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.

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

Think of **situations or people at work which you found challenging to handle**. What created the difficulty?

- content of the situation: complaint, disagreement, dispute, complexity of the problem, clashes amongst the people,...
 - personalities involved: aggressive, passive, sensitive,...
 - role: the person was a superior, a dignitary, an important client, a co-worker,...
 - context: the problem arose in front of a large group, in the presence of dignitaries; in front of your boss,...
- a. Give examples of these situations and explain why they were difficult.
 - b. Explain how you handled these situations.
 - c. Do you think you could have dealt with any of these situations more effectively? If yes, what should you have done?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Express: advisability in the past, possibility

Give: examples, reasons, causes, results

Compare

Qualify

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Comparison

One of my most difficult situations arose when a co-worker didn't do her share of the project we were working on together.

Past continuous / simple past tenses

She was having personal problems and was totally distracted at work.

Qualifiers: except, apart from, aside from

I didn't do anything about it, except stew.

Connectors: because, since

I didn't say anything because I didn't want to get her into trouble.

Perfect Modals

I could have handled the situation better;

I should have had it out with her and told her I resented doing all the work alone.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you tell me if you've had to deal with a difficult boss.

Have you had a difficult boss to deal with?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

challenge
clash
handle
share

Nouns

challenge
clash
complaint
disagreement
dispute

Adjectives

aggressive
challenging
distracted
passive
(over)sensitive

Idioms

do one's share of
get someone into trouble
have something out with someone
make trouble for someone
(to) stew

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

Everyone has encountered **people who** are commonly labelled "**difficult to handle**" such as the expert, the complainer, the joker, the person who is aggressive or passive, the one who is always negative, the one who talks much but says little. Which of these types have you encountered? Under what circumstances have you encountered these people? What strategies did you use to deal with them? How do you deal with these personality types now? What advice do you have for handling difficult people?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Talk about actions in the present

Talk about actions in the past

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation

Counsel/advise

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past habitual action: used to / would + base verb

We used to have a pessimist on our team; whenever he pointed out negative aspects of a situation, I would point out all the positive features.

Present perfect tense

During my work life, I've probably encountered all those difficult people.

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

You have to deal with the problem behaviour as it arises; otherwise, it can get worse and worse.

Noun clause

What I've found difficult is getting through to the passive types.

Causative: get someone to do something

It's hard to get passive people to speak up and voice their concerns.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you explain what other strategies you use?

What other strategies do you use?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

complain
confront
encounter
deal with
point out
voice

Nouns

aspect
complainer
complaint
expert
feature
joker
pessimist

Adjectives

aggressive
negative
passive
pessimistic

Idioms

get through to
speak up

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

An **employee insulted a client** whose behaviour was officious and rude. How should the employee have handled the client's unacceptable behaviour? Give this employee advice about how to deal with such situations.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express: necessity, obligation, possibility

Talk about past advisability

Counsel/advise

Explain

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Perfect modals

The employee should have kept his cool, even though the client was rude.

Modals: have to, must, should, can

You must remain in control; you have to stay calm. No matter what the provocation, you can't lose your temper.

Connectors: even though, despite the fact that, although

Despite the fact that the client is rude, we still need that person's business.

Subjunctive

My recommendation in these circumstances is that you remain courteous.

Infinitive

It's often wise, with this kind of client, to stick to your guns but do so very politely and firmly.

Indirect and direct questions

I don't understand what the employee should do, once he's insulted the client.

What should the employee do, once he's insulted the client?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

control
insult
reason

Nouns

behaviour
client
courtesy
insult
provocation

Adjectives

acceptable
courteous
insulted
officious
polite
rude
unacceptable

Idioms

(be/ remain) in control
keep one's cool
lose one's temper
No matter what (the provocation)
stick to your guns

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

Give advice to a colleague who will be meeting with an important client. This client is notorious for making unrealistic demands; e.g. wanting more than either the budget or the time frame allow. Suggest ways of dealing with this client; e.g. help define the client's needs, point out the effects of too short a time frame, explain the costs,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Make suggestions

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Future/ present continuous tenses

You'll need to summon up all your patience when you are dealing with him.

Modals: have to, must, can, should

You have to try to keep him happy but you can't let him push you around.

