

Teacher Guide

MICHIGAN
ADULT
EDUCATION



Clerical & Office

CAREER PREPARATION

Contextual Education for the GED

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction to the Teacher | i |
| Lesson Plans | 1 |
| Lesson 1.1: What Career Should I Choose? – Sherene | 3 |
| Lesson 1.2: Applying for a Position – Sherene | 5 |
| Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job – Sherene and Jerilyn | 7 |
| Lesson 1.4: Assessing Skills – Sherene..... | 9 |
| Lesson 2.1: It’s My Mission – Artif | 11 |
| Lesson 2.2: The Ever-Changing Workplace – Cecy | 13 |
| Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip – Opal | 15 |
| Lesson 2.4: Ethics in the Office Place – Lorna..... | 17 |
| Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go? – Lisette..... | 19 |
| Lesson 3.2: It’s All About Priorities – Lisette..... | 21 |
| Lesson 3.3: Help! I Can’t Find My Desk – Marcos..... | 23 |
| Lesson 4.1: To Whom Am I Speaking? – Mr. Haliz | 25 |
| Lesson 4.2: Too Many Lines – Allie | 27 |
| Lesson 4.3: It’s Jamming Again – Lucas..... | 29 |
| Lesson 4.4: One More Copy – Faye..... | 31 |
| Lesson 4.5: How Difficult Could It Be? – Reda..... | 33 |
| Lesson 4.6: What Is That? – Elijah | 35 |
| Lesson 4.7: It’s All in the Application – Elijah | 37 |
| Lesson 4.8: Data, Data, Data – Myra..... | 39 |
| Lesson 4.9: Fax It Immediately! – Sharon | 41 |
| Lesson 4.10: It’s All Online – Phillipe | 43 |
| Lesson 5.1: Routine Writing in the Workplace: Emails – Terri..... | 45 |
| Lesson 5.2: Whoops, That’s Not What I Meant to Do: Emails – Shona..... | 47 |
| Lesson 5.3: Writing Business Letters – Pam..... | 49 |
| Lesson 5.4: Memos – Oscar | 51 |
| Lesson 5.5: Getting Out the Mail – Kateel..... | 53 |
| Lesson 6.1: It’s All About Customer Service – Lana..... | 55 |
| Lesson 6.2: Customer Service Is Everyone’s Job – Vanna and Maria..... | 57 |
| Lesson 6.3: The Difficult Customer – Ari..... | 59 |
| Lesson 6.4: Did You Hear What I Said? – Janelle and Mrs. Figueroa | 61 |
| Lesson 6.5: It’s Only a Voice or Is It? – Janelle..... | 63 |
| Lesson 7.1: Filing Strategies – Eleana | 65 |
| Lesson 7.2: How About Electronic Files? – Eleana and Janice..... | 67 |
| Lesson 7.3: Where’s the Cash? – Frederic..... | 69 |
| Lesson 7.4: Payroll – Lucas | 71 |
| Lesson 7.5: The Exciting World of Work – Sherene..... | 73 |
| Answer Keys for Handouts | 75 |
| Lesson 2.2: The Ever-Changing Workplace | 77 |
| Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go? | 79 |
| Lesson 6.5: It’s Only a Voice or Is It? | 81 |
| Lesson 7.1: A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started | 83 |
| Lesson 7.3: Where’s the Cash?..... | 85 |
| Handouts | 87 |
| Lesson 1.1: What Are Clerical Skills? | |

Lesson 1.2: How Do You Use Graphics?
Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job
Lesson 2.2: The Ever-Changing Workplace
Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip
Lesson 2.4: Ethics in the Office Place
Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go?
Lesson 3.2: It's All About Priorities
Lesson 3.3: Help! I Can't Find My Desk
Lesson 4.1: To Whom Am I Speaking?
Lesson 4.2: Too Many Lines
Lesson 4.3: It's Jamming Again
Lesson 4.5: How Difficult Could It Be?
Lesson 4.8: Data, Data, Data
Lesson 4.9: Fax It Immediately!
Lesson 4.10: It's All Online
Lesson 5.1: Routine Writing in the Workplace: Emails
Lesson 5.2: Whoops, That's Not What I Meant to Do: Emails
Lesson 5.3: Writing Business Letters
Lesson 5.5: Getting Out the Mail
Lesson 6.1: It's All About Customer Service
Lesson 6.2: Customer Service Is Everyone's Job
Lesson 6.3: The Difficult Customer
Lesson 6.4: Did You Hear What I Said?
Lesson 6.5: It's Only a Voice or Is It?
Lesson 7.1: A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started
Lesson 7.3: Where's the Cash?
Lesson 7.4: Payroll

Introduction to the Teacher

Background

Manufacturing has been the backbone of Michigan's economic vitality for several generations. Over the past decade or so this state has experienced a catastrophic loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector. These are facts. It is not our place here to debate causes of the current situation but we can provide information to students that will help them find employment in industries that are hiring. The wages of the lost manufacturing jobs are not easily replaced. Our students must begin to look at "careers" in other industries and to believe that they have hope for a future if they will stick it out at lower level positions and "pay their dues". The long view is a hard sell especially for the young. The development of clerical skills is one way to gain entry into the first level of an office career.

This workbook and the teacher guide developed as a companion piece were written in the midst of the worst financial crisis our nation has seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Michigan has been doubly hit since our state had been losing jobs for years even before the recession began. As our nation copes with the new reality of global competition all our workers must understand the need to continue learning new skills to be able to compete. Unemployment statistics document that the recession hit those with the least education hardest. The clear conclusion is that if we are to be successful economically each of us must continually upgrade our skill level.

Michigan's Office of Adult Education has had these materials developed to address precisely the issues described above. This is why the "Clerical Skills" topic was chosen for one of the sets of workbooks. Leaders have recognized that people have trouble making the time to develop the office skills needed even when they understand that those skills are important. Michigan has also identified GED completion as a critical need. To make that happen we must increase the number of Michigan residents who complete classes and subsequently pass the GED Test. Student retention is a critical element in GED attainment. Studies have shown that students who persist to mastery of content are more likely to have better attainment of skills. It is thought that by including GED type skills imbedded within a work-based skills curriculum students will stay enrolled longer and we can have the best of both worlds.

Theory

The idea is that reading, writing, and mathematics skills needed to pass the GED Test can be learned within a real-life work-based context. This dual focus is expected to yield a double-duty benefit to students. First, course content will provide an organized approach to the mastery of GED skills. Secondly, course content will also focus on issues central to understanding career opportunities and skills required for a successful office career. The goal is to provide a themed course designed to help Adult Ed students become better informed as potential employees while they improve academic (GED) skills needed to function effectively in life, school and the workplace.

Topics addressed

"Building Clerical Skills" is all about providing students with the tools to understand and appreciate career opportunities. We do not plan to prepare our students to be able to perform the skills needed in the varied office settings. That is for our vocational colleagues to accomplish. What we can do is to provide students with career information and soft skills needed in the clerical arena. This Teacher Guide provides career information within the context of critical thinking content usually found in GED Preparation material.

There are seven units in the workbook. Unit 1 is an "Introduction to Clerical Skills" and serves as an overview of the field. The first four lessons in this unit ask the student to ponder what a clerical career

may be like and whether there appears to be a place for them within the field. Unit 2 covers “The Work Environment” with lessons ranging from blending the company mission with personal goals to understanding workplace ethical choices. The Unit 3 theme is “Time Management”. Working in an office is all about accomplishment of tasks and managing time efficiently so tasks are completed when needed. Unit 4 contains ten lessons covering “Technologies and Skills” Technology is the key component in a modern office. Our students must Understand that demonstration of technological capability during the application process is a major factor for managers who are hiring. Clearly we understand that communication is critical to all human interactions. Unit 5 has a focus on “Written Communication”. Clarity and precision are required for effective written communication in the workplace. Sloppy writing practices that lead to miscommunication can be very costly to a business. Unit 6 is all about “Customer Service”. We frequently talk about effective customer service because all have had both good and bad results when we bring an issue to a company. That experience usually determines whether the business relationship continues. Unit Seven is the last but by no means the least in importance. “Records” are the history of all a company does and are critical to success. All types of records are important to effective management of the business. The organization and ability to retrieve records in a timely fashion influence decision making profoundly. The clerical staff is the important cog in the organization of records whether those records are hard copy or stored electronically.

The topics and content in these materials are nothing new. Most of the information contained in this material can be found in a wide range of sources. Many of our students have no idea what they would like to do in their employment lives. Many may also have a view of office clerical work that is not reflective of today’s reality. The writers have tried to build a balanced picture of office clerical work for the student. Most of our students come to class with the goal of attaining the GED credential because they believe the GED will help them improve their job prospects. The GED in such cases is a tool to improve their economic status. This content is designed to help students achieve both educational and career goals at the same time. They can improve in GED type skills while gaining tools to take control of their employment futures.

Teacher Guide

This teacher guide was developed to provide the instructor with tools to enlarge the student’s understanding of office clerical skill topics while they are engaged in activities that will improve competence on GED skills. Each lesson begins with some ideas on “Introducing the Lesson”. The introduction suggested usually involves the students in an activity so they begin to ponder the lesson at hand. Instructors are also provided with ideas on how to introduce the lesson in such a way as to give students the necessary background information on the topic at hand. This information supports the topic as addressed in the corresponding workbook scenario and should be covered before the class begins reading the scenario. A discussion of the “Targeted GED Skills” to be acquired by the student follows. The vocabulary listed at the start of each scenario should also be reviewed. If there are questions on the meaning please consult the “Glossary” at the back of the workbook. The “Glossary” definitions were chosen to approximate the usage of the term in the scenario.

Many lessons also have handouts which should be copied and handed out to the class at the appropriate time. The work on these handouts is the kind of problem solving activity which mirrors GED skill acquisition.

The plan is that each scenario will need about ½ hour of class time to cover with an additional hour to complete the work on handouts and lessons designed to address GED skills and to discuss any issues that arise from the lesson. The idea is that during a 3 hour class two scenarios may be completed.

Each teacher guide lesson also contains “Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity”. These supplemental activities are included to further enlarge the student’s understanding of the issue and are designed to require some out of class time to complete. Many “Challenge Activities” use the internet to accomplish the task. They are designated as “supplemental” since we know some sites are without classroom access to the internet. All instructors should encourage students to complete the activities if at all possible. Completion of the

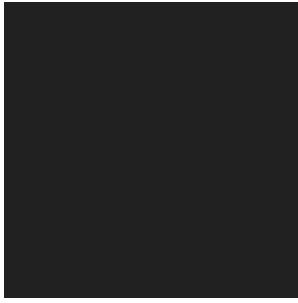
supplemental activities will often require the students to come together to share results from their search. We know that internet search engines are critical to the solution of workplace problems. If at all possible please organize the class to facilitate student engagement in these activities.

Course Length

When delivered as a stand alone course this curriculum was designed to be completed in about 60 hours. There are 36 scenarios in the workbook. If the planned schedule is workable a three hour class will finish two scenarios and the accompanying activities in the teacher guide. Adherence to this schedule takes 18 three hour class meetings. The additional hours to make-up a 60 hour offering would take care of orientation and assessment. The authors do not believe that this content is all a student will need to achieve complete GED skill attainment but will provide most with a great start toward that goal.

Summary

This course is designed to test the thought that reading, writing and mathematics skills can be learned within a real-life context that will yield a double benefit to students. “Building Clerical Skills” was chosen as the real-life context for this course because employment in these industries continues to be available and many of our students are unaware of how to turn a “job” into a career. It is hoped that “Building Clerical Skills” will be a welcome addition to the Michigan Adult Education Program.



Lesson Plans

Lesson 1.1: What Career Should I Choose? — Sherene

*Note to Instructors: The beginning scenarios of **Building Clerical Skills for the 21st Century Workplace** provide students with an introduction to the different types of clerical positions that are available in the workplace. These scenarios have been developed to lead students into the skill sets necessary for entry-level clerical positions.*

Reading Strand A. 4.1 Activate background knowledge and personal experiences in order to derive meaning from text.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by pairing students. Have the students introduce themselves to the other person and to write down their partner's answers to the following questions. Write the questions on the board:

- What type of clerical job are you thinking about pursuing?
- Why are you interested in that type of job?
- What concerns do you have about your career choice?
- What would you like to learn about your career choice?

Explain that when they are done, they will introduce their partner to the class by sharing their partner's thoughts about their clerical career choices. Debrief the activity by discussing the importance of career planning and that this course will assist them in obtaining the types of skills necessary for entry-level clerical positions.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Reinforce with students the need for specific skills in today's workplace, such as the technology skills required in offices.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Activate background knowledge and personal experiences in order to derive meaning from text.

Students may not realize the different types of skills required to be successful in the clerical field. As a group, have the students brainstorm different skills that they think will be necessary to learn in order to successfully apply for a clerical position. Write the students' answers on the board. Above their answers, write the phrase "background knowledge." Explain that accessing what they already know about a topic, background knowledge, is an important reading strategy. Share with students that they will be reading an overview of the skills required for most clerical positions.

Have students read the Handout **What Are Clerical Skills?** Debrief their reading assignment by having students discuss how the brainstorming session assisted them in better understanding the text.

