



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.

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

MANAGERS

Think about **the best and the worst** bosses or managers you ever had. What contributed to their success or failure? You may want to consider factors such as the work atmosphere established, their listening skills, their attitude to employees' concerns and perspectives, the example they set, the frequency and kind of feedback they provided, their recognition or praise for work well done,....

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinions

Explain/describe

Compare

Express: ability, possibility, necessity

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past tense

The worst boss I ever had was a tyrant who lost his temper far too easily.

Gerunds/infinitives

Working for him was impossible because of his inconsistency; from one day to the next, we didn't know what to do to please him.

Noun clauses

What my most successful managers had in common was their ability to lead.

Present tense

In my opinion, good management implies treating your staff with respect.

Causative: let someone do something

Good managers let their teams develop and grow.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering how important giving feedback was.

How important is giving feedback?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

imply
please someone
treat (someone)

Nouns

ability
feedback
leadership
respect
tyrant

Adjectives

consistency
inconsistency
respectful
successful
unsuccessful
worst

Idioms

from one day to the next
have in common
lose one's temper

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

MANAGEMENT STYLE

What **management style** do you prefer? Consider some of the following:

- the manager makes the decisions or involves others in decision making
- the manager delegates tasks or keeps control by direct supervision of jobs to be done
- the manager tells people exactly what to do or lets people figure out requirements on their own
- the manager fosters competition or encourages co-operation
- the manager uses the same management techniques consistently or varies the style depending on the requirements of the situation
- the manager gives positive reinforcement freely or withholds praise
- the manager provides on-going feedback or provides feedback once a year

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinions

Express: ability, possibility, necessity

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Relative clauses

I prefer a management style that is collegial rather than authoritarian.

Present/ present continuous tenses

I like managers who involve us in what is going on.

Modals: have to, must, should, can

Managers have to give feedback more than once a year during performance appraisals. Otherwise, how can you improve?

Infinitives/gerunds

For feedback to be effective, it has to be constructive. Just criticizing someone is counter-productive.

Indirect and direct questions

Could you tell me if you think competition or co-operation contributes to a better work atmosphere?

Do you think competition or co-operation contributes to a better work atmosphere?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

criticize
delegate
encourage
figure something out
foster
involve someone in something

Nouns

competition
co-operation
decision making
management style
reinforcement
requirement
supervision

Adjectives

authoritarian
collegial
consistent
constructive
direct
on-going
positive

Idioms

keep control
makes decisions
on one's own

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

MANAGEMENT STYLE

If you could, what **advice** would you give to **help your boss manage his/her job better**? Think about a situation which your boss did not handle very well. What could/should he/she have done to handle the situation better? What would you have done in this situation?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Hypothesize

Talk about past advisability

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If I were able to make suggestions, I would tell him to learn how to be better organized.

Had I the opportunity, I could give her some time management tips.

Passive

We were not given sufficient warning before significant changes were dumped on us.

Infinitives

The manager should have provided ample time for us to get used to the new ideas.

Past unreal condition

If she had done that, she would have saved herself and us a lot of time and trouble.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if you could give me another example of mismanagement.

Could you give me another example of mismanagement?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

get used to
stand back from
stand up for
stay on top of

Nouns

mismanagement
time management
tips
warning

Adjectives

ample
enough
organized
sufficient

Idioms

come in handy
come out ahead
dump something on someone
save oneself time and trouble

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ORIENTATION

Think about your first month on a new job. What kind of orientation was provided? Who provided the orientation? What was done? What should have been done? What do you think the manager's responsibilities are in orienting new employees?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Explain

Express and support opinions

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Passive

Unfortunately, I was given very little orientation.

Gerunds/infinitives

After showing me around the office, the manager left me to flounder on my own.

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

The manager should have explained exactly what I was supposed to do. Instead, I had to ask my co-workers.

Past/ past continuous tenses

I learned by trial and error. I felt I was always bothering people with my questions.

Present tense

I think managers need to introduce new employees to the staff, explain the work and assign a short task which will allow the new person to learn the ropes gradually.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if the rest of the team shares orientation responsibilities.