Participles

While listening to his demands, you can figure out what we can realistically deliver.

Gerunds/Infinitives

The real challenge will be convincing him of what's feasible within his budget; it might be wise to discuss budget over a nice lunch.

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

See if you can get him to be realistic; don't let him intimidate you.

Indirect and direct questions

Can you tell me what you do if the client won't listen to reason.

What do you do if the client won't listen to reason?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

define
demand
intimidate
summon up

Nouns

budget
demand
patience
time frame

Adjectives

feasible
notorious
patient
realistic
unrealistic

Idioms

keep someone happy
listen to reason
figure out
push someone around

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

A colleague has asked you for advice. You both work in an open concept office fraught with on-going distractions – co-workers receive personal calls, "drop-in" to chat, and invite you to join them for frequent cups of coffee. Your colleague does not want to seem unsociable or unfriendly but is having great difficulty concentrating enough to get work done. Give your colleague advice.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Make suggestions

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation

Hypothesize

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

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

You may have to take the bull by the horns and confront the troublesome people.

Imperative

One thing is certain; don't simply ignore the situation because it can easily get out of hand.

Present perfect tense

Have you considered ear phones? I've heard that some people swear by them.

Participles/gerunds

If they see you wearing ear phones, they may catch on without your saying anything.

Infinitive

I think it would be wise to call a spade a spade and let them know what's bothering you.

Indirect and direct questions

Would you explain what you do if the co-workers don't take the hint.

What do you do if the co-workers don't take the hint?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

bother
confront
ignore

Nouns

distraction
ear phones

Adjectives

fraught with
friendly
on-going
open-concept
sociable/ unsociable
troublesome
unfriendly

Adverbs

easily
simply

Idioms

call a spade a spade
get out of hand
swear by something
take a hint
take the bull by the horns

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

Your team leader is threatened by new ideas, especially if these ideas are presented in front of a group. You want to make some suggestions for change. How would you handle this situation?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Explain

Express: possibility, necessity, probability

Talk about sequence of events

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If my team leader were like that, I'd be very careful about handling him.

Infinitives

First of all, I'd remember to take it slowly and not to push him too hard.

Gerund

After gaining his confidence, I'd probably broach the subject very casually.

Causative: make someone do something

I'd try to make him realize that I'm not criticizing him and that I'm not a threat.

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

Then, when I had his trust, I might ask him for his advice about how to handle the problem before suggesting my ideas.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know if such subtlety really works.

Does such subtlety really work?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

approach
criticize
handle
threaten

Nouns

confidence
criticism
subtlety
tact
threat
trust

Adjectives

casual
diplomatic
discreet
direct
indirect
indiscreet
subtle
tactful
threatening
threatened
undiplomatic

Adverbs

casually
diplomatically
discreetly
directly
indirectly
indiscreetly
subtlety
tactfully
undiplomatically

Idioms

broach the subject
gain someone's confidence
push (someone) hard
take it slowly

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: UNWELCOME SUGGESTIONS

You are a **team member**. Your team leader is threatened by new ideas, especially if these ideas are presented to him in front of a group. You want to make some suggestions for streamlining paper work so that less time is spent reporting on work progress and more time is devoted to actually doing the work. You have asked for time to talk with him alone.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Discuss sensitive topics

Be diplomatic

Persuade

Express possibility

Make suggestions

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect / present perfect continuous tenses

I've noticed that I've been spending a lot of time filling out weekly work progress reports.

Participles

Sometimes I feel as if I'm spending more time reporting on my work than on actually doing the work.

Gerunds

I was wondering if you might consider changing our recording practices.

Modals: would, could, might

Could you just let us try a different approach for a trial period?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

consider
spend time doing something
streamline
urge someone to do something

Idioms

iron out our differences
put yourself in my shoes/position

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: UNWELCOME SUGGESTIONS

You are a team leader. Your team had been very contentious but finally you have got them to toe the line. The most outspoken of the group has asked to meet with you.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Challenge information

Hedge

Stall

Refuse

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present habitual / continuous tenses

Why don't you people just do your jobs? Why are you always complaining?

Relative clauses

In fact, it's not the paper work that is the problem. It's the people who take so long to complete the paper work.