Discuss the importance of reading when learning new skills and that the use of effective reading strategies will assist them in obtaining the skills necessary for positions in the clerical field.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students work in small teams. Provide each team with chart paper and markers. Using the list of clerical skills that the students initially brainstormed, have each team use the information from the handout **What Are Clerical Skills?** and identify skills not listed. Debrief the activity by combining both lists and share with students that these are the types of skills that they will be learning throughout the text.

Lesson 1.2: Applying for a Position — Sherene

Reading Strand B. 1.3 Extract meaningful information from charts, graphs, tables, and other graphic representations.

Introducing the Lesson

Explain to students that when deciding a new career, it is important to research different aspects of a job, such as the skills required or the salary that is provided.

Have students read the scenario. In small groups of three or four, have students discuss the questions. In each group, designate one student as the group leader, one student as the recorder, one student as the presenter, and one student as the trouble shooter. Discuss that in the workplace, being able to work effectively as a team is an important skill. Share with students that throughout this course, they will change roles frequently to provide them with different opportunities to practice specific teaming skills.

Provide each group with chart paper and markers to document their ideas. Have each team share their ideas with the group.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Extract meaningful information from charts, graphs, tables, and other graphic representations.

Provide students with the **How Do You Use Graphics?** handout. Have students identify the different types of graphics that they used and how they used each one.

Share with students that we are surrounded by graphic/visual information, from charts, tables, and graphs to photographs, diagrams, and editorial cartoons. Information provided through graphics can be seen at home, in the car on the way to work, and in the workplace. Graphic literacy is an essential skill for the workplace.

Ask students if they listed charts or tables on their handout. Discuss that charts and tables appear everywhere in real-life situations, from tax tables to class rankings. Using a chart or table to list information according to category is often much clearer than writing out of the information in paragraph form. Show students how tables present data or information in a series of rows and columns. If the data is arranged chronologically (for example, population figures over a ten-year period), the table can show *trends* — patterns of rising or falling activity. The biggest use of tables is for numerical data. However, tables can also be used to compare and contrast information. A table can be used to compare items such as salaries.

Provide each student with the **May 2010 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Michigan** handout. Show students the different parts of a chart or table and how to locate information. The following items should be located:

- **Table Title** – A title gives an overview of the information displayed in the chart or table. The title is given at the top of the chart or table.
- **Row/Column Labels** – The label of each row or column indicates what type of information is contained in that row or column.
- **Individual Cells** – Each cell is defined by its row and column location.
- **Relationship of Cells** – Often, one wants to determine whether or not there is a trend within rows or columns. For example, do the values increase as one moves up or down a row or column? If so, a relationship is shown.

Have each student create a question based on data in the chart. Students should write their question on an index card. Collect the cards and use the questions to check that students have proficiency in locating information in the table.

Debrief the activity by discussing the types of office support staff positions that make the highest hourly and/or annual salary. Discuss possible reasons for the differences in salaries. You may wish to clarify for students the difference between the terms mean and median.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Bring copies of newspaper help wanted sections to class. Have students identify different types of clerical positions that are available in their area.

Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job – Sherene and Jerilyn

Writing Strand B. 1.2 Gather ideas to present an opinion or explanation drawing on personal observations, knowledge, experiences, and research needed.

Reading Strand B. 4.1 Draw conclusions on information from two or more different sources and combine that information to create a new idea or understanding.

Introducing the Lesson

Have students share times when they did not get a job that they really wanted. Ask students how they felt and what they did after learning they did not get the position. Ask students if they had an individual like Ms. Mason to counsel them. Discuss that often individuals apply and interview for positions and never receive any notice that they did not get the position.

Read the scenario and as a class discuss the questions.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Gather ideas to present an opinion or explanation drawing on personal observations, knowledge, experiences, and research needed.

GED Skill – Draw conclusions on information from two or more different sources and combine that information to create a new idea or understanding.

Provide students with copies of the **Comparison Alley** handout and both resumes. Discuss that being able to draw conclusions based on information from two or more different sources is an important skill in the workplace. Set up the activity by sharing with students that Ms. Mason has been requested to provide a short summary on why she hired Delilah instead of Sherene. Discuss that being able to identify similarities and differences is the first step in developing a summary and that each student will be responsible for writing a response in the form of a paragraph.

Have students read each resume. As a class, have the students identify similarities in both resumes. Next, have students identify the differences that they note in Delilah’s and Sherene’s resume. Document the information on the board or chart paper. One example may be that both Delilah and Sherene have taken computer courses. However, Delilah has taken multiple courses recently, whereas Sherene has not taken a course since 2004.

Individually have the students draft a paragraph defending Ms. Mason’s choice. Have the students read their paragraphs to the class. Discuss the need to base choices in the workplace on factual information.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Have students write a resume for the perfect clerical employee – someone who would succeed in an entry-level clerical position. Have students complete the four sections of a resume for this employee: Experience, Accomplishments, Skills, and Education/Training.

As they write the sample resume, have them think about the following:

- What types of experience/previous jobs could help this employee have the experience they need to be the “perfect” employee?
- What kinds of accomplishments could a high-performing clerical employee have on their resume (e.g., created a filing system for the entire company; nominated for Employee of the Month, etc.)?
- What skills would the “perfect” employee need to list in order to demonstrate excellent communication, terrific organizational skills, and outstanding customer service?
- What types of classes or training programs would help this employee learn everything he/she needed to be the “perfect” employee?

For additional information on writing a resume, have students access Career OneStop at:
<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/Introduction.aspx>

Have students place their sample resume in a folder. They will use the information at a later date during the training.

Lesson 1.4: Assessing Skills — Sherene

Reading Strand B. 1.2 Ask questions to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, clarify meaning, and locate specific information within a text.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if any of them have ever taken a business course at a local adult education center or community college. Have students share their experiences.

Have students read the scenario. As a class, discuss the questions. Discuss the importance of matching a person's skills or aptitude to a career.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Ask questions to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, clarify meaning, and locate specific information within a text.

Have students individually list skills that they currently have that they feel would be beneficial to an office career. Discuss why these skills may or may not be important in an office environment. Explain to students that another way to determine whether or not they have the skills or aptitude necessary for a career in an office environment, or any type of career, is to take a career profiler. Share with students that a career profiler asks questions of them regarding their likes, aptitudes, and skills.

Have students take a career profile. You may wish to have students start by taking a general career profiler that matches their aptitudes and skills to specific positions.

One free example to use is:

Skills Profiler from Career InfoNet

<http://careerinfonet.org/skills/default.aspx?nodeid=20>

You may wish to have students take a profiler that matches their aptitudes and skills to a beginning clerical position, such as Office Clerks, General.

Two free online profilers are:

Skills Profiler for Office Clerks, General from Career OneStop

http://careerinfonet.org/skills/skills_wc_list.aspx

Office Skills & Job Fit Test

http://www.queendom.com/tests/access_page/index.htm?idRegTest=2338

Debrief the activity by having students draw two columns on a piece of paper. On one side have students identify the skills that they have. In the second column have them identify the skills that they will need to obtain. Discuss that students will learn improve their clerical skills throughout this course of study.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Career OneStop provides free videos on different types of careers, as well as workplace skills and abilities. Note that many of the career videos are also provided in Spanish.

Have students explore the following website and select a video of interest to them. Have them watch the video and provide a short summary of what they learned to the class.

Career OneStop Videos

http://www.careerinfonet.org/videos/COS_Videos.asp?id=27&nodeid=27

Lesson 2.1: It's My Mission — Artif

Reading Strand A. 3.3 Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Introducing the Lesson

Write the following famous slogans on the board (answers are in parenthesis):

Snap! Crackle! Pop! (Kellogg's Rice Krispies)

Please don't squeeze the _____.® (Charmin Toilet Paper)

Quality is Job 1. (Ford)

M'm. M'm. Good! (Campbell's Soup)

Nobody does it like _____. (Sara Lee)

Share with students that a slogan is a memorable motto or phrase that is often used by companies to express an idea or purpose. Have students share other famous slogans or mottos with the class.

Discuss that many companies have personal slogans, as well as a mission statement, to describe their goals in an easily understood way.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Reinforce with students the need to understand a company's motto/slogan, goals, and mission statement.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Introduce the skill of inference by providing students with everyday life inferences from which they should draw a conclusion.

Examples:

You drive into a small town that has two diners. There are two cars at one diner and many cars at the other. Which diner may have better food and prices?

You look in the newspaper for a movie to see. One film has a full-page ad with favorable comments from well-known critics. Another movie has a full-page ad with favorable comments from radio stations and newspapers you never heard of. Which may be the better movie?

Write the word **infer** on the board. Have students define the word and record their answers. Students should respond that to infer is to be able to “read between the lines.”

Discuss with students that they make inferences every day, most of the time they do so without thinking about it. Share with students that when reading business documents, they may often need to use both information from the document, as well as their background knowledge, to obtain a deeper understanding of what is being stated.

Write the following on the board or chart paper:

Word Clues + Experience = Inference

Share with students that when they read fiction or poetry, there are often many different interpretations of the text. However, when they are reading nonfiction or business documents, there is a narrower range of interpretation permitted.

Have students reread the mission statement for The Dow Chemical Corporation from the scenario.

“To constantly improve what is essential to human progress by mastering science and technology.”

Ask students to find the answer to the following questions:

- What is essential to human progress?

Model for students how to infer the answers to the questions by using the following chart. Sample answers are provided.

| Clues (Proof – What is said in the text.) | What I Know (My experiences or knowledge.) | Inference (What I can figure out.) |
|---|--|--|
| The company wants to improve human progress by being the best that they can be in science and technology. | I know that The Dow Chemical Company creates different types of plastics, as well as researches how to better use energy, chemicals, and materials we have in today's world. | It's important that we have environmentally safe products in order to protect our planet and live a better life. |

Have students practice making inferences. Provide the students with a sample slogan or mission statement. Ask students a question regarding the statement. Have them complete the chart and infer the answer based on the text and what they know. Debrief the activity by having students share their ideas.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Have students brainstorm the names of different organizations, businesses, and industries in their community. Have students select businesses in which they are interested. Next, have them research their selected companies on the World Wide Web to locate whether or not a slogan/motto and mission statement are posted. Have students share their findings with the class. Discuss how this information is important to them when they apply or interview for a position.

Lesson 2.2: The Ever-Changing Workplace — Cecy

Writing Strand A. 1.1 Demonstrate effective organizational skills including the editing and revising of basic documents in order to demonstrate a clear and logical presentation of ideas.

Introducing the Lesson

Write the word “adapt” on the board. Have students define what the word means to them. Discuss that adaptability is the ability to change. Share with students that change plays an important role in the workplace. The ability to cope with and readily accept change is essential to the success of the clerical professional.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Have students brainstorm different types of change that they may encounter in the workplace. Write their answers on the board or chart paper. Students may share that there will be changes in technology (new computers, phone systems), supervisors, office space, work requirements, etc.

Discuss that in the 21st century workplace, change is occurring more rapidly than ever before and that adapting to change is a necessary skills. You may wish to discuss the process of effectively dealing with change:

- Understand why change is necessary by identifying what has occurred in the workplace that requires change.
- Determine what will be achieved by the change.
- Establish guidelines for achieving the objectives for change.
- Determine the benefits that will occur as a result of the change.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the change once it has occurred.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Demonstrate effective organizational skills including the editing and revising of basic documents in order to demonstrate a clear and logical presentation of ideas.

Share with students that many daily activities require organization skills. The use of clue or transition words can be helpful in completing these types of tasks. Introduce the skills of organization and the use of transition words by writing the following acronym on the board:

FANBOYS

Ask students if they have ever used the acronym in writing? Students may share that this is the acronym for the transition words: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Ask students how they use transition words in their writing. Students should state that transition words help them put their thoughts in order; they act as clue words.

Have students brainstorm additional transitional words. Document the words on the board or chart paper. A sample list of transition words is located in the **Transition Word** handout.

Divide the class into small groups. Provide students with sample paragraphs or multi-paragraph texts that are out of order. Use paper strips so that each sentence of the text is on a separate strip. Using the list of transition words, have the students reconstruct the texts in correct order by moving the paper strips.

Have students read aloud their reconstructed text. Have them discuss the reasons for their paragraph order and the transition words that they used to construct an organized paragraph.

A sample multi-paragraph text is provided in the **Steps for Adapting to Change in the Workplace** handout.

The handout is provided in paragraph form, as well as in a sentence-strip format that can be printed and then cut apart into strips. Make sure to mix up the strips so that they are not in order.

Other text can be used dependent on the students' level of skills.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students work in small teams. Provide each team with chart paper and markers. Have each team identify the qualities that they would expect an ideal supervisor to have. Debrief the activity by having each team share their list.

Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip — Opal

Reading Strand A. 4.7 Utilize the elements of poetry to analyze and interpret meaning.

Reading Strand A. 3.3 Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Introducing the Lesson

Ask students if they have ever been the recipient of gossip. How did it make them feel? What did they do about it?

Share with students that every office seems to have at least one person who has the nitty-gritty on what is happening. However, the gossip's remarks may change into more personal remarks, such as who's dating whom on the sly, who's pregnant, who's leaving early every day, who has a problem at home, etc.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Debrief the questions by sharing with students some tips on how to deal with office gossip.