Does the rest of the team share orientation responsibilities?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be supposed to do something
bother someone with something
flounder
share
show someone around

Nouns

colleague
co-worker
location
operation
system

Adjectives

friendly
gradual
social
slowly

Idioms

learn by trial and error
learn the ropes
on one's own

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ORIENTATION

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 the manager and the rest of the team should do for new team members during the first day, the first week, the first month,...

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Clauses: adverb, noun

Since the employees are new to the government, you will need to explain to them how the government works.

Imperative

On the first day, be sure to introduce the new team members to the rest of the team.

Subjunctive

I would suggest that the team leader or a member of the team invite the new people to join them for coffee and for lunch.

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

You should familiarize the new people with the way you do things.

Future/ future continuous tense

As project leaders, it will be your job to give them an overview of the work they will be doing on the project.

Causative: let someone do something

Don't overwhelm them with too much information; let them get into the swing of things gradually.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if we should give them work to do right away.

Should we give them work to do right away?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

become accustomed to
be sure to
introduce
familiarize
get used to
join someone for something
overwhelm

Nouns

introduction
orientation
overview

Adjectives

gradual
overwhelmed
overwhelming

Idioms

get carried away
get into the swing of things
get the hang of something

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

COACHING AND TRAINING

Whose responsibility is coaching and training? Some believe that it is part of the job of a good manager to make sure employees reach their full potential by ensuring that they have on-going coaching or training. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Why? What kind of coaching or training have you found most effective for your own growth and development; e.g. on-site courses, off-site courses, one-on-one instruction, workshops, demonstrations, lectures, simulations,...?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Explain

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

Agree/disagree

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Noun clauses

Who is responsible for coaching depends on the nature of what has to be taught.

Gerunds/infinitives

The manager is definitely responsible for making sure that employees get every chance to develop professionally.

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

However, that doesn't mean the manager has to be the trainer. Rather, the manager must ensure that employees get the training they require.

Present perfect tense

I've found hands-on training very useful for learning a process.

Passive

Timing is very important; it's no good to be trained in how to do a process six months before you have the chance to try to do it.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know more about what other kinds of training you like.

What other kinds of training do you like?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

coach
demonstrate
ensure
lecture
make sure
simulate
train

Nouns

coaching
demonstration
instruction
lecture
potential
responsibility
simulation
training
workshops

Adjectives

effective
off-site
one-on-one
on-site
potential

Idioms

hands-on
on-going
on the face of it

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

COACHING AND TRAINING

A colleague has asked you for advice on effective coaching. What tips can you provide on the steps to follow (e.g. explanation, demonstration, practice, feedback), the atmosphere necessary for learning to take place, the amount of practice necessary, the pace, the clarity of instructions, the need to break the task into parts, how to confirm mastery,.... What should you do about the person who "doesn't get it" despite your attempts at coaching?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Enumerate

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Relative clause

First of all, provide an environment which is conducive to learning.

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

This means you have to allow enough time and eliminate distractions during that time.

Present/ present continuous tenses

A very important factor is that the employee you are coaching feels comfortable with you.

Imperative

Remember to break the task you are teaching into parts.

Gerunds

Allowing time for practice is essential for integrating new techniques.

Present real condition

If a person doesn't catch on, you could try breaking the task into even smaller steps or try a different approach.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if you have any other tips.

Do you have any other tips?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

confirm
distract
explain
demonstrate
practise

Nouns

atmosphere
clarity
demonstration
distraction
explanation
feedback
mastery
pace
practice

Adjectives

clear
constructive
encouraging
patient
stressful

Idioms

break something into parts
get (understand) something
take place

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: COACHING/TRAINING

Think of a procedure, a technique or a process which you can teach to someone in your class.
Provide coaching for your partner.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Gerunds

Give: reasons, examples, causes, results

Order

Express: ability, possibility, necessity, obligation

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Modals: have to, should, can

First, you have to....