Present unreal conditions

If people were more focussed, the reporting wouldn't take so long.

Present perfect tense

You haven't persuaded me.

Future tense

We 'll put it on hold for now but I 'll sleep on it and get back to you.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

get back to someone about something
I don't want to touch it with a ten foot pole
put (something) on hold
(I'll have to) sleep on it
toe the line
(That's) a can of worms

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

An employee seems to delegate his work to others. Since there always appears to be a reason for him to be working on something else, the behaviour has gone unnoticed for awhile. Recently however, you realize how much of his work you have been doing in addition to your own work. How would you handle this situation?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Explain

Express: possibility, necessity, probability

Talk about sequence of events

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If I were in that situation, I'd be angry for allowing it to go unnoticed for so long.

Infinitives

First, I'd try to keep a paper trail to document the extra work I was doing.

Gerund

After making sure I had evidence, I'd probably try broaching the subject in a very unthreatening manner.

Past continuous tense

Then, I'd probably try to find out if anything were bothering him.

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

He could be ill or stressed; he might even be having a breakdown.

Causative: make someone do something, let someone do something

Once I'd established that he was actually passing the buck, I'd make him start carrying his own weight.

I certainly wouldn't let him get away with delegating his work to me any more.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you explain what you do if he denies everything.

What do you do if he denies everything?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

allow
bother
delegate
document

Nouns

breakdown
document
evidence
paper trail

Adjectives

diplomatic
direct
indirect
inoffensive
sympathetic
tactful
unnoticed
unthreatening

Idioms

broaching the subject
carry (one's) own weight
make sure
pass the buck

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: PASSING THE BUCK

You are a **team member**. Your colleague has been delegating many of his work responsibilities to you and others on the team. Because there has always seemed to be a good reason for his not doing the task himself, you have agreed in the past. He has approached you again. You don't want to endanger the good working atmosphere of your team but you've had enough of this behaviour.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Discuss sensitive topics

Be diplomatic

Express: possibility, necessity, obligation

Make suggestions

Refuse

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous tense

I've been meaning to talk to you about how this work is spread around.

Gerund

Is there some reason I'm not aware of that prevents you from doing it?

Past participle

It seems to me you're the one with the expertise required.

Modals: could, have to

Could you rearrange your time? I'm afraid I'm up to my ears right now so you'll have to do it yourself.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

delegate
prevent someone from doing something

Idioms

be up to one's ears
spread something around

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: PASSING THE BUCK

You are a **team member** who feels work should be shared equally amongst team members and that each task should be assigned to the team member most adept at dealing with it.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Justify behaviour

Express: necessity, obligation, possibility, ability

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Simple past / past continuous tenses

I didn't know you felt put upon; I was only trying to make sure none of us gets overworked.

Gerund

I can't help thinking that you're over-reacting.

Infinitive

I'm surprised you feel I'm trying to get rid of my workload.

Modals: have to, should, can, might

You have to look at it from my point of view; since you have such expertise in this area, you should have the chance to show your stuff.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

make sure
overreact

Adjectives

adept
overworked

Idioms

can't help (feeling)
feel put upon
get rid of
show one's stuff

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: TAKING ON AN ACTING POSITION

You are a **team member**. Your boss is going to be on secondment for 6 months. You know that he/she wants you to assume the acting position. You do not want to do this. You will need to present your reasons and try to refuse your boss' proposal, while not hindering your chances for future advancement.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Persuade

Be diplomatic

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Refuse

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present habitual / present continuous tenses

I'm flattered that you are considering me for the position.

Subjunctive with wish

I wish I felt I were able to accept but I can't do it right now.

Noun clause

The problem is that I'm up to my ears both here and at home.

Present unreal condition

If the time were different I would jump at the chance.

Infinitives/gerunds

I'd hate to undertake the job and end up doing it badly.

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

I'm afraid I'll have to pass this time.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Adjectives

flattered
overloaded
overwhelmed

Idioms

be up to one's ears
jump at (something)

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: TAKING ON AN ACTING POSITION

You are a **manager** who will be on secondment to another Department for six months. You have asked to meet with the person in your unit who you feel is the most qualified to replace you in an acting position.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Persuade

Give reasons

Make suggestions

Concede

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous / present perfect tenses

I've been thinking about my replacement and I've reached the conclusion that you're the best candidate.