1. Don't be a kind listening ear. Try to avoid staff who gossip. When they attempt to tell you something negative, share with them that you prefer to see the positive side.
2. Do not compromise getting your own work done. Ignore gossip that doesn't pertain to you.
3. If you feel like you need to reach out to the person being targeted, suggest that the person seek help from human resources, the manager, or the company supported Employee Assistance Program.
4. If the gossip is about you, the best thing to do is to find out who the source is and confront them directly without sounding accusatory. Don't involve more people than you need to, or you'll just escalate the drama.
5. If the ongoing gossip or negativity makes you uncomfortable, seek guidance for yourself.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Utilize the elements of poetry to analyze and interpret meaning.

GED Skill — Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Review the skill of inference with students. Information on inference was introduced in Lesson 5. Share with students that they can use their skills in drawing inferences when reading different types of texts.

Write the word poem on the board or chart paper. Have students work in pairs and define the word poem. Students should share their definitions with the class.

Provide students with handouts of the poem *Nobody's Friend*, Poetry Reading Strategies, and Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer. Using the poem *Nobody's Friend*, have students follow steps 1 through 4 in the Poetry Reading Strategies handout. You may wish to have students work in teams or complete the activity as a class. It is important that the poem be read aloud.

Write the following question on the board:

- What message is the poet trying to send or help you understand?

Using the Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer, have students answer the question by first identifying details or statements from the poem that answer the question and what they know about the message from their personal experiences. Then have students combine the information to infer the message that the poet is sending.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Divide the class into pairs. Provide each pair with a copy of the following scenario. Have the students practice role playing the situation and how Joe should respond to his work colleagues. Students should share their role plays with the class.

Joe is an office clerk at XYZ Company. He's quiet, not too sociable, and not particularly well-liked. At lunch, Joe's work associates make negative remarks about his appearance. They laugh at his choice of shoes and his shirt that doesn't match his pants. Beale is the worst. Joe overheard her tell a friend that Joe should not be allowed to work in an office where he can be seen. Beale even told people that he got his clothes out of garbage cans. That made everyone at the table laugh. Joe looks at himself in the mirror. His clothes are clean and neat. They're not fashionable, but they are all he can afford as he has been out of work for over a year. The job is so important to him, but Joe doesn't know how much more he can take.

Debrief the activity by reviewing the different responses provided through the role plays.

Lesson 2.4: Ethics in the Office Place — Lorna

Reading Strand B. 3.3: Identify cause and effect relationships.

Introducing the Lesson

Prior to reading the scenario, share with students the handout **Making Decisions in the Workplace**.

Discuss that in addition to mission statements, companies generally have a code of ethics. Explain that a code of ethics or code of business conduct is a set of rules that govern the behavior of people who work for a company.

Divide the class into teams of four students. Have each team read the scenario and discuss the questions. Next, have each team complete the decision-making process and share with the class the alternatives that Lorna has and determine the best choice and why it is the best choice.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify cause and effect relationships.

Brainstorm with students to see what they know about cause and effect. Give real-world and workplace examples, such as:

| Cause | Effect |
|---|--|
| You are driving 75 mph. | You receive a speeding ticket. |
| You are hungry. | You fix yourself something to eat. |
| The copy machine breaks down in the middle of a large printing job. | Your supervisor does not have the handouts necessary for a presentation. |
| Your co-worker calls in late for work again. | You will need to provide coverage of the reception desk, along with getting your job done. |

Have students identify a specific problem that they have encountered in the workplace or in their daily lives, e.g., the car ran out of gas in the middle of the road. Write the problem on the board or chart paper. Have students brainstorm different effects of the problem. Discuss that one cause may have either single or multiple effects. Other times, multiple causes may lead to a single effect. Reinforce that cause and effect occurs in all types of texts, such as fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, as well as in real-world situations.

Share with students the graphic organizer handouts: **Cause and Effect: Multiple Effects and Cause and Effect: Multiple Causes**. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each group with either a cause or effect workplace situation. As a team, have students identify either possible causes or effects of the situation. Sample situations are provided in the handout **Real-World Situations – Cause and Effect**.

Debrief the activity by having students share their ideas with the class. Make sure that students identify their situation as either a cause or effect. Remember, there can be many different causes and/or effects for each situation.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students think about a time at school or at home when they used ethics and judgment when deciding whether or not to “do the right thing” (e.g., to keep a secret, to report something that was wrong, to admit to making a mistake, etc.). What happened as a result of their choice? What did they learn? How could they apply this lesson to ethics and judgment in the workplace? What would they do the same or differently if a situation should arise in an office that required them to make a similar judgment?

Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go? — Lisette

Writing Strand A. 2.1 Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

Writing Strand A. 2.2 Identify and correct errors in the area of grammar mechanics in a document.

Introducing the Lesson

Write the phrase *time management* on chart paper or on the board. Have students provide a definition for effective time management.

Have students read the scenario and answer the questions. Discuss that often things get in the way of effective time management in the office place. Sometimes these interferences are termed “time thieves.” Have students brainstorm different types of “time thieves” that may occur in the office. Document their answers. Examples may include: the inability to say “no,” lack of planning, an untidy desk and files, invited and uninvited visitors, talking, telephone interruptions, checking emails constantly, procrastination. Discuss that the next lessons will focus on time management and different methods to organize and prioritize the office.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

GED Skill — Identify and correct errors in the area of grammar mechanics in a document.

Share with students that being able to identify and correct errors in a document is crucial to their position as an office professional. Review the following basic rules of grammar with students:

- Capitalization
- End punctuation
- Commas
- Subject-verb agreement
- Complete sentence versus a sentence fragment

You may wish to refer students to an English Language Arts grammar text to review the basic rules for each area. Ensure that student understand the rules by having them provide you with an example of each, such as: Getting my work done – sentence fragment.

Provide each student with a copy of the **Tips for Time Management** handout. Share with students that in the workplace they will editing and revising documents that will be share with co-workers and customers, rather than completing worksheets such as in the classroom. Explain that their task is to edit the **Tips for Time Management** handout for grammatical errors. Have students complete the task. Debrief by pairing students and having them share their edited work. Check for accuracy.

Ask the class whether the task was easier or more difficult than completing a worksheet. Why or why not?

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Tell students that they are going to become editing detectives. Have students be on the “look out” for editing errors in materials that they read, such as newspaper articles, junk mail, advertisements, personal correspondence, etc. Have students cut out the text and bring it to class. Spend time identifying the errors in different types of text and how to correct them. Tell students that careful reading will assist them in becoming better editors in the workplace.

Lesson 3.2: It's All About Priorities — Lisette

Reading Strand B.1.3 Extract meaningful information from charts, graphs, tables, and other graphic representations.

Mathematics Strand C. 3.1 Construct, interpret, and draw inferences from tables, charts, and graphs.

Introducing the Lesson

Write the following words on the board or chart paper: chart, matrix, prioritize. Have students identify each of the terms. Discuss that a matrix, often called a chart diagram, is a type of graphic organizer that condenses and organizes data or information. Share with students that they will be reading about a situation where a matrix, or chart, assists a clerical employee in better managing her time through prioritizing the tasks that need to be accomplished.

Divide the class into small groups of three students. Have each group identify a facilitator, a recorder, and a reporter for their team. Share with students that an important skill in the workplace is to work as a team. Determining different roles within a group assists the group in working more cohesively. Provide each group with chart paper and markers. Have the groups read the scenario and answer the questions.

Debrief the activity by having the recorder post the answers of the group and the reporter orally sharing the answers with the class. The facilitator for each group should monitor the process and provide additional information if needed.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Extract meaningful information from charts, graphs, tables, and other graphic representations.

GED Skill — Construct, interpret, and draw inferences from tables, charts, and graphs.

Introduce the skill by asking students how they use charts in their daily life, either at home or in the workplace. Share with students that charts are everywhere. They appear in books, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, on television, and of course, in the workplace. Discuss that Lisette used a chart divided into four quadrants (or cells) to identify priorities in her job. Just like items on the GED® test, the ability to construct, interpret, and draw inferences from charts is an important life skill.

Using the chart in the scenario, identify for students each part and provide the following descriptions:

- **Title** – A title gives an overview of the information displayed in the chart. The title is given at the top of the chart.
- **Row/Column Labels** – The label of each row or column indicates what type of information is contained in that row or column.
- **Individual Cells** – Each cell is defined by its row and column location. Example: This chart has four cells, which are termed quadrants. Quad means four.

Provide students with newspapers and magazines. Have the students find different types of charts and cut them out for use in the classroom. Have students identify the different parts of the charts, as well as create questions that can be answered by the information provided.

Next, have students construct a chart based on information from a text. Provide students with chart paper and markers. A sample text to use is:

In the state of Michigan, clerical positions are projected to grow from 2008 to 2018. The number of customer service representatives will grow from 62,510 employees in 2008 to 71,370 employees in 2018. The number of medical secretaries will grow from 9,080 employees in 2008 to 10,710 employees in 2018 with the number of customer service assistants growing from 62,510 to 71,370 in the same time span. Although not all office and administrative support occupations will show growth, general office clerk positions are also

projected to grow to 117,710 positions in 2018 as compared to the 109,560 positions in 2008.

Labor Market Information. Michigan Occupational Forecasts

http://milmi.org/admin/uploadedPublications/719_occ_g43.htm

Debrief the activity by having students share their charts and compare/contrast the ease of reading the article versus reading the same information in chart format. Check for accuracy and completeness. Students may also wish to calculate the percentage of growth for each identified position.

A sample chart should look similar to the following:

Projected Growth of Select Office and Administrative Support Occupations in Michigan

| Position | 2008 | 2018 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Customer Service Representative | 62,510 | 71,370 |
| Medical Secretary | 9,080 | 10,710 |
| Customer Service Assistant | 62,510 | 71,370 |
| General Office Clerk | 109,560 | 117,710 |

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Provide students with the **Task Priority Matrix** handouts. Discuss the types of tasks that should be included in each of the quadrants. Have students list the tasks that they currently need to complete at their job or in their daily lives. Next, have students determine the priority of each task and write it in the appropriate quadrant. Debrief the activity by having students discuss why they placed specific tasks into a certain quadrant. Have the students practice using the matrix during the next week and discuss how it has worked in helping them better manage their time.

Lesson 3.3: Help! I Can't Find My Desk – Marcos

Writing Strand B. 1.1 Gather ideas to present an opinion or explanation drawing on personal observations, knowledge, experiences, and research as needed.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students how they feel a cluttered workspace or work environment could impact a person's effectiveness and/or time management skills. Discuss with the class how a cluttered environment can result in wasting a person's time looking for things that are needed to complete a task, as well as projecting an unprofessional work environment. Share with students that having an organized workspace is part of an effective time management plan. Tell students that today they will be reading about how Marcos dealt with his unorganized workspace.

Read the scenario as a class and brainstorm the answers to the questions.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Gather ideas to present an opinion or explanation drawing on personal observations, knowledge, experiences, and research as needed.

Ask students how they feel when someone tells them they need to write an essay or a letter. Does their mind suddenly go blank? Do they struggle to come up with a good idea? Share with students that finding a good topic is often one of the most challenging parts of writing.

Ask students what strategies they use to develop ideas. Have them brainstorm all of the different techniques they use. Write their ideas on the board or chart paper. Examples may include: making lists, free-writing, brainstorming, doodling, mapping, webbing, flow charts.

Next, ask students how they determine whether their idea is a good one. Sample answers may include that a good idea is one about which they have personal knowledge, find interesting, or have strong feelings.

Share with students that the pre-writing process is an important step in becoming a more effective writer. Provide students with a copy of the **Developing Your Ideas** handout. Model for students how to complete the handout. Begin with a real-world topic, such as a person or place. Show students how to create a vivid "picture" by answering the questions and then using the information to create a sample paragraph.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Have students read **A Few Tips for Organizing Your Office** handout. As a class, have students brainstorm additional ideas or tips that they use to ensure an organized desktop and/or office space. Have students share how their tips assist them in better time management.

Lesson 4.1: To Whom Am I Speaking? — Mr. Haliz

Writing Strand A. 2.1 Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

Introducing the Lesson

Ask students if they enjoy answering phones. Why or why not? Ask students if they have ever listened to their voice on an answering machine message. If not, provide students with the following sample script and record each student's voice.

“Good morning. Ann Arbor Electronics, [insert student's name]. How may I help you? Mr. Haliz is out of the office until tomorrow morning. May I take a message or ask him to return your call?”

Have students listen to their message and have them critique their own voices:

- Do they sound friendly and interested?
- Is their voice clear?
- Do they speak too slowly or too quickly?
- Do they speak too softly or too loudly?

If students do not like the sound of their voice, ask them to practice improving their expression or tone and retape. Share with students that the telephone is often the first experience a customer may have with a business. Answering the phone in a professional manner is an important skill to learn.

Have students read the scenario and as a class answer the questions.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

Share with students that another important skill when greeting customers, either on the telephone or in person, is the use of correct grammar. Write the following sentences on the board or chart paper.

Mrs. Smith is not available to take your call.