Infinitives

After that, remember to say

Once you've got that, the next thing is to do....

Gerunds

How about trying that out now?

Imperative

Don't forget to....

Connectors for reason:

because, since, on account of, because of

You need to do it like this because....

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

catch on
come to grips with
get (understand) something
get something straight

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: COACHING/TRAINING

You will have a process, procedure or technique explained to you. Make sure you understand and can follow the instructions.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Ask questions to elicit information/details

Ask for confirmation/clarification

Express: necessity, possibility, ability, obligation

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Yes/no questions

Is this what you mean?

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

Why is it necessary to repeat this step?

Indirect questions

I was wondering if you could explain that again.

Can you explain that?

Gerunds/infinitives

Would you mind explaining that part again? How can I manage to do that?

Noun clauses

I was wondering why that step is necessary.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

catch on
come to grips with
get something (= understand)
get something right
get something straight

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS

When a large office became available, it was assigned to a term employee. A permanent employee, whose office is small, became very angry. He now feels his worth is neither recognized nor appreciated.

- a. What could the manager have done to prevent this situation from arising?
- b. What should the manager do now?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Talk about past advisability

Counsel/advise

Express: necessity, possibility, obligation

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Connectors for opposition: but, however, although, even though

The employee was angry over the office assignment **but** that was only a symptom.

Noun clauses

What he is really upset about is that he feels unappreciated.

Past/ past continuous tenses

When the manager gave the large office away, he was adding insult to injury.

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

The manager shouldn't have allowed this situation to arise.

Gerunds

He might have averted the situation by giving the employee more recognition.

Causative: let someone do something

Now the manager should meet the employee and let him get his feelings out.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know if there are other ways to deal with this dilemma?

Are there other ways to deal with this?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

appreciate
assign
avert
prevent something from happening
recognize

Nouns

appreciation
assignment
dilemma
positive reinforcement
praise
recognition
symptom
worth

Adjectives

appreciated
unappreciated
upset about

Idioms

a slap in the face
add insult to injury
get something off one's chest
get one's feelings out

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

You are a **manager**. 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 have asked him to come and talk with you. You believe it is time for outside help. Remind him of the services provided by the EAP; advise/persuade him to use these services.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Persuade

Express: possibility, obligation, ability

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect / present perfect continuous tenses

I've wanted to talk to you because you haven't been acting like yourself; you seem as if you are at the end of your rope.

Gerunds

Are there problems you would consider discussing with me?

Present/ present continuous tense

I know that sometimes it feels as if everything is piling up.

Modals: may, might, should, could

It might be a good idea to talk with EAP. It would be totally confidential and it could help you let off some steam.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be better off
be at the end of one's rope
come to grips with
everything is piling up
let off steam

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

You are an **employee**. You are exhausted because of pressures at home and at work. You have been trying to cope with everything; you feel it is your responsibility to handle problems on your own. Your manager has asked to talk to you.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect / present perfect continuous tenses

There have been a lot of pressures at home and here too; I've been trying my best to keep on top of everything.

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

I feel we each have to find our own way. How can an outsider tell me what I should do?

Gerunds

I don't see how discussing things can change anything.

Present real condition

If you insist, I guess I could consider counselling services but I'm not totally convinced.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be better off
be at the end of one's rope
come to grips with
everything is piling up
find one's own way
keep on top of
let off steam

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: OVERTIME

You are a **manager**; one of your employees has difficulty asking for help from you and from peers. She tries to figure out solutions to her problems alone. The result is that she often works after regular hours into the evenings. You are concerned – you cannot pay her overtime for her extra hours; as well, she is showing signs of exhaustion.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect / present perfect continuous tenses

I've noticed that you've been staying late frequently. I've been worried; you look exhausted. You can't keep up this pace.

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

The work shouldn't take so long. It would be a good idea to ask your team for tips on how to deal with some of the problems.

Gerunds/ infinitives

I know you don't like asking others to help you but none of us minds.