Connectors: because, since

Because you have the most experience and since the others respect you, you are a natural for the job.

Modals:

Couldn't you just delegate some of your work? The others might welcome the opportunity to show their stuff.

Infinitive/gerund

I urge you to give it more thought. I'd advise sleeping on it.

Present real condition

If you can't see your way clear, I guess I'll have to go along with your decision.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be a natural
go along with
reach a conclusion
see (one's) way clear
show one's stuff
sleep on
welcome the opportunity

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: OUT-OF-TOWN ASSIGNMENT

You are a team leader. Your manager wants you to work in another city for three weeks. You do not want to hinder your chances for promotion or your relationship with your manager; however, the scheduled dates and the duration of the absence are extremely inconvenient for you both at work and at home (e.g. if you are away for three weeks, your group will not be able to meet the deadlines on several projects; your home is being renovated and you are needed for decision making on a daily basis; plus, your child is going to school for the first time.)

Explain the problems to your manager. Convince your manager to make alternate arrangements: e.g. send you for only a few days; postpone the visit until a later, more convenient date; send someone else who could benefit from the experience; use teleconferencing to work with the team in the other city,.... Try to reach a compromise.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Persuade

Make suggestions

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Insist

Compromise

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Subjunctive with wish

I wish I could do it but it's impossible now.

Modals: have to, can

I have to be on hand both here and at home. There's no way I can get out of these responsibilities. I'm sorry but I just can't do it this time.

Gerunds/infinitives

What about sending Smith? I'd prepare him and I know he'd like to expand his horizons.

Subjunctive

Could I suggest that we try teleconferences and telemeetings?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be on hand
expand one's horizons
get out of
there's no way

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: OUT-OF-TOWN ASSIGNMENT

You are a manager. You must send one of your team leaders, an excellent trouble shooter, to help a group in another city. It should be possible to complete the work required within three weeks. The team leader you selected is the only one who can rise to the challenge of this job. In addition, you think this person might welcome the change and benefit from the new situation.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Persuade

Make suggestions

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Insist

Compromise

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Modals: have to, can

I have to send my best trouble shooter and you're the one I know I can rely on.

Subjunctive

I suggest that you see what replacements you can set up for yourself both here and at home.

Infinitives/gerunds

It would be wise to take advantage of the challenge this opportunity offers. Besides, you'll get a kick out of being in a different environment.

Subjunctive with wish

I wish I could convince you to see this my way.

Relative clauses

After you've given this some serious thought, if you still can't see your way clear, I'll have to accept some of the alternatives that you suggested.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

rely on
set up

Idioms

get a kick out of
see one's way clear

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: EXTRA STAFF

You are a team leader. Convince your manager or director that you need an additional person: e.g. contract specialist, secretary, clerk, administrative assistant,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Persuade

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous / present habitual tenses

We've been working consistently but we're still over our heads. The work keeps piling up.

Modals: can, have to, must

We can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. We have to do something or we'll all burn out.

Present unreal condition

If we could get some extra help for six months, we'd meet our deadlines, maintain the quality of our work and preserve the mental health of the rest of the team.

Clauses: relative, time

Surely you recognize that the quality of our work suffers when everyone is so over-extended.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Adjectives

over-extended
overwhelmed
over-worked

Idioms

burn out
over one's head
see the light at the end of the tunnel

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: EXTRA STAFF

You are a manager. Your budget is stretched as far as possible. Another manager has scheduled a meeting with you about hiring an additional person. Explain that you can make no additional expenditures unless there are equal cuts in other areas.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Persuade

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous / present habitual tenses

I understand you've been working hard; nevertheless, I still have no extra funds.

Modals: can, have to, must

We have to make do with what we have.

I can't get water out of stone – we have no budget.

Present unreal condition

If I were in your position, I'd ask for the same thing.