Mrs. Smith are not available to take your call.

Ask students which is correct and the reason for their answer. Share with students that the use of correct subject-verb agreement is a necessary skill in both speaking and writing. To review a few of the common rules for subject-verb agreement, you may wish to provide students with the handout **Review of Subject-Verb Agreement**. Have students create sentences that use each rule correctly.

Divide the students into teams. Have each team develop a short telephone greeting using incorrect subject-verb agreement. Have students read their script to the class. See if students can find the subject-verb agreement errors. Have students reread the edited script.

Example of a sample script.

Good morning. This are Harris and James Corporation, Bruce speaking. How can I help you this morning? I is so sorry, but neither Mrs. Smith nor Mr. Harris are available. There are another supervisor with whom I can transfer you to if you would like.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Share with students that our vocal tone, as well as the words and phrases that we use convey a message to the caller. Divide the class into small groups. Provide them with the following phrases in the left-hand column. Have the students create a more positive message for each phrase. Samples are provided in the right hand column. Debrief the activity by having students share their ideas and discuss how each response would make the caller feel.

| Sample responses | Better responses |
|---|---|
| Your problem. | Your question, your concern. |
| It's not my job. | While I'm not able to answer question, I will speak to my manager about your concern. |
| You need to . . . | Would you please? |
| Hang on. | May I put you on hold while I check with my supervisor? |
| Who's calling? | May I say who is calling please? |
| I can't hear you, speak up! | I am having a little difficulty hearing you. Can you please speak up? |
| I can't help you. You'll have to speak to someone else. | I need to transfer your call to our sales department so they can answer your question. May I do so? |
| She's in, but she's busy. | She's not available, but I do expect her back in the office at 3:00 p.m.) |
| Bye-bye. | Thank you for calling. Good-bye. |

Lesson 4.2: Too Many Lines — Allie

Writing Strand A.3.1 Proofread workplace, community, and personal documents as well as “how-to” and information texts in order to identify and correct errors.

Writing Strand B.1.6 Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever called a business or place of work. Ask them if they have ever had to wait for the phone to be answered. How did it make them feel? Ask students to brainstorm different reasons for a phone not being answered at a business. Sample answers may include too many calls coming in at one time, the receptionist may have stepped away from the desk, etc. Ask students how many rings they think the phone should ring before it is picked up. (Professionals in the field suggest that a business phone should only ring two-four times before it is answered.)

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class.

Explain that phone systems differ from workplace to workplace. However, there are some similar functions that should be learned. Answering the phone and taking messages is an important skill for the clerical professional.

If possible, show students how an office phone system works. Share with students that office phones often have several “lines,” (all have the same phone number) so that a receptionist can see a light flashing to know that another call is ringing through. When this occurs, the receptionist can use the “hold” feature in order to answer the call. Demonstrate the “hold” and “transfer” features of a phone system. It is beneficial if students can observe an effective receptionist handling numerous calls and the process used to ensure positive customer service.

Explain that some businesses have an automatic answering feature that will perform the hold function for them. A message provides callers with information that their call will be answered in a specific timeframe. Ask students if they have ever experienced a recorded message from a business that they have contacted. Share with students that it is important that they master the office’s phone system if part of their responsibilities is to answer incoming calls. Reading the phone system’s manual, asking for help, attending workshops, and organizing one’s desk (list of extensions, message pads, etc.) are some ways to become an efficient, competent, and customer-friendly receptionist.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Proofread workplace, community, and personal documents as well as “how-to” and information texts in order to identify and correct errors.

GED Skill — Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

Share with students that an important skill when working in an office is taking complete messages that provide the reader with accurate and adequate information.

Ask students to brainstorm what they would want to know if someone called when they were unavailable. Write their answers on chart paper or the board. Sample answers may include: the name of the person calling, the time and date of the call, a contact number, a short description of what was discussed, and the person who took the call.

Provide students with copies of the **Message Pad** handout, or you may wish to purchase preprinted message pads at a local office supply store. Explain that many businesses use a specific type of message pad so that front office receptionists can quickly document the information required when taking messages for a coworker or supervisor who is unavailable. Model for students how to complete each section of the message pad. Reinforce the importance of summarizing the information accurately, as well as editing the completed

message in order to identify and correct errors. Share with students that writing legibly is also an important task when writing messages that others will read.

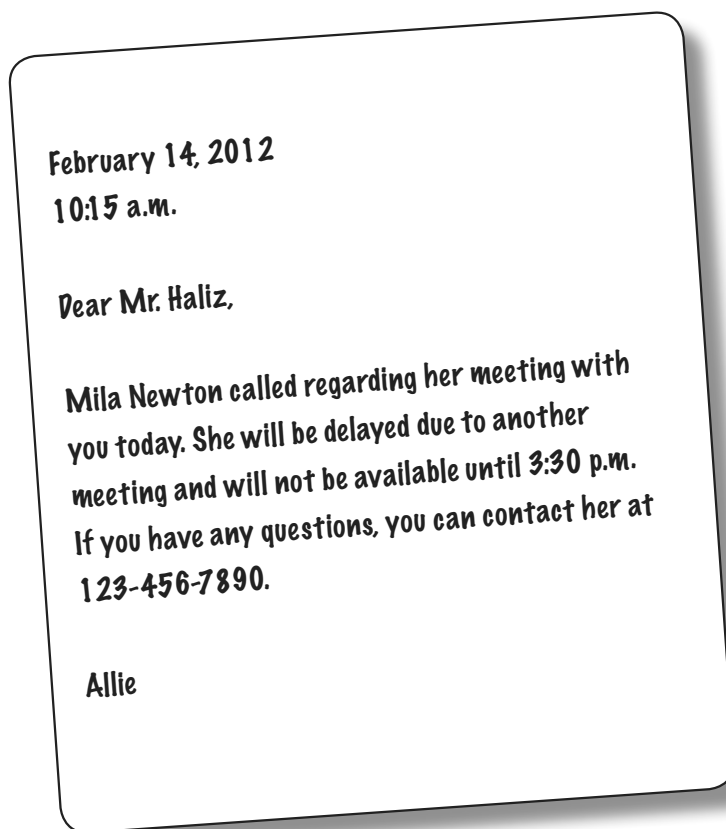
Tell students that you will act as the caller. Their task is to take a message based on the information that you provide. You may wish to use a sample scenario from the **Take the Message** handout or create your own. Remind students to edit and revise their message to ensure that it is correct and that the information is accurate. Debrief the activity by having students divide into small groups of three to four students. Have each group compare their messages. Have the students determine any differences in the messages. Have each group identify the most effective message to share with the class. Provide additional practice as needed by the class.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Share with students that sometimes there are no preprinted message forms available in an office setting. In that case, the office worker must know the important information to obtain from the caller and write the note on blank notepaper.

Provide students with blank paper. Have the students practice taking messages using a blank sheet of paper. You may wish to use one of the scenarios in the handout or create your own scenario of a phone conversation. Divide the class into pairs. Have each pair discuss similarities and differences in the way they wrote the message. Debrief the activity by having students identify the important information necessary to include on a blank piece of paper.

Demonstrate for students that messages are often written in the form of a short letter with the date and time in the top left-hand corner of paper, a salutation, the information obtained, and at the end of the letter, the name of the sender (the person who took the call). You may wish to model for students this format:



Using the letter format, have students practice taking another message. Have students edit and revise their message in order to present a professional appearance.

Lesson 4.3: It's Jamming Again — Lucas

Reading Strand A. 4.4 Identify the structure of a nonfiction text–sequence.

Introducing the Lesson

Ask if anyone has used a photocopy machine. Students may share that they have made copies in school, at work, or at a local office supply store. Ask students if they have ever experienced a time when the copier did not work or the machine had a paper jam. What did they do?

Share with students that using a photocopier can be complicated as modern copiers have a wide array of buttons and layers of usability that can be confusing to someone unfamiliar with the machine. Understanding how to use office equipment is an important part of one's clerical responsibilities.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Discuss that office equipment becomes outdated quickly with today's technology. However, it is important to learn to efficiently operate the equipment that exists.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify the structure of a nonfiction text–sequence.

Write the following word on the board: nonfiction. Have students define the word.

Share with students that as an office professional, they will be faced with reading many different types of nonfiction text, such as letters, memos, emails, and manuals. Explain that understanding the structure, or how the text is written, can help them better comprehend what they are reading.

Share with students that as they read nonfiction, they should:

1. Preview the selection before they read. Look at the title, pictures, diagrams, subtitles, and any terms in boldfaced print or italics.
2. Figure out the organization. Nonfiction text may be chronological or arranged around what the writer wants to discuss. Understanding the organization can help you predict what to expect next.
3. Separate facts and opinions. Even in nonfiction, writers may include personal opinions, such as “The X Printer is the best printer on the market.”
4. Question as you read. If you are reading a chronological text, such as a how-to manual, stop now and then to review the previous steps and predict what may come next.
5. Continually evaluate what you read. Was the writing complete? Do you still have questions? Did the author provide you with the information needed in an easily understood manner?

Have students use the above steps to read the **Making the Perfect Copy!** handout. Debrief the activity by having students share with the class their evaluation of the text. Could they make a photocopy based on what they read? What did the writer do well? What could have been done better?

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Model for students how to use a photocopy machine. Identify for the students the main parts of the machine: paper feeder, control panel, paper trays. Model for students how to make copies of a document using the paper feeder. Demonstrate for students how to select the size of the document, number of copies, quality of printing, single sided or front/back, and the correct paper tray. Show students how to put paper in the paper tray and how to remove a paper jam.

Have students practice the skills demonstrated. Have students follow the steps in the **Making the Perfect Copy!** handout.

If a photocopier machine is not readily available, provide students with a copy of a photocopier machine and describe the different parts of the machine and the steps necessary to make a photocopy. Have students demonstrate their understanding by modeling the same steps for the class.

Note: You can make an organizational activity out of the **Making the Perfect Copy!** handout by removing the numbers from each step, copying the handout, and then cutting the handout into strips (one step of the process on each strip). See if students can put the process in the correct order. You may wish to have students work individually or in teams.

Lesson 4.4: One More Copy – Faye

Writing Strand A. 1.1 Demonstrate effective organizational skills.

Mathematics Strand A. 1.8 Use a variety of strategies to solve academic and real-life problems.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever received a document where the pages or the information was not in the correct order or the printing was smudged or too light to read easily. Share with students that an important clerical skill required in the office setting is the ability to demonstrate effective organizational skills and to solve problems. Share with students that life in the workplace is filled with decisions. These decisions can directly impact one's job.

Have students read the scenario. Ask students if they have ever had the experience of a piece of equipment malfunctioning. Have students share their experiences and what they did to solve the problem.

Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Have the students answer the questions. Debrief the activity by having students report their answers to the class.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Demonstrate effective organizational skills.

GED Skill – Use a variety of strategies to solve academic and real-life problems.

Share with students that in real-world situations, people tend to do one of three things when faced with a problem.

- They become uncomfortable and wish the problem would just go away.
- They look for someone to blame or to take responsibility.
- They feel that they have to come up with a correct answer immediately.

Ask students which of the above they feel Faye selected. Why? Ask students how they would determine what to do in Faye's situation. Students should respond that they would look at possible solutions and select the best choice.

Share with students that workplace situations can cause a person tremendous stress. However, using an effective problem-solving approach, similar to that learned in a math class, can help a person deal with all types of problems.

Write the following steps on the board or chart paper. Model for students how each step would help Faye in making a decision. Have the students assist you in answering the questions.

1. Identify the problem. What is the problem to be solved or the decision that Faye needs to make?
2. Gather information about the situation. What does Faye know about the problem and the possible causes for the machine to smoke?
3. List possible solutions that address the problem. What are the different ways that Faye could solve her dilemma?
4. Evaluate the possible results of each situation. What are the pros and cons for each choice? What would be the result of each choice?
5. Decide on the best solution. Which solution would have the best result for Faye? The worst? Why?

Explain that this step-by-step approach should be used anytime a person faces a decision that needs to be made.

Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Use a previous scenario, such as **Lesson 4.3: It's Jamming Again!** and have each group solve the problem using the five-step problem solving method.

Debrief the activity by having each team share with the class the final solution selected and the reasons for their choice.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

The ability to collate or organize a printing job is an essential skill in the office. Provide each student with three copies of a section of a company handbook or a lengthy memo. White out the page numbers prior to photocopying the section. Shuffle the pages so that they are out of order. Provide each student with a stack of papers with the task of organizing (collating) them into three complete copies. You may wish to insert a page that does not belong.

The same type skill can be taught by removing the staple from a magazine and shuffling the pages so that they are not in order. Have students put the magazine back together correctly.

Debrief the activity by having students discuss how they determined the correct order of the pages and whether a page needed to be included or not.

Share with students that photocopy machines may jam or malfunction, requiring that an office employee hand collate materials. Have students brainstorm other situations that may require that they collate materials. Sample answers may include: presentation materials for a meeting, a company handbook to be bound or placed in a binder, a mailer of multiple pages, etc.