Passive (infinitive)

The problem is there's no money in the budget for you to be paid overtime.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

convince someone of something
figure something out
help someone with something
keep something in mind
keep up

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: OVERTIME

You are an **employee** who would rather work late and complete a job correctly than turn in sloppy work. Sometimes you don't meet your deadlines. Your manager wants to see you.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Justify behaviour

Accept advice

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Gerunds/infinitives

I don't mind staying late. It's better to do a job well.

Present tense

I know I miss deadlines sometimes but the work is always well done.

Connectors

opposition: even though, although

reason: because, since

Even though the others don't mind helping, I'm not sure I want their help because sometimes their work is sloppy.

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

I can see your point and I'll have to go along with what you want.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

figure something out

help someone with something

keep (something) in mind

mind

object to

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: TRANSFER

You are a **manager**. An employee wants to be transferred. You cannot spare the employee.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Persuade

Insist

Hypothesize

Express: necessity, possibility, ability

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Relative clauses

I understand what you are saying but you are the glue that holds this group together.

Gerunds/infinitives

I still don't see what transferring will do to change things for you.

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

The bottom line is I can't do without you right now. A transfer may be possible at another time.

Present unreal condition

If you were given more challenges, would you be happier?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

bear in mind
keep (something) in mind
transfer

Idioms

be the glue that holds something together
do without someone
the bottom line

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

STAFF RELATIONS ROLEPLAY: TRANSFER

You are an **employee** who wants to be transferred to a team with a different manager. You feel it will be better for your career, you are bored with what you are currently doing, and you find this manager very difficult. Persuade your manager to transfer you.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Persuade

Insist

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

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

I'm sure the group can function without me. I still have to keep my eye on my career path.

Present/ present continuous tenses

I see where you are coming from but I'm really in need of a change at this point.

Present unreal condition

Were I to stay, would you give me greater freedom and responsibility?

Gerunds / infinitives

Could you also consider sending me for training to upgrade my management skills?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be in need of something
function
upgrade

Idioms

keep one's eye on
see where someone is coming from
understand where someone is coming from

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

BAD NEWS AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Tell a management trainee / a new manager what you have learned about the best ways to handle giving bad news and giving negative feedback. Think about situations in which you have received bad news or negative feedback or situations in which you had to give someone bad news or negative feedback. How have these situations been handled? What techniques help to relieve the negative impact of the message?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Counsel/advise

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

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

You should be constructive even though you may have to call a spade a spade when you have negative things to say.

Infinitives/gerunds

It's a good idea to get input from the employees. Including their feedback is important.

Imperative

Never be sarcastic. Don't put the person down. That's humiliating and counter-productive.

Subjunctive

I recommend that feedback be an ongoing part of regular communication.

Present real condition

If you give reasons and explanations for your assessment, it's usually helpful.

Indirect and direct questions

Can you tell me how you handle giving bad news.

How do you handle giving bad news?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

belittle
encourage
establish
humiliate

Nouns

assessment
feedback
goal
humiliation
input
impact
message
sarcasm

Adjectives

constructive
counter-productive
humiliating
negative
sarcastic

Idioms

beat around the bush
call a spade a spade
put someone down

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: GIVING/ HEARING BAD NEWS

You are a **manager**. You have a very good employee whose term is over; you had hoped to be able to extend the employee's term. However, despite your efforts, funding has not come through. You have to give the employee the bad news.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Give bad news

Express sympathy/empathy

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty/ uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Connectors

Opposition: despite, in spite of

Result: as a result, therefore; so

I have some bad news. Despite my efforts, it seems that there is no more funding; as a result, we can't extend your term.

Present unreal condition

If I could do something to change this, I certainly would.

Past unreal condition

If I could have done something to change this, I certainly would have.

Noun clause

I know what a blow this is and I'm sorry.

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

I'll do whatever I can to help you find something else. You'll have to move on it right away.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be a blow
be hard on
be thrown by something/someone
move on something

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: GIVING/ HEARING BAD NEWS

You are a **term employee**. Your manager has been very pleased with your work and you had hoped your contract would be extended. The manager wants to talk to you.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express feelings

Get information

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Noun clauses

I guess you know that I'm very disappointed. This is quite a blow.