Present real condition

If you can find the money by cutting costs elsewhere, my hat's off to you. I'll go along with it.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

cut
shave
slice
trim

Idioms

get water out of stone
make do with
my hat is off to you

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

Imagine that you were assigned a work placement which was not working out: e.g. the work itself seems unrelated to what you are supposed to be learning; there is little or no supervision; no training is provided; you are asked to do tasks which seem to be only "busy-work"; the person who is supposed to be your mentor seems resentful of the time spent with you,... How would you handle this situation? Would you try to learn things on your own, discuss the problem with the mentor, discuss it with the supervisor,...

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Explain

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation, probability

Enumerate

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If I were in that situation, I would first try to learn what I could from the resources available. Next, I would find out how other management trainees handled similar situations.

Gerund

After doing my homework, I'd probably try broaching the subject with my supervisor.

Infinitives

I'd remember to be diplomatic and not to come on strong.

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

I'd have to bite my tongue so that she wouldn't know how angry I was.

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

I'd try to make my supervisor understand my perspective; I hope I could get her to make some changes.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know how you would manage not to insult the supervisor.

How would you manage not to insult the supervisor?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

insult
manage

Nouns

busy work
mentor
perspective

Adjectives

bored
boring
productive
resentful
unproductive

Idioms

bite one's tongue
come on strong
a waste of time

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: DISAPPOINTING WORK PLACEMENT

You are a **management trainee**. You are disappointed with your work placement (The work seems unrelated to what you are supposed to be learning, there is little or no supervision, no training is provided, you are asked to do tasks which seem to be only "busy-work", the person who is supposed to be your mentor seems resentful of the time spent with you.). You have scheduled a meeting with your supervisor to discuss the problems and to negotiate changes.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express opinions

Support opinions: give examples, reasons, causes, results

Persuade

Insist

Be diplomatic

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous / present habitual tenses

I've been trying to fit in but there seems to be no place for me here.

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

It seems I have to keep after people in order to get more than just busy work all day.

Present unreal condition

If only I felt I were learning something, I wouldn't feel so frustrated.

Noun clause

The problem is that I'm bored to tears.

Gerunds

Could you consider assigning me to a different project or another mentor?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Nouns

feedback
guidance
input
mentor
mentoring

Idioms

bored to tears
fit in
make the best of

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: DISAPPOINTING WORK PLACEMENT

You are the **supervisor** of a management trainee who has scheduled a meeting with you. You thought the placement was going well but the trainee seemed upset.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Get information

Make suggestions give examples, reasons, causes, results

Persuade

Insist

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Indirect and direct questions

You seem upset; do you want to tell me if something is the matter? Are you OK?

Present perfect tense

Have you found out what other trainees do in their placements?

Modals

Unfortunately, my hands are tied. You'll have to make do with the projects and people we can offer.

Present real condition

If I arrange for you to sit in on project planning, will you be more challenged?

Imperative

Remember: no matter what job you're in, there will always be day-to-day scut work.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Nouns

challenge
frustration
scut work

Idioms

make do
my hands are tied
on one's mind
something is the matter

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

FOREIGN SERVICE TRAINEES

You have received your posting assignment; it is a posting which you really do not want. What would you do in this situation? Explain why you would handle the situation in this way.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Express: possibility, necessity, ability

Explain

Enumerate

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If I were posted to a place I didn't want, I would think a lot before I made a fuss.

Gerund

I'd need to decide if making waves were a wise move at this stage of my career.

Modals: might, could, have to

I might try to make the best of it. If I thought I couldn't, then I would have to make a good case for a change.

Infinitives/gerunds

If I decided to try to make a change, I'd remember to be diplomatic when talking with the posting officer.

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

I'd try to make the posting officer understand my perspective; I hope I could get her to agree to the change.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you tell me more about how you would convince the posting officer?

How would you convince the posting officer?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

adjust to
agree to
appeal to
arrange for

Nouns

career
diplomacy
perspective
stage

Adjectives

boring
dangerous
diplomatic
tactful
worried

Idioms

a wise move
make a fuss
make a (good) case (for)
make the best of something
make waves

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: CHANGE OF POSTING

You have been assigned to a post you do not want. You have made an appointment to try to negotiate a different posting.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Be diplomatic

Express and support opinions

Explain

Persuade

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous tense

I've been trying to come to grips with this posting but I can't see my way clear.