Lesson 4.5: How Difficult Could It Be? — Reda

Reading Strand A. 4.9 Selectively employ effective strategies for comprehension, including: questioning, scanning, analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, grouping, and mapping.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever experienced using new or different equipment for something they knew how to do, such as driving a vehicle that was not theirs or figuring out how to use a new remote control to control the television. Discuss that technology is constantly changing and an important skill as an office professional is the ability to learn how to use new and ever-changing equipment.

Ask students if they have ever seen a split-key ergonomic keyboard. If possible, show students a traditional computer keyboard and a split-key ergonomic keyboard. Have students practice typing on both keyboards and comparing the differences.

Ask students why there are different types of keyboards. Explain that ergonomic keyboards arrange the keys in a way designed to put less stress on wrists and hands; reportedly, decreasing problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Let students know that the slightly different positioning of the keys may initially feel strange and result in errors. However, most people adjust to different keyboards very quickly.

As a class, have students read the scenario and answer the questions.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Selectively employ effective strategies for comprehension, including: questioning, scanning, analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, grouping, and mapping.

Ask students to define the word summarization. Share with students that when reading, it is important to summarize while reading, as well as after reading the text. Have students read the handout **Ergonomics in the Workplace**. When they are done, have them complete the following one sentence summary frames:

Ergonomics is the science of _____.

Carpal tunnel syndrome happens because _____.

The 20/20/20 rule begins with _____, continues with _____ and ends with _____.

To reduce stress in your wrists and arms, you should _____.

Computer vision syndrome happens because _____.

To prevent neck, shoulder, and back pain while working at the computer, you should _____.

Debrief the activity by having students share their summaries with the class. Reinforce that summary frames are one type of strategy that is useful to use when reading different types of texts. You may wish to have students create additional one sentence summary frames based on the article. Share with students that summary frames often ask for a description, a problem/solution, a sequence, a cause/effect, or a comparison/contrast.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Students need practice to gain touch typing skills. Share with students the following websites that provide lessons, games, and activities to improve their typing skills. Explain to students the importance of gaining accuracy and speed when typing/word processing. You may wish to have students document their progress by taking an online typing/word processing test each week.

Free Typing Games.Net – <http://www.freetypinggame.net/>

Typing Web – <http://www.typingweb.com/typingtutor/>

Nimble Fingers – http://www.nimblefingers.com/index_1.html

Good Typing (accessible in English, Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese) –
<http://www.goodtyping.com/>

Learn to Type – <http://www.learn2type.com/>

Keyboarding Freeware – <http://www.northcanton.sparcc.org/~technology/keyboarding/freeware.html>

Mavis Beacon – <http://mavisbeacon.com/>

Lesson 4.6: What Is That? — Elijah

Mathematics Strand A. 1.6 Calculate with mental math, pencil and paper, and a scientific calculator using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and integers.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students to define what it means to be computer literate. Record the students' answers. Ask students to define the difference between computer hardware and software. Sample answers should include that hardware refers to the parts of a computer, such as the monitor and keyboard; whereas, software refers to the applications or programs, such as Microsoft Windows or Word.

Have the students read the scenario and answer the questions. Discuss the need for students to understand the different parts of a computer and how each works. You may wish to have students identify the different parts of a computer, using the correct terminology.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Calculate with mental math, pencil and paper, and a scientific calculator using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and integers.

Ask students if they have purchased a computer, printer, or any software recently. Have students share what type of hardware or software that they may have purchased. Share with students that office equipment is a major expenditure for companies. Ask students to brainstorm what equipment they feel would be needed in a “perfect” office. Write the students' answers on the board or chart paper.

Students should include such items as:

- Desktop computer (minimum 8GB of RAM and 500 MB to 1TB hard drive)
- Keyboard
- Mouse or Tracker Ball
- Monitor
- Desktop printer/scanner/fax machine
- Office desk
- Ergonomic chair
- File cabinet

Ask students what they would estimate the total cost of their “perfect” office would be. Document their predictions.

Have students research the cost to outfit their ideal office. Students may wish to check the Internet or local office supply houses for costs. Have students itemize the cost of each item and provide a short description, such as: ergonomic keyboard or desktop computer with 8 GB of Ram and a 1TB hard drive.

Debrief the activity by asking students what math skills they used when creating their ideal office. Document the students' answers. Have the students share with the class the total cost of their ideal office. Discuss why the cost varied from student to student. Have the students compare the actual cost to their predictions.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Computer literacy is an integral part of any type of clerical position. To assist students in becoming more computer literate, provide them with an introduction to computers. The following are sample websites and tutorials that students can access to learn more about the basics of computer hardware.

Parts of a Computer. Microsoft – <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/>

Parts-of-a-computer

Computer Basics. Goodwill Community Foundation International – <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/computerbasics>

Introduction to Computers. Grassroots Design – <http://www.grassrootsdesign.com/intro/>

Introduction to Computers. Function X – <http://www.functionx.com/windows/Lesson01.htm>

Introduction to Computer Hardware – <http://www.introductiontocomputers.org/id2.html>

Introduction to the Computer Online Tutorial – <http://dimes.org/alternet/main/intro/intro.htm>

Jan's Illustrated Computer Basics – <http://www.jegsworks.com/LESSONS/lessonintro.htm>

Lesson 4.7: It's All in the Application — Elijah

Writing Strand A. 1.2 Recognize and correct errors in sentence structure in a document.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever used a computer software program. If so, what was the name of the program? How did they learn to use the program?

Share with students that computer software programs are constantly changing with new versions being released frequently. Discuss that as an office professional, it is important that they attend training or access online training to ensure that their skills are current. Introduce the scenario by having students think about workshops that they may have attended and what made the trainings memorable.

As a class, have students read the scenario. Debrief the scenario by having students share their responses to trainings they have attended in the past. Have the students answer the questions that accompany the scenario and share their responses with the class.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Recognize and correct errors in sentence structure in a document.

Ask students to define what a sentence is. Answers should include that a sentence has two characteristics:

- It must have a subject and a verb.
- It must have independence or completeness.

Share with students that if a sentence does not meet this criteria, it is called a sentence fragment.

Write sample sentence fragments on the board. Have students determine whether or not each meets the characteristics of a complete sentence. If it doesn't meet both characteristics, have students edit the fragment to create a complete sentence.

Sample sentences:

Leaving the office before any of the other staff had completed their work.

Which is why different computer applications in the office setting.

Because the computer is not working correctly.

Software programs of all kinds.

For doing freelance work for a competitor got Phil fired.

Share with students that many word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, have spelling and grammar checks. These are useful tools. However, they are not always accurate.

Have students use a word processing program to type the sentence fragments. Have them notice whether or not the grammar check identifies the sentences as fragments. Next, have students type their edited sentences. Have students check their edited sentences using the computer program's spelling and grammar check. Debrief the activity by checking the students' edited sentences for accuracy.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Provide students with online training opportunities for software applications. Share with students that there are many different step-by-step trainings on the Internet. As many offices use Microsoft products – Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint – you may wish to share the free Microsoft training website with students.

Show students how to select the correct version of the application that they wish to learn, e.g., Word 2003, Word 2007, Word 2010. Throughout the course, have students report on trainings that they have accessed and what types of new skills they have gained.

Microsoft Training Site – <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/support/training-FX101782702.aspx>

Lesson 4.8: Data, Data, Data — Myra

Reading Strand B. 1.1 Extract basic meaning and draw conclusions about literary and nonfiction texts by summarizing, paraphrasing, and restating information.

Mathematics Strand A. 1.9 Use a scientific calculator to compute answers to a variety of academic and real-life problems.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by showing students a calculator, such as the Casio fx-260 solar used on the GED® test, and an expanded computer keyboard with a number board. Have students compare and contrast the similarities and differences in both keyboards. Review with students how the Casio fx-260 solar can be used for calculations when taking the GED® test.

Ask students why a numeric keyboard would be included on a computer. What types of jobs may use a numeric keyboard? Sample answers would be jobs in the fields of data entry, accounting/bookkeeping, programming.

Share with students that today's lesson will provide them with information on another type of clerical position, data entry clerk.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Extract basic meaning and draw conclusions about literary and nonfiction texts by summarizing, paraphrasing, and restating information.

GED Skill — Use a scientific calculator to compute answers to a variety of academic and real-life problems.

Share with students that summarizing information means condensing what is read into what is most important about the text. Discuss that summarizing is more than merely retelling someone what you have read. In the workplace, we are often requested to summarize – what occurred in a meeting, a short overview of a new memo or policy, even information on a new product.

Discuss that the process of summarizing is often difficult because the reader attempts to put all of the details from a text into the summary.

Explain that in today's lesson, students will be using a strategy called “Don't Look Back” to summarize a reading about work-at-home scams. Prior to reading, introduce the article by having students define the word scam. As a class, discuss that there are many legitimate work-at-home jobs in the 21st century workplace; however, there are also many scams that can be both time-consuming, as well as expensive. The area of data entry is often the target for non-legitimate businesses. Share with students that advertisements that suggest large salaries for working at home for only a few hours a week are generally those that should be avoided.

Provide students with the handout **Recognizing a Scam**. Ask students to read the selection and take notes of important details as they read. You may wish to provide students with small sticky notes or they can write on their notes on the handout.

When students have finished, direct them to turn over the paper and write what they remember without looking back at the article.

After they have listed the details that they recall, ask students to create a paragraph using just the information they remember.

Debrief the activity by having students share and compare their paragraphs. The process of sharing assists students in reviewing the main content, as well as identifying additional important information that they may have missed in their summaries.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

The numeric pad or tenkey is used for data entry positions, as well as in situations where a person needs to type numbers into a document. Reinforce the similarities of key placement between the Casio fx-260 solar calculator, used on the GED® test, and the numeric keypad on the computer. Explain that because the computer keyboard's numeric pad is designed to fit a person's hand, certain fingers are used on each number to increase speed and accuracy, similar to touch typing with the letters on the keyboard. Share with students the following sample websites that provide them with practice on using the numeric pad/tenkey. You may wish to have students document their progress or have students compete against each other.

Sense Lang.org. Keyboard Tutorial – <http://www.sense-lang.org/typing/tutor/numeric keypad.php>

Type Online. Number Pad Lessons – http://www.typeonline.co.uk/number_pad_lesson1.html

10 Key Tutor – <http://www.10keytutor.com/>

Lesson 4.9: Fax It Immediately! — Sharon

Writing Strand B. 1.6 Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing, such as business documents.

Introducing the Lesson

Write the word “facsimile” on the board. Ask students to define the word. Sample answers should include: a facsimile is a copy of something. Ask if anyone has used a facsimile machine. If students do not respond, ask if anyone has ever used a fax machine. Explain that facsimile technology, often called a fax, is used to send images using the telephone. Discuss that fax machines are easy to use and are commonly found in offices. They provide an inexpensive and fast way to send and receive information. Ask students if they know another way to send documents or images. Students should respond that documents can also be scanned and sent via computers. Share with students that as an office professional, they should be able to use both a fax machine and a scanner.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Discuss that office equipment becomes outdated quickly with today’s technology, even fax machines. However, it is important to learn to efficiently operate the equipment that exists.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing, such as business documents.

Provide students with a copy of the **Sample Fax Cover** handout. Discuss with the class what information should be included in each section of the form. Reinforce the need to include the number of pages that will be faxed, including the cover sheet. For example, if a 14-page document is being faxed, the number 15 would be placed in the Pages section – a 14-page document + 1 cover page = 15 total pages.

Provide students with practice in completing a blank fax cover sheet. Provide each student with the **It’s Your Turn!** handout. Have the students complete the fax cover sheet and create a short note. They may create their own address and phone number. Debrief the activity by having student’s first share their completed document with a classmate and then sharing similarities and differences between the documents with the class. Check for completeness, accuracy, and correct use of Edited American English. Reinforce the need for all business documents, regardless of length, to look professional.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Model for students how to use facsimile machine to send and receive a fax. If possible, show students a stand-alone fax machine, as well as one that is part of an all-in-one printer. Identify the main parts of the machine: telephone keyboard, paper feeder, paper tray, menu items, document screen, and print cartridge. Share with students that fax machines offer many different features. Among the more common features are:

- Laser or full-color printing
- Automatic dialing and redialing if the receiving number is busy
- Automatic answering feature that receives messages if the machine is left on 24 hours a day
- Automatic document feed
- Report of date, time, and number of pages sent and received
- Small screens that display messages, such as data regarding sending and receiving errors

Have students practice the skills demonstrated. If a facsimile machine is not readily available, provide students with a photo of a fax machine and identify the different parts of the machine and the steps to send and receive a fax. Have students demonstrate their understanding by modeling the same steps for the class.

Lesson 4.10: It's All Online — Phillipe

Reading Strand A. 2.3 Adjust reading rate based on type of text and purpose for reading, including the skills of skimming and scanning.

Introducing the Lesson

Share with students that today's scenario is about the use of an important technology in today's workplace — the Internet and World Wide Web. Ask students the following questions:

- How do you feel the Internet is useful in today's workplace?
- How can the internet be misused in the workplace?

Have students discuss their answers as a group. Next, read the scenario to the class. Have students answer the questions. Discuss ways that the Internet can be used as a productive tool in the workplace and how businesses guard against misuse.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Adjust reading rate based on type of text and purpose for reading, including the skills of skimming and scanning.