Present perfect / past perfect tenses

Since you have always been satisfied with my work, I had hoped that I would be able to stay on.

Indirect questions

Could you tell me if there was anything I could have done to change things?

Wh-questions

How do you think I should go about finding my kind of work within the government?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

be a blow
be hard on
be up against
be thrown by something/someone

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: GIVING/ HEARING BAD NEWS

You are a **manager**. You could select only one person for assignment to a special project. Two people applied. Tell the unsuccessful candidate that the other person was selected. Explain what this person can do to improve his/her chances for the next special assignment that arises.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Give bad news

Give reasons, explanations

Make suggestions

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Passive

I'm sorry but you weren't selected for the special project.

Noun clause

The deciding factor was that the other candidate had more expertise.

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

You should consider developing your managerial skills; you might also want to take some courses to expand your area of expertise.

Present unreal condition

If you wanted to try again the next time something like this comes up, I'd certainly encourage you to go for it.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

come in handy
come up
have a go at something
have a good chance
have one's heart set on something

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

ROLEPLAY: GIVING/ HEARING BAD NEWS

You are a **team member** who has applied for assignment to a special project. The manager has asked to see you. If you did not get the assignment, find out why and what you can do to improve your chances for special assignments in future.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express feelings

Get information

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, permissibility

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Past

I'm discouraged; I had my heart set on that project and I thought I had a good chance.

Passive

Could you tell me why I wasn't selected?

Wh-questions

What can I do so I'll have a better chance next time?

Causative: let someone do something

If I could find relevant courses, would you let me take them during work?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

apply for
arrange for
make sure
take time off

Idioms

come in handy
have a go at something
have a good chance
have one's heart set on something

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Think of performance appraisals you have given and/or those you have received. What do you think of the performance appraisal process as you have experienced it? What can a manager or supervisor do to make performance appraisals a constructive part of employee development?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinions

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Modals: have to, must, should, can

Employees must have on-going feedback; managers shouldn't wait until the yearly appraisal to talk about employees' work.

Gerunds/infinitives

I think more managers should consider collaborating with employees to set goals.

Subjunctive

I would suggest that a manager give positive reinforcement whenever an employee performs well.

Noun clauses

What is very important is open communication; without that employees won't ever open up and really get down to brass tacks about their problems.

Indirect and direct questions

I'd like to know how you give criticism.

How do you give criticism?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

collaborate
evaluate
perform
praise
recognize
reinforce
set

Nouns

collaboration
development
feedback
goal
input
performance appraisal
reinforcement

Adjectives

collaborative
constructive
on-going
positive

Idioms

call a spade a spade
get down to brass tacks
open up

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS ROLEPLAY

You are a **manager**. You are meeting with an employee for a performance appraisal. The employee's work is satisfactory but little interest in excellence is demonstrated. What is required is done but no more; relations with team members are lukewarm. You would like to find out what would motivate this employee.

FUNCTIONS TO USE

Give negative feedback

Be diplomatic

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Contrast connectors: although, but, however

Although your work has been satisfactory, I don't see any attempts to go the extra mile.

Present perfect / present tenses

I've also noticed that you don't seem too close to your team members.

Past continuous / present tenses

I was wondering what your feelings are about your work and your team.

Modals: can, could, have to, should

What can we do to remedy this situation?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

a couldn't care less attitude
at odds with
be close to someone
go it alone
go the extra mile

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS ROLEPLAY

You are an **employee** about to meet your manager for your annual performance appraisal. You think your work has been satisfactory but you have no idea what your manager thinks because you rarely get feedback. You are rather bored with the work you are assigned but your attempts to get different kinds of tasks have led to resistance or resentment from your team members. As a result, your relations with them are rather strained.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support your opinion

Justify behaviour

Explain

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous/ present/ present perfect tenses

I've been doing the work that's required of me; I think it's satisfactory but I haven't been able to find out what you think.