Modals: can, have to, must

I know we have to make adjustments; in this case, though, because of my allergies, I just can't do it.

Gerunds

Could you consider finding an alternative?

Noun clause

You know that I'll work very hard and do the best job I possibly can.

Present unreal condition

If you could work this out for me, I'd be very grateful.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

accommodate
adapt (to)
adjust (to)

Idioms

come to grips with something
make adjustments
see one's way clear
work something out

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

ROLEPLAY: CHANGE OF POSTING

You are meeting with a foreign service trainee. You believe this person is unhappy with the posting assignment.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Get information

Make suggestions

Express: possibility, necessity, obligation

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Indirect and direct questions

You seemed upset; can you tell me what the problem is. Are you OK?

Why didn't you address this issue earlier?

Present perfect tense

Have you looked into allergy shots?

Gerunds

What about desensitizing?

Modals: have to, can, should

We'll have to see what we can do about this. This problem should have come to light a long time ago. We may be up against a brick wall.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

arrange for
back out
look into

Idioms

take (something) into account
take steps
up against a brick wall

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

GROUP ACTIVITY

It has been suggested that a "wellness program" will result in improved morale and productivity. You are a member of a steering committee given the task of establishing a preliminary plan. You have a maximum of \$1000 to spend on this project.

PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING

In this activity, you will be able to practise handling difficult people. With your class, decide on the nature of the difficulty which will arise during this meeting:

- will some people be strongly opposed?
- will some people be difficult in the meeting: e.g. interrupt, provide only negative input, talk too much, constantly make jokes,...?

Assign roles. Work alone or with a partner; brainstorm in preparation for the meeting.

- a. Consider the content of a wellness program. Think about:
 - **physical wellness:** access to personal trainers; yoga; tai chi; aerobics; dancing; walking; jogging; organized sports – volleyball, baseball, badminton, bowling; blood pressure clinics; lectures on health issues; nutrition: cooking demonstrations or workshops re preparation of healthy foods; potluck snacks or lunches; improvement of cafeteria menu,...
 - **mental wellness:** stress and anger management – lectures, workshops; counselling sessions; feng shui – introduction and implementation; hobby development – workshops to explore pottery, painting, woodcarving,.... Add ideas of your own.
- b. Select the activities you think will be attractive to the largest number of people, affordable, and feasible given your work environment.

Review the functions, grammar and vocabulary.

Select someone to chair the meeting and someone to take minutes or record ideas.

CHAIRPERSON:

Establish a date and time which is convenient for everyone. 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 has been distributed, read the agenda and think about each of the agenda items. Jot down your ideas from the brainstorming you did; bring your notes with you 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 (to discuss and plan a wellness program) and how you plan to proceed.

Elicit participation from everyone.

Keep discussion on track.

Clarify/summarize decisions made on each topic.

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

Close the meeting.

PARTICIPANTS:

Present the ideas you selected. Explain why you made these choices.

From the list of suggestions established by the committee, work together to reach consensus on a workable program given the realities of your workplace (e.g. Is there a gym with showers?) and the personalities of the participants (e.g. management, employees and support staff).

Variation:

Once you have established the program you would like to have, work with your group to reach consensus about

- the fee (what fee-per-session will people be willing to pay)
- delivery (by whom, where, when – noon hour, before/after work, evenings, weekends, duration of each session,...)
- promotion of the program
- how to determine if the project is working, how to measure success

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 the 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 habitual tenses

This kind of program takes a lot of planning.

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

We have to provide a variety of options.

Infinitives

To get a lot of people to come, we need to find a convenient time.

Gerunds

Have we considered using community facilities?

Present real conditions

If it's not fun, people won't come.

Subjunctive

I suggest that the program be open to everyone, from management to support staff.

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

We can't make people participate but if we can get them to see how much fun we'll have, then it may take off.

Noun clauses

How much we charge will affect how many people sign up.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

agree to
arrange for
budget
criticize
define
handle
ignore
point out
urge someone to do something
voice

Nouns

aspect
budget
complaint
criticism
disagreement
feature
pessimist

Adjectives

aggressive
feasible
negative
passive
realistic
unrealistic

Idioms

call a spade a spade
do one's share
jump at
make sure
take the bull by the horns