Share with students that as an office professional, they will often need to locate specific information in a document. As they may not have the time to closely read everything, they need to develop skills in skimming and scanning to find what is needed.

Have students define what the words skimming and scanning mean to them. Reinforce that skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text; whereas, scanning is locating a specific piece of information or a fact.

Write the words skimming and scanning on the board. Under each word, have students identify situations where they would use each reading skill in the workplace.

Examples may include:

- skimming — finding the main idea of a text, quickly reviewing a document
- scanning — finding a phone number in the directory, locating the time of a meeting in a memo

Have students bring to class a workplace or community document: a letter, a policy, an advertisement, a memo, etc. Provide students with the handout **Skimming and Scanning**. Have the students select a short document and complete the form. Debrief the activity by having students read the complete text and share with the class the accuracy of their predictions from skimming and scanning the text.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Effective use of the internet and the World Wide Web is an important skill to possess in the 21st century workplace. Share with students that when accessing information on the World Wide Web, people rarely read web pages word by word; instead they skim and scan the page similar to the way most people read the newspaper or preread texts.

Show students a sample website. You may wish to use the <http://www.maepd.org/> website or one of interest to students. Using the website, indicate that web pages use what is termed scannable text, including:

- Highlighted keywords (hyperlinks or different typeface variations and colors)
- Meaningful sub-headings
- Bulleted lists
- One idea per paragraph

- An inverted pyramid style (starting with the conclusion, similar to what is used in a newspaper article)
- Less word count than traditional texts (generally half the word count)

To practice their skimming and scanning skills, have students locate three websites of interest to them. You may wish to identify a specific topic related to clerical skills, such as: computer software, word processing games, online training for office workers, etc.

Students may wish to use a browser, such as Google, Bing, Explorer, Safari, Opera. Have students complete the **Skimming and Scanning** handout for each site. Have students share their favorite site and their reasons for finding the site usable.

Lesson 5.1: Routine Writing in the Workplace: Emails — Terri

Reading Strand A.2.1 Read silently at an appropriate speed with understanding approximately 220–250 words per minute.

Mathematics Strand A.1.1 Represent and use numbers in a variety of equivalent forms in real-life and mathematical problem situations.

Mathematics Strand A.1.4 Select the appropriate operations to solve problems.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they use email with family and friends. Have students discuss the purpose of using email to communicate with family and friends. Sample answers should include: to share what's happening, share pictures, forward a joke or message, etc. Ask students if they have ever had to use email in their current or past job. Have students discuss how writing emails in the workplace is different from writing emails for personal communication.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Reinforce with students that all written communication in the workplace reflects the image of both the company as well as the individual writing the text.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Read silently at an appropriate speed with understanding approximately 220-250 words per minute.

GED Skill — Represent and use numbers in a variety of equivalent forms in real-life and mathematical problem situations.

GED Skill — Select the appropriate operations to solve problems.

Ask students if they know how fast they read. Share with students that reading rate is how quickly a person reads with understanding. Because there are often many things to read in the workplace, it is important that students realize that increasing their reading rate can help increase their comprehension of different types of text, as well as their efficiency in the office.

Explain to students that they will be determining their reading rate by reading a passage while being timed. Share with students that they should read for understanding as you will be asking questions on what they have read.

You may check a student's reading rate different ways. You may wish to give students one minute to read a handout. When the minute ends, have the students count how many words they read. This is their reading rate. Example: 179 words per minute (WPM).

You may also have students read an entire article and time themselves. Students should document the time they begin and the time they end.

To calculate a reading rate, students should divide the number of words in the article by the number of minutes used to read the article. Share with students the following formula to determine their reading rate.

- Convert the minute score to seconds
- Divide number of seconds into number of words. This figure is your WPS or your Words Per Second (carry to one decimal place)
- Multiply WPS by 60. This figure is your WPM or Words Per Minute (carry to one decimal place)

Example:

- 9 minutes 30 seconds to read 2178 words
- 60 seconds in minute x 9 minutes reading = 540 seconds

- $540 \text{ seconds} + 30 \text{ seconds} = 570 \text{ seconds}$ of reading time
- $2178 \text{ words} \div 570 \text{ seconds} = 3.8 \text{ WPS}$
- $3.8 \text{ WPS} \times 60 \text{ seconds} = 228 \text{ WPM}$

Have students read the **Tips for Writing Professional-Looking Emails** handout and calculate their reading rate. The handout has 359 words and is written at a 7.1 Flesch-Kincaid reading level. Reading materials to check a student's rate of reading should be written at approximately one-grade level below the student's assessed reading level. Discuss the different skills that they used to calculate their reading rate: converting minutes to seconds and seconds to minutes, adding, multiplying, dividing, counting, and determining decimal place.

Share with students that they should practice reading a variety of materials to improve their reading rate.

A sample website with practice in timing reading rate is:

- How Fast Do You Read? - <http://mindbluff.com/askread.htm>.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Make sure that students have an email address. If students do not have an address, show them how to set up a gmail account. Send students an email with instructions that require that they craft an email for a customer. Students should create their email following the tips discussed in the lesson. Have students send their completed email to you. Show students how an email thread works by editing their copies for errors in grammar, sentence structure, spelling, style, and content and returning the copy to them for correction and revision.

Lesson 5.2: Whoops, That’s Not What I Meant to Do: Emails — Shona

Writing Strand A.2.1 Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

Reading Strand A. 3.3 Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by having students identify how they communicate with their friends and family.

Sample answers may include: email, texting, instant messaging, social media.

Write the words “workplace” and “personal” on the board. Have students identify what types of communications are used in the workplace versus in personal life. Discuss the necessity for a code of ethics in the workplace when using communication tools.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Have students discuss the behavior of Shona and her use of communication tools in the workplace. You may wish to have students debate whether or not Shona should keep her job based on the information in the scenario. Debrief the scenario by reinforcing that employees should follow the code of ethics for the company with whom they are employed.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify and correct language usage errors in a document.

GED Skill — Infer the meaning of words from context clues.

Introduce the skill by discussing that the use of texting, instant messaging, and informal emails have produced the use of shortened forms of words, as well as the use of emoticons. Using words correctly is an important skill. One problem often seen in the workplace is the incorrect use of homonyms. Review with students that the words homonym and homophone are often used interchangeably.

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation, but have different meanings. For example, rose (which refers to a kind of flower) and rose (which is the past form of rise) are spelled and pronounced the same way.

Homophones are words that sound the same, but may have different meanings and spellings. For example: ate and eight; to, too, and two; or it’s and its.

Provide students with a copy of the **Homophones in the Workplace** handout. Have students draft a sentence that uses each of the homophones correctly. Debrief the activity by having students share their sentences with the class. Have students identify the meaning of words from context clues, as well as checking for accuracy in the use of homophones.

You may wish to have students add homophones with which they have difficulty to the list.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Share with students that many companies have a code of ethics regarding electronic communications. An example may be similar to the following:

- Do not engage in email bombing, spamming, or spoofing.
- Do not forward an unsolicited email that has been sent to you.
- Do not send personal messages to anyone within the company or outside the company.
- Do not use someone else’s email account to send messages.
- Do not forward chain letters via email.

Review the reasons for a company implementing a code of ethics, especially in today’s world of electronic media.

Divide students into teams of two. Have each team review the email that Shona sent her friend and rewrite it as an email to Shona's supervisor. When drafting the workplace emails, have students:

- Determine the audience and purpose of the email
- Be concise and to the point regarding the problem
- Avoid emoticons or negative language
- Use appropriate form and Edited American English

Debrief the activity by having each team share their emails with the class. Have students identify what information should and should not be included in an email. Discuss why or why not Dr. Edgar's handwriting should be included in the email.

Sample email:

| |
|---|
| From: Shona Williams, Clerical Assistant |
| Subject: Corrections on Orders to EyeGlass Wear |
| Date: 8/16/11 |
| To: Ms. Smith, Office Supervisor |

Lesson 5.3: Writing Business Letters – Pam

Writing Strand B. 1.6 Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

Reading Strand B. 3.6 Break a text into logical parts and think about how the parts fit together.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever learned something through their workplace about someone they knew. How did it make them feel? Discuss that many clerical positions, such as the one in the scenario, deal with confidential information. Reinforce that confidential information should never be shared outside of the workplace, and only when required within the workplace.

Read the scenario and discuss the questions.

Share with students that there are many different purposes for writing a letter. Generally, letters fall into six types:

- Requesting information
- Providing information
- Acknowledging information
- Conveying negative information
- Seeking action
- Persuading

Ask students what type of letter Pam sent to Denice. Discuss that some types of letters have a favorable or neutral response from the reader; whereas other types of letters may have a negative or unfavorable response even though the letter is written in a professional manner.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

GED Skill – Break a text into logical parts and think about how the parts fit together.

Have students bring in samples of letters that they receive in the mail. Divide the students into teams. Give each team a sample business letter, a pair of scissors, and the following template. Have each team cut out the correct part of their business letter that matches each of the following parts of a business letter.

As a class, discuss possible reasons why letters may not follow a formal business letter style. Reasons may include: different styles are used by different workplaces, the intended audience of the letter, the purpose of the letter, lack of proper editing of format and style by the business place.

Business Letter Format

| Parts of a Business Letter | Sample |
|---|--------|
| Letterhead | |
| Date | |
| Inside address | |
| Salutation | |
| Body | |
| Complimentary close | |
| Writer's signature | |
| Writer's name and title | |
| Reference initials (person word processing the letter, such as the administrative assistant – usually lower case letters of the person's first and last name. Example: Jonathon Delay would be jd.) | |
| Enclosure (if an enclosure is included) | |
| Copy notation (cc as necessary) | |

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Place the following phrases on pieces of paper.

- Requesting information
- Providing information
- Acknowledging information
- Conveying negative information
- Seeking action
- Persuading

Have students draw a piece of paper. Have students draft a business letter that meets the purpose on their piece of paper. Using the template **Writing an Effective Business Letter**, have students draft a business letter. If available, have students word process their letter. Debrief the activity by having students post their letters for the class to review.

Lesson 5.4: Memos – Oscar

Writing Strand A. 3.2 Identify errors and make changes in text.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by writing Five Ws on the board. Ask students to identify the Five Ws of writing: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

Have students read the scenario and answer the questions. Ask students to locate which “Ws” were missing from Oscar’s memo to the administrators. Students should respond that Oscar did not include when (which Friday and at what time) and where (the location and room) the meeting would be held. Have students discuss what they think might have happened because of the poorly written memo. Answers may include that the Superintendent’s office would have been contacted or that very few administrators would have attended the meeting.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Identify errors and make changes in text.

Have students reread Oscar’s memo. Ask them what other errors they notice. Students should state that numbers are used incorrectly. Review the following rules for writing numbers with students:

| Use words for: | Example |
|---|--|
| Numbers ten and under. | They ordered five flat-panel computer monitors. |
| Street names ten and under. | 4021 Eight Street |
| Units of time ten and under. | Her manager has been in the position for six months. |
| Numbers that begin a sentence. | Twenty-nine representatives attended the meeting. |
| Use figures for: | |
| References to numbers below and above ten when used together. | We ordered 6 computer keyboards, 18 computer screens, and 20 scanners. |
| References to numbers above ten. | We have 98 employees in the company. |
| References to exact time or when using a.m. or p.m. | It is 3:00 p.m. |

Provide students with sample texts, such as magazines and newspapers. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Have each group locate examples of how numbers/numerals are used in the text. Debrief the activity by having students determine whether correct Edited American English rules were followed.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students rewrite Oscar's memo to include the Five Ws. An example is as follows:

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Administrators

FROM: Sent on behalf of Dr. W. C. Camilo, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: 8/3/2011

RE: Monthly Meeting of District Administrators

To discuss the beginning of the new school year, the monthly meeting of all district administrators, principals, and assistant principals will be held on Wednesday, August 3, at 3:00 p.m. The meeting will be conducted at Jones High School in Room 218. It is important that everyone attend the meeting as new policies will be discussed, as well as the yearly operating budgets.

Attached is a copy of the agenda. If you have any additions, please email them attention to Oscar Paul at **oscar.paul@districtschools.edu**.

Attachment

Lesson 5.5: Getting Out the Mail – Kateel

Writing Strand B.1.6 Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever had mail returned to them as undeliverable? Have students share reasons for mail being undeliverable. Discuss that getting the mail out is a routine, but very necessary, task in an office.

Show students a sample business envelope that includes four lines. Read each line of the envelope and have students identify the information. For example:

- First Line – Name of the company or business
- Second Line – Name of the contact person and the person's title
- Third Line – Street address – number and name (check to see if there is a suite number as well)
- Fourth line – City and state (check to see if the country is named on the envelope)

Explain that often the country is not named if the mail stays within the country. If the mail is going outside the country, then the country that it is coming from or going to must be named.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Complete a final draft that exhibits an effective piece of writing.

Model for students how to correctly insert a letter into an envelope, as well as how to correctly address an envelope. Provide each student with a blank envelope and a sample letter. Have students address their envelopes and correctly fold and insert the letter. Share with students that the names of states are generally abbreviated on envelopes. As a resource, provide students with a copy of the **List of State Abbreviations** handout.