Reason connectors: because, since

Actually, I'm rather bored because I do the same thing day in and day out.

Present real condition

If I try to get different kinds of tasks, everyone is up in arms.

Infinitives

It's as if I'm trying to infringe on their territory.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Adjectives

boring
bored

Idioms

day in and day out
infringe on one's territory
up in arms

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Think about and give examples of conflicts which you have witnessed or in which you have been involved in either your work or personal life; e.g. disagreements, disputes, complaints, personality clashes, role clashes, cross-cultural confusion,.... How were these conflicts resolved? What strategies have you learned for resolving conflicts?

What differences in approach would you use to resolve conflicts if the problem were

- a. between two co-workers?
- b. amongst several people within a group?
- c. between you and your boss?
- d. between a client and an employee?

What is your opinion of these steps in mediating disputes: listen to what each person has to say, clarify issues, control discussion, work out a deal; establish an action plan, follow-up? Explain why you think these steps would or wouldn't work.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinions

Explain

Hypothesize

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Noun clauses

What often happens is that one person backs down.

Causative: get something done

In that case, no one gets anything done.

Gerund/infinitive

The method I choose for handling a conflict depends on the players but it's always important to help people identify what's causing the problem.

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

You can't use the same strategies all the time.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering if resolving conflicts with clients is the hardest?

Is resolving conflicts with clients the hardest?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

clarify
control
follow up
identify
mediate
resolve

Nouns

action plan
clash
complaints
confusion
disagreement
disputes
personality
players
role

Adjectives

emotional
cross-cultural
irrational
rational
reasonable
unreasonable

Idioms

back down
put one's finger on
soothe ruffled feathers
work out a deal

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLEPLAY 1 (FOR THREE PEOPLE)

Role 1 – manager

Two of your employees are continually arguing. Their on-going conflict is affecting their own work and making the rest of the team tense. You have decided to speak to them to try to identify the problems and to establish an action plan for overcoming the difficulties.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Get Information

Clarify/confirm

Make suggestions

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Noun Clause

I'd like to get to the bottom of whatever is going on between you.

Direct wh-question / indirect question

What triggers the negativity between you? What sets you off?

I'd like each of you to tell me from your own perspective what you think the problem is.

Causative: let something happen

We don't want to let this get out of hand.

Gerunds/infinitives

What about establishing an action plan to help you get along?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

get along
get to the bottom of something
get out of hand
set someone off

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLEPLAY 1 (FOR THREE PEOPLE)

Role 2 – employee

Your manager has asked to see you. You know the meeting concerns the tension between you and a team member whose manner is so aggressive and direct that you never have a chance to explain your views on issues.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Justify behaviour

Talk about frequency

Express: necessity, obligation, possibility

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Infinitive

As I see it, I never get a chance to get a word in edgewise.

Present / present continuous tenses

He always jumps the gun; he has something to say about everything. Frankly, I'm getting fed up.

Modals: have to, should, can, might

I think you should assign us to different projects so we can each be happier.

Gerunds

I guess I could consider speaking up.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Adjectives

aggressive
assertive
pushy

Idioms

be/get fed up
get along (with someone)
get a word in edgewise
jump the gun
speak up

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLEPLAY 1 (FOR THREE PEOPLE)

Role 3 – employee

Your manager has asked to see you. You know the meeting concerns the arguments you have been having with a team member whose manner is so low key and indirect that you never know where he stands on issues.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Justify behaviour

Talk about frequency

Express: necessity, obligation, possibility

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Infinitive

As I see it, I'm always waiting for him to make up his mind, he's so low key.

Present / present continuous tenses

He's so indecisive, it seems I'm always waiting for him to make up his mind.

Modals: have to, should, can, might

I think you should assign us to different projects where we could work with people more like ourselves.

Gerunds

I guess I could consider trying to hear him out.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Adjectives

decisive
direct
indecisive
indirect
low key

Idioms

hear someone out
know where someone stands
make up one's mind

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLEPLAY 2 (FOR TWO PEOPLE)

You are a **team member**. You have been working on a project with another person on your team. You used to be able to work well together but now he/she is often late with work promised and when the work does get done, it is sloppy. This person seems distracted and unfocussed. A deadline is approaching and you are totally fed up. You have asked this person to have a talk over a cup of coffee.

FUNCTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO USE

Express and support opinion

Be diplomatic

Justify behaviour

Get Information

Make suggestions

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR WHICH MAY ARISE

Past action

We used to be able to work well together and we would always turn in excellent work.

Present/ present continuous/ present perfect tenses

I don't know what's going on but lately all that has changed.

Frequency adverbs

It seems the work is often late and, I hate to say this, but it's rarely accurate.

Infinitive

I'm at my wit's end; this situation is driving me up the wall.

Question-word question

Why didn't you tell me about what's going on at home?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

at one's wit's end
drive someone up the wall
go on (happen)
turn in (work)

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ROLEPLAY 2 (FOR TWO PEOPLE)

You are a team **member**. You have been working on a project with another person on your team. You used to be able to work well together but now this co-worker seems to be on your back all the time and you are resentful. You think your colleague should be less picky and also more understanding because your responsibilities at home have increased since your elderly parent has had to move in with you. Now you are meeting over a cup of coffee to talk.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support opinion

Justify behaviour

Get Information

Make suggestions

Reach consensus

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present/ present continuous tenses

Nowadays you are always on my back about something. It's driving me crazy.

Past/ past continuous

I told you there were issues at home. You weren't listening.

Gerund/infinitive

Making accusations doesn't do any good. Why don't we try to figure out what we can about the situation?

Indirect question

Do you think you could back off.

Future tense

I'll try to be more focussed.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

back off
drive someone crazy
figure (something) out
get off my back
make accusations
on my back
it doesn't do any good

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

STAFF RELATIONS

You will be having a number of managers and supervisors in your work placements. What do you expect from these people? What do you hope to learn from them?

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express opinion

Support opinion

Explain

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Relative clauses

Managers are the ones who introduce me to their organization, its culture, operations, people and corporate services.

Present

They're supposed to provide training and regular feedback.

Infinitives/gerunds

I expect them to help me develop my career plan. They're responsible for providing direction and support.

Hope + infinitive; hope + future

I hope to learn a great deal from them about all facets of management.

I hope they'll take interest in me and my professional development.

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

I'll have to stay on my toes to learn so much.

Indirect and direct questions

I don't understand what you mean by the culture of the organization.

What do you mean by the culture of the organization?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

benefit
expect
identify
provide

Nouns

career plan
corporate services
culture
direction
facets
feedback
operations
support

Adjectives

professional
regular
on-going

Idioms

make oneself available
take (something) into account
stay on one's toes

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

FOREIGN MANAGEMENT TRAINEES

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS ROLEPLAY

You are **in charge of a new foreign service** officer. This is the officer's first posting. He and his family are having problems adjusting. As a result, the employee often arrives late and lacks concentration while working. You have already discussed strategies with the employee but there has been no change. You have asked him to come in for another talk. This is his last chance.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Give negative feedback

Get information

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect tense

We've already discussed this problem but there has been no change.

Modals: can, could, have to, should

We can't allow the situation to continue as it is. We have to come up with a strategy that will work.

Contrast connectors: although; but; however

Although your intentions are good, I don't see any significant improvement.

Wh-questions

What do you suggest? Where do we go from here? Who do you need to see?

Infinitives

I'm sorry to have to say this but this is your last chance to get your act together.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

get one's act together

get down to brass tacks

get into the swing of things

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS ROLEPLAY

You are a **foreign service officer** at your first posting; your family is having problems adjusting. You think that given time your children will get used to school and your spouse will find the new environment less stressful.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Express and support your opinion

Justify behaviour

Explain

Express: possibility, obligation, ability, necessity, certainty, uncertainty

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present perfect continuous / present continuous tenses

I've been trying my best and I'm still trying.

Reason connectors: because, since

I'm distracted because my wife and children are having such a hard time.