Students may wish to use the following chart to check for completeness. Debrief the activity by having students share their envelopes with the class. Check for accuracy.

| When mailing a business letter, I can . . . | Check |
|---|-------|
| Fold a letter into thirds to fit in an envelope. | |
| Match the inside address to an address label. | |
| Tell if an address is complete or incomplete. | |
| Copy an address in the correct location on an envelope. | |
| Find the address to use as the return address. | |
| Copy a return address in the correct location on an envelope. | |
| Prepare an envelope neatly and completely. | |
| Use block style on the envelope. | |
| Use capitals and abbreviations correctly in addresses on an envelope. | |

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Provide students with a variety of envelopes of various sizes and styles, including those with windows, letter, legal/business (4 1/8' x 9 1/8"), and brown kraft envelopes of varying sizes, as well as the contents that were in each envelope. Have students match the contents of the envelopes to the correct envelopes. Debrief the activity by checking for accuracy in matching, as well as in refolding and inserting the content correctly.

Junk mail can be used for this activity as it comes in a variety of sizes and types of envelopes.

Lesson 6.1: It's All About Customer Service — Lana

Writing Strand B.1.3 Write an essay of three to five paragraphs in length using a three-part structure: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by having students think about a recent customer service experience – either positive or negative. Have students share their experiences. On the board or chart paper, draw two columns. Label one column “positive customer service.” Label the other column “negative customer service.” Have students brainstorm characteristics of each type of service. Share with students that providing good customer service is a skill necessary in all workplaces.

Select two students to assist you in role playing the scenario. Have the students take the parts of the woman and Maria and read what each says, while you read the narrative.

Debrief the activity by discussing the questions as a class. Discuss that as an office professional, they will have many different customers – those outside the company, as well as their co-workers and supervisor.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Write an essay of three to five paragraphs in length using a three-part structure: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Have students assess their personal customer service skills by completing the **Checking Out My Customer Service Skills** handout.

When they are done, have each student identify one skill that he/she did not check or feels that he/she needs to improve. Have each student write down different things that can be done to improve his/her usage of the skill. Have students discuss their ideas with the class.

Explain to students that their writing task is to use their ideas to develop an essay on customer service. Review that effective essays have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Students may wish to research customer service on the Internet, as well as use personal and professional experiences in their writing.

Share with students the steps to writing an effective essay by reviewing: prewriting and organizing, drafting, revising and editing, and rewriting/sharing. You may wish to have students share their essays throughout the writing process.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Divide the class into pairs. Have each pair practice role playing the scenario using effective customer services. Have the students role play the situation for the class. Debrief by having students identify the positive characteristics of customer service used.

Lesson 6.2: Customer Service Is Everyone’s Job – Vanna and Maria

Reading Strand A.3.2 Recognize word relationships, including idioms, analogies, metaphors, hyperbole, and similes.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by sharing with students that anyone who has direct interaction with customers in any field needs to have excellent customer service skills. Often employees in entry-level positions, such as receptionists, are the first and often the only point of contact between customers and business.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Reinforce with students that customer service is everyone’s job.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Recognize word relationships, including idioms, analogies, metaphors, hyperbole, and similes.

Explain that it is important to read ideas, especially when figurative language is used with the text. Ask students to define figurative language or a figure of speech. Discuss that writers often use figurative language to describe something by comparing it with another thing, often for poetic or dramatic effect. The most commonly used types of figurative language include idioms, analogies, metaphors, hyperbole, and similes. Provide students with the **Figurative Language Chart** handout. Review the definitions and examples.

Discuss that in daily life, students may hear examples of figurative language used, such as “I’m dead tired” or “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.”

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Provide each group with a copy of the **Words of Wisdom on Customer Service** handout. Have each group identify types of figurative language that they find in the quotes. Debrief the activity by discussing the quotes and their meaning.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Have each group brainstorm a list of what they consider the most important rules to remember when dealing with the public/customers. Explain to students that their task is to come to a consensus on the “Ten Rules of Customer Service.” When students have come to consensus, have them create a poster that highlights their ten rules of customer service. You may wish to provide students with poster board, colored markers, and other available art supplies. Have the students display their posters throughout the classroom.

Lesson 6.3: The Difficult Customer – Ari

Reading Strand B.2.2 Transfer concepts and principles from a passage to a new context.

Reading Strand B.2.3 Take the concept or knowledge gained from one text and use it to answer questions from another.

Introducing the Lesson

Ask students to think about a difficult person with whom they have worked or dealt with in their daily lives. Have students complete the following sentence: “I would be more effective working/dealing with my difficult person if . . .” Have students share their statements with the class. Students should not use names when completing their sentence.

Ask students if what they wrote was dependent on the other person changing. Most students will indicate that yes, the other person needed to change something. Share with students that generally people are not willing to change to make someone else’s life easier at work. Instead, it is their job, as an office professional, to deal with the situation.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Transfer concepts and principles from a passage to a new context.

GED Skill – Take the concept or knowledge gained from one text and use it to answer questions from another.

Share with students that difficult people can often make the work day less enjoyable. However with the right strategies, they can learn to deal with them effectively.

Provide students with a copy of the **Steps for Dealing with Difficult Customers** handout. Discuss each of the steps. Have students brainstorm additional phrases that can be used with difficult customers for each of the steps. Write their ideas on the board or chart paper. Discuss that an important skill in reading materials is the ability to transfer the information learned to different contexts or situations.

Divide the class into pairs. Provide the students with a real-world scenario and have them practice applying each of the steps for dealing with a difficult customer. The following are two sample scenarios that may be used:

| |
|--|
| Scenario 1 |
| You are a receptionist in a pediatrician’s office. During cold and flu season, it gets extremely busy. Most parents are fairly patient. However, one woman thinks that her children must be seen right away, regardless of how many others are waiting. The woman comes up to your desk and demands that her children be seen immediately. What do you do? |
| Scenario 2 |
| You are the office manager for a hair salon. A customer enters your office without knocking and comes straight to your desk. The customer is always complaining about something in the salon. Today, however, she is very angry because her stylist has increased the price of her services as she has recently been promoted to head stylist. The customer demands that she receive a discounted price from the salon as she has been a long-time customer. What do you do? |

| |
|---|
| Scenario 3 |
| You're working at the front desk of a car dealership. A customer gives you a credit card to pay for the repairs on his automobile. The credit card gets declined, even after you try to swipe it several times. "I'm sorry," you say. "Your card doesn't seem to be working." The customer starts screaming at you. Everyone in the car dealership turns and stares at you. What do you do? |
| Scenario 4 |
| You work in the accounting office of a large warehouse. A customer demands to see the owner. He states that the company is trying to rob him. The bill is double what it should be – the company is just a bunch of crooks. What do you do? |

Have each pair of students role play one of the situation for the class. As a class, have students discuss how the outcome could have been different if the steps had not been followed.

Debrief the activity by having the students write a summary sentence on what they feel is the most important skill necessary for dealing with difficult customers.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Ask students whether they have experienced a time when they wanted to “tell someone off?” Have students share different ways in which they dealt with the situation. Discuss that one technique that can assist them when they are upset is the use of “I” messages, instead of “you” messages. Being able to professionally express one’s feelings is a more positive approach than criticizing the other person.

Example:

| You Statement | I Statement |
|-------------------------------|--|
| You are talking way too fast. | I'm having some difficulty following what you are saying; could we please go back to the first part of your story? |

Share with students that the use of “I” messages is one effective way to deal with a problem situation or to request clarification. Explain that “I” messages have two parts: the feeling part and the desired change or action. Identify both parts in the above sample.

Have students practice crafting “I” messages. The following are sample ideas to use:

- You are always interrupting me.
- You should have checked that you had all of the files before you left the office.
- You don't make sense.
- You are late for your appointment.

Lesson 6.4: Did You Hear What I Said? — Janelle and Mrs. Figueroa

Writing Strand B.1.5 Review a written essay for organization, content, and Edited American English (EAE) and revise as needed.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by putting students into lines or rows. Whisper a sentence into the first student's ear (make sure you write it down on paper). That student then whispers what they heard to the next student and so on. The final student in line runs to the board and writes the sentence on the board. The closest to the original sentence wins. Ask students why they did not get the sentence totally correct? What happened that interfered with the listening process?

Ask students if they have ever had a conversation with someone only to feel that they were not really being heard. Introduce the lesson by having students discuss what makes a good listener. Sample answers may include: looks at the person who is speaking, does not interrupt, accepts what is being said, smiles, encourages with gestures, listens patiently and with interest, does not ridicule. Share with students that good listening skills are often termed active listening. Active listening is a skill important in the workplace. Share with students that when a person listens actively, the person uses various strategies to help understand what someone is saying and why it is being said, as well as how to interpret a person's tone and body language.

Read the scenario aloud to the class. Have the students listen while you read, but do not provide them with the written text. Next, read aloud the questions. Have students write down the answers to each question. Debrief the activity by discussing whether it was easier or more difficult to answer the question without seeing the written text. Why or why not?

Discuss that although we are surrounded by sound, we often aren't good listeners. Dependent on the study being quoted, we remember 25-50% of what we hear. Have students think about a ten-minute conversation that they recently had with a co-worker, a friend, or a family member. Reiterate that according to the research, only 2 ½ to 5 minutes of the ten-minute conversation was heard.

Share with students that they will practice their active listening skills during this lesson, as well as identifying the importance of active listening skills in the workplace.

Provide students with the text and have them review the scenario and discuss the questions.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Review a written essay for organization, content, and Edited American English (EAE) and revise as needed.

Provide each student with the **Listening Skills Questionnaire** and **How Do Good Listeners View the World?** handouts. Have the students complete the questionnaire and then read the article. When they have completed both tasks, provide them with a writing assignment on active listening skills. You may wish to use one of the following prompts:

Effective listening is one of the essential qualities of a successful office professional. Write an essay that identifies the qualities that you possess as a good listener and how each is important in communicating in the workplace.

Have you ever had a misunderstanding because you didn't listen carefully or because someone else didn't listen carefully to you? Write an essay that identifies what happened because of miscommunication and what steps you took to remedy the situation.

Write an essay that describes a situation in your experience where communication failed because the listening was faulty. Identify the barrier to listening in the situation and how you would overcome this

barrier in the future.

How would you rate your own listening skills on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “excellent” and 5 being “poor?” Write an essay that describes your strong and weak areas and the steps you could take to overcome your weaknesses.

Have students plan, organize, and draft their essay. When they are done, divide the class into small groups. Have each group review the essays and provide ideas for revising and editing each essay. Have students rewrite their essays with the shared revisions and edits. Students may wish to word process their final draft. Check for accuracy in Edited American English, as well as word choice and development and detail.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Share with students that listening is one of the most important skills that they can have. One strategy that can assist in ensuring understanding is the use of the 5Ws and H. Ask students what each W and the H represent: Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How. Share with students that asking themselves the 5W and H questions will assist them in listening actively when someone is speaking.

Pair students. Have each student share with his/her partner something about his/her workplace, family, or a hobby or interest. Tell the students to think of the 5Ws and H as the information is being shared. Debrief by having each student present to the class what he/she learned.

Lesson 6.5: It's Only a Voice or Is It? — Janelle

Reading Strand B.3.5 Identify elements of style and structure and identify the author's use of different techniques to set the tone of the text.

Introducing the Lesson

Ask students if they have ever made a call and the person who answered the phone sounded as if he or she wished you had not called. Have students share situations with the class. Explain that a tired or unhappy voice can easily be heard on the phone and makes a bad impression on the caller. Tell students that before they answer the phone, they should always remember to first smile. The difference between a positive and negative experience with a phone call is you.

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group practice reading the scenario using different tones of voice.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Identify elements of style and structure and identify the author's use of different techniques to set the tone of the text.

Write the following on the board: "It's not what you say, but how you say it." Ask students what the phrase means to them. Have students share their ideas with the class.

Discuss that when reading text it is important to understand a writer's use of tone. Tone in writing refers to the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject of the message. A writer's tone may be: humorous, joyful, exciting, depressing, funny, miserable, serious, light-hearted, threatening, optimistic, pessimistic, or ironic. It's important to remember that the tone of a written message affects the reader just as one's tone of voice affects the listener. Often tone is implied through the words we use when we write or speak.

Provide students with the handout **It's All in How You Say It**. Have students create alternate phrases that exhibit a positive customer service tone. Debrief the activity by having students share their examples with the class.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students practice answering the phone. Divide the class into teams of two students. Tell students that one of them will be the customer and the other the office professional. Have students role play a situation similar to the scenario. Have students assess their telephone etiquette by answering the questions in the **Self Check for Telephone Customer Service** handout. Debrief by having students role play for the class.

Lesson 7.1: Filing Strategies — Eleana

Reading Strand B.4.5 Make connections among parts of text.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever looked for something and couldn't find it only to find it later that day? Ask students how they felt. What did they do differently to make sure that things they needed were always easy to find?

Share with students that a business may deal with hundreds or thousands of files each year. Organization eliminates that harried, stressed feeling you get while searching for something important. That is why an organized filing system assists businesses in operating more smoothly and efficiently.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Discuss with students that companies may have individualized filing systems. However, most companies follow rules similar to those set forth by the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, now known as the Association for Information Management Professionals.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Make connections among parts of text.