Infinitives/gerunds

I'm trying to get them organized. Once they're taken care of, concentrating at work won't be such a problem for me.

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

I'm sure I can do this job. I know I have to improve. Things should get better soon.

Present real condition

If you could just give me more time until we all adjust, I know it will work out.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Idioms

get one's act together
get down to brass tacks
get into the swing of things
take care of
try one's best
work out

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

How would you handle this situation? A locally engaged employee irritates Canadian staff in your office by arriving late for appointments and by ignoring agreed-upon deadlines. You think the problem arises from a cultural difference regarding the concept of time. The employee tries very hard to please and is very sensitive if criticized.

FUNCTIONS TO PRACTISE

Hypothesize

Explain

Give: reasons, causes, results

Confirm/clarify: Ask questions to elicit information/details

GRAMMAR POSSIBILITIES

Present unreal condition

If I were in that situation, I would be very diplomatic.

Gerunds

I would try talking to her about cultural differences.

Infinitives

I would be sure to show my appreciation of all her good work.

Noun clauses

I might ask her what Canadian behaviour she finds different or difficult.

Causative: get someone to do something

I would explain our concept of time and try to get her to compare it with hers.

Indirect and direct questions

I was wondering how you would make sure she didn't get insulted.

How would you make sure she didn't get insulted?

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

appreciate
criticize
ignore
irritate
please

Nouns

appreciation
concept
criticism
deadline
difference

Adjectives

appreciation
cultural
diplomatic
engaged
locally
sensitive
tactful

Idioms

get insulted
go easy on someone/something
handle someone with kid gloves

MANAGEMENT/MANAGING

GROUP ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will have the opportunity to participate in a meeting about a typical problem managers need to solve.

Work with the class and select one of the situations below or choose one of your own. You can draw specific details from the reality of the workplace of someone in the class or you can make up an imaginary workplace. You may enjoy working in small groups to flesh out a problem which you will then give to another group to solve.

The purpose of the meeting is to establish a training budget. You will need to decide or reach consensus on

- how much of the overall budget you can afford to devote to training
- what kind of training to offer (consider costs, location,...)
- who is eligible for each kind of training

You have a vacancy to fill; e.g. an executive assistant, secretary, a specialist,... There are three candidates. You must decide or reach consensus on which candidate to hire.

You will need to define the job to be filled and come up with profiles of the candidates; e.g. one candidate already works for you part-time, does the work well, will require no orientation or training time but often needs to take time for family responsibilities. Another candidate is a recent graduate, has excellent qualifications and references, little government experience but is eager to learn,....

There has been a reduction in person years. You need to decide or reach consensus on what position or positions to cut and who will be affected.

The purpose of the meeting is to decide or reach consensus on how you will allocate the budget for this year. Consider all costs including training, equipment, travel, special projects,....

Your own suggestion:

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 discussion on track.

Clarify and summarize decisions made on each topic.

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

Close the meeting.

PARTICIPANTS:

Present your ideas.

Consider and discuss other participants' ideas.

Reach consensus or come to a decision.

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 situation needs...

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

We have to take into account...

Infinitives

To accomplish what we want, we need to take many factors into account.

Gerunds

How about considering...

Present real conditions

If we agree, then they may take advantage of us.

Subjunctive

I suggest that we look at...

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

We need to get them to concede.

We can't make anyone agree.

Noun clauses

How much we accomplish depends on the two sides.

VOCABULARY TO PRACTISE

Verbs

be supposed to do something
be sure to
convince someone of something
get used to
figure (something) out
keep something in mind
make sure
prevent something from happening
stand back from

Nouns

action plan
colleague
co-worker
decision making
dilemma
potential
symptom
warning

Adjectives

best/worst
constructive
organized
overwhelmed/overwhelming
positive/negative
sufficient

Idioms

be up against
come out ahead
come to grips with
get a word in edgewise
get down to brass tacks
get (understand) something
get something right/straight
get to the bottom of
make decisions
on the face of it
see where someone is coming from
the bottom line