Share with students that when reading a text that outlines various rules or steps, it is important to see how everything works together. Provide students with a copy of the **A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started** handout. Have students read the first rule for alphabetizing. Ask students what would happen to their filing system if that is the only rule they use. Answers may include that files may be misfiled, causing difficulty in locating what is needed. Discuss the need for students to first scan a document prior to a closer reading. Provide students with 30 seconds to scan the handout and ask them what types of different information they will learn from reading the entire handout. Reinforce that these different parts of the text are all important in applying the skills necessary for an effective filing system.

Review each of the rules with the class prior to providing them with a real-world alphabetizing activity. Using the names on the **Time-Out for Filing** handout, have students alphabetize the list of names by units following the rules on the **A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started** handout. To add more authenticity, you may wish to have students create file folders for each name using the appropriate rules. Check for accuracy.

Debrief the activity by reiterating the need to use multiple segments of a text when reading workplace materials.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students access the Association for Information Management Professionals (ARMA® International) on the Internet at: <http://www.arma.org/>.

Have students review the site and identify one thing about filing that they learned. Have students write down their new information and create an example of the rules. Debrief the activity by having students share their new information with the class.

Lesson 7.2: How About Electronic Files? — Eleana and Janice

Mathematics Strand C.3.2 Make inferences and convincing arguments that are based on data analysis.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever looked for a document on their computer and couldn't find it. Have students share their experiences. Discuss that as an office professional, it is important that they use a consistent process to name the different files or documents that are located on their computer.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Discuss with students that companies may have specific policies on naming electronic files and folders. Make sure that students understand the difference between electronic files and folders. Files are often called documents and may include such things as: word documents (letters, memos), spreadsheets, databases, and presentations (PowerPoint). Folders and subfolders are similar to paper folders and organize the documents, similar to a directory. Reinforce that a good place to create folders and files is in the My Documents folder on the computer's local hard drive.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Make inferences and convincing arguments that are based on data analysis.

Introduce the skill by sharing with students that in the workplace, data is important when making decisions. Many businesses conduct surveys in order to make informed decisions. Share with students that they will be surveying a specific business or organization to find out about their electronic filing system.

Divide the class into teams. Tell each team that their task is to visit a school library, office, or local business or organization, such as a hospital or insurance company. Have them request time to interview someone who can explain the following:

- How is information stored on their electronic media system?
- What responsibilities are assigned to a records coordinator or manager?
- What filing system is used for records?
- How are files and folders named?

Have each team prepare a summary of their findings in a memo format. Debrief by having the students read their memo to the class and respond to questions from the class regarding the electronic filing system. Have each team support their findings with facts.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students brainstorm ideas on how they organize their electronic files. Write their ideas on the board or chart paper. Show students a sample desktop and model for them how to name files and folders.

Reinforce the concept that companies may have specific policies on naming files and folders, as well as how to save the information. Sometimes these naming systems may be very different than what students normally use. The important thing is to understand and apply company policy at all times.

Lesson 7.3: Where's the Cash? – Frederic

Reading Strand B.4.5 Make connections among parts of text.

Introducing the Lesson

Share with students that most organizations maintain computerized accounting records in such areas as payroll, inventory, taxes, and financial profit/loss. Although many of the different accounting tasks in a business may be performed by a bookkeeper or accountant, entry-level clerical positions may be responsible for keeping certain types of financial records. Discuss that clerical staff may be asked to keep a record of office supplies or to assist with payroll or to be responsible for the petty cash fund. Ask students to define what a petty cash fund is.

Explain that many offices find that if the expenditure is small, it is easier to make the payment immediately in cash. Have students brainstorm possible expenditures that an office may pay out of a petty cash fund. Examples may include: postage due on a package, an emergency purchase of office supplies, or messenger services. Discuss that the amount in a petty cash fund differs from business to business. However, it is important to account for all expenditures, regardless of how small.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill – Make connections among parts of text.

Have students brainstorm math skills that they need as an office professional. Sample answers may include computational skills (adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing), decimals, problem solving, reading charts, tables, and graphs, using spreadsheets and formulas.

Discuss that keeping accurate records is important to the profitability of a company. Provide students with a copy of the Petty Cash handout. Have students use the information in the scenario to complete the invoice. Provide students with the following additional information for the missing receipt: Receipt 242 on 9/23/2011 for delivery services in the amount of \$3.25.

Going the Next Step – A Challenge Activity

Divide the class into two teams. Provide each team with two sheets of chart paper and markers. Explain to the teams that their task is to determine the pros and the cons of an office having a petty cash fund. On one sheet, they should list the pros of having a petty cash fund available. On the other sheet, they should list the cons of using a petty cash fund. Debrief the activity by having each team share their ideas. Reinforce the need for accurate accounting any time funds are dealt with in a business setting.

Lesson 7.4: Payroll — Lucas

Mathematics Strand A.1.4 Apply the appropriate operations to solve problems.

Mathematics Strand C.3.5 Apply measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode).

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by showing students a sample payroll form. You may wish to download a sample from the Internet. Have students discuss how businesses calculate a person's salary and the different types of deductions. Share with students that as an office professional, they may be responsible for a company's payroll. Although many companies use a computerized payroll system, data input is often a task that must be completed by the office staff.

Have students read the scenario and discuss the questions as a class. Discuss the importance of accuracy when dealing with payroll.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Apply the appropriate operations to solve problems.

GED Skill — Apply measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode).

Introduce the lesson by writing the following words on the board or chart paper: mean, median, mode. Have students identify each term and determine how each is calculated. As a review, you may wish to use the following chart:

| Measure | Calculation | Example: 2, 2, 3, 5, 5, 7, 8 |
|---------|--|--|
| Mean | To find the mean, add up all the data and divide this total by the number of values in the data | Add the numbers $2 + 2 + 3 + 5 + 5 + 7 + 8 = 32$ There are 7 values so you divide the total by 7: $32 \div 7 = 4.57$ The mean is 4.57 (2 decimal points). |
| Median | To find the median, put the values in order, then find the middle value. If there are two values in the middle, then you find the mean of these two values. | Put the numbers in order: 2, 2, 3, (5), 5, 7, 8 The middle value, 5, is marked in brackets. The median is 5. |
| Mode | The mode is the value which appears the most often in the data. It is possible to have more than one mode if there is more than one value which appears most often. If no number appears most often, there is no mode. | 2, 2, 3, 5, 5, 7, 8 The values which appear most often are 2 and 5. They both appear more times than any of the other data values. The modes are 2 and 5. |

Using the information in the scenario, have students determine the mean, median, and mode of the employee's hourly wages, as well as the gross weekly salary for each individual listed. You may wish to model how to determine the gross wage using time and a half for any overtime hours. Make sure that students understand the difference between gross and net.

Example:

J. D. Beall worked 40 hours at \$15.35 an hour and 8 hours of overtime at \$23.03 an hour (round up). $40 \times \$15.35 + 8 \times \$23.03 = \$798.24$

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students research the different types of payroll deductions. Have students discuss with the class their findings. To assist in discussion, you may wish to use the **Payroll Deductions** handout.

Lesson 7.5: The Exciting World of Work — Sherene

Writing Strand A. 3.1 Proofread workplace, community, and personal documents, as well as “how-to” and information texts in order to identify and correct errors.

Reading Strand B. 4.1 Draw conclusions on information from two or more different sources and combine that information to create a new idea or understanding.

Introducing the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by having students brainstorm their next steps in obtaining the “perfect” clerical position. Discuss the need for job searching skills, as well as developing a professional looking letter of application and resume. Reinforce the need for students to continue their training as the world of work rapidly changes along with the skills needed to be continuously successful.

Read the scenario and as a class discuss the questions. Reflect on the information that has been learned throughout the course and the next steps for students to take.

Presentation of Targeted GED Skills

GED Skill — Proofread workplace, community, and personal documents, as well as “how-to” and information texts in order to identify and correct errors.

GED Skill — Draw conclusions on information from two or more different sources and combine that information to create a new idea or understanding.

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Share with students that it is important to understand what employers are looking for when seeking clerical employees. By understanding the common skills that employers request, students can better assess what skills they will need to develop and obtain in order to find employment.

Have students perform a search for clerical job openings in their area. To get them started, share the following websites:

- <http://www.monster.com/>
- www.hotjobs.com
- ClericalJobsHelp.com
- <http://www.clericaljobshelp.com/michigan-clerical-jobs.php>

Have students locate a minimum of four different ads and compare them to each other. Have students write a short comparison of the ads by answering the following questions:

- Which requested basic skills, knowledge, and experience areas are similar in all of the job ads?
- Which areas are different?
- Compare the skills, knowledge, and experience requested in the job ads to what you have learned from viewing the videos. Which basic skills listed in the job ads are also described or mentioned in the videos?
- From your research, which skills mentioned in the videos seem to be the most important ones mentioned in the job ads?

Going the Next Step — A Challenge Activity

Have students access the sample resumes that they crafted as part of Lesson 3. Have the students review the four different sections of the resume: Experience, Accomplishments, Skills, and Education/Training.

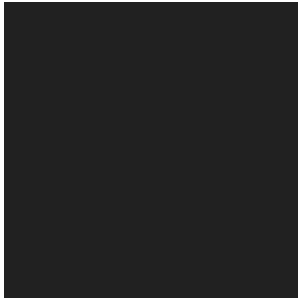
Have students use this sample to draft a personal resume. As they write their resumes, have them think

about the following:

- What types of experience/previous jobs have they had that will make them “stand out” from other candidates?
- What kinds of accomplishments in their lives will they include on their resume (e.g., created a filing system for the entire company; nominated for Employee of the Month, etc.)?
- What skills do they have in the areas of communication, organizational skills, technology (word processing, spreadsheets, office machines, etc.), customer service?
- What types of classes or training programs have they taken that will support their being hired for a clerical position?

For additional information on writing a resume, have students access Career OneStop at: <http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/Introduction.aspx>

Assist students in revising and editing their resumes prior to drafting a final copy, printing the resume on high-quality paper, and saving each resume electronically. Share with students that developing a resume is an important step in the job searching process. Students may wish to share and review each other’s resumes.



Answer Keys for Handouts

Steps for Adapting to Change in the Workplace

Change in the workplace can be something that is very difficult with which to deal. However, if you are able to anticipate change, adapt quickly and embrace it, then changes in the workplace can actually be positive and can propel you toward success.

The first way to benefit from changes in the workplace is to anticipate these changes. Although most people do not like and may even fear change, anticipating these variations is just the first step in being able to deal with change and using it to your benefit.

The second way that you can use change to your benefit is to adapt quickly when you see change coming. If you are able to adapt quickly, you can put yourself in a better position than any of your coworkers, who like most people, fear change and do not adapt quickly. Unsuccessful people hold on to the past and are often left behind when change occurs.

Lastly, it is important to embrace change. If you see change as a positive experience and actually embrace it, you can turn a negative into a positive. As the old saying goes, “The only thing that’s constant in life is change.”

Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go?

Tips for Time Management

Effective time management is an essential skill in today's workplace. People are always looking for ways to make more time in their day. One of the most important tips in practicing good time management is learning how to organize and prioritize. A good way to get started in organizing your workday is to make a list. Lists are great workplace tools. Listing tasks on paper can help you see what needs to be done. Once you have listed the tasks that you need to complete, the next step is to prioritize. Add corresponding deadlines so that you can identify what must be completed immediately versus the tasks that can wait until tomorrow or next week. People often think that they can remember what they need to do. However, forgetting a certain task is easy without a task list to remind you of what needs to be accomplished.

Another time management tip is to do the things you least want to do early in the day. People often procrastinate about completing a task that they don't like to do. If you get it done immediately, you can then complete tasks that you prefer doing.

Finally, start your day out right. As soon as you get to work, take twenty minutes to plan your day. Make sure to define your top priority and update your "to-do" list. Spending a few minutes at the beginning of your workday can assist you in focusing on the most important things that need to be done.

Lesson 6.5: It's Only a Voice or Is It?

It's All in How You Say It

How you handle yourself on the phone reflects not only on you, but also the business for which you work. Read each of the following sample phrases and create an alternative phrase that provides a friendlier, more customer-service oriented tone.

| Instead of . . . | Say . . . |
|---|--|
| Hold on. | Will you please hold while I . . . |
| Who is this? | May I have your name please? May I ask who's calling? |
| We can't do that. | I believe that we can . . . will that work for you? |
| I can take a message. | I'll be happy to take a message and make sure that it gets to (the correct person) right away. |
| Someone else is responsible for that. | I'm sorry for the inconvenience, what can I do to help you? |
| Like I told you before. | I'm really sorry that you're having this problem. Let's find a way to resolve this issue. |
| No one in this office would have told you that. | If I understand you correctly, you were promised . . . |
| If you would just listen for a moment. | I understand that you are upset. I apologize for the trouble you're having with this. |
| I don't know. | That's a good question; let me find out for you. |
| Just a second. | It will be five minutes before . . . will be able to take your call. |

Lesson 7.1: A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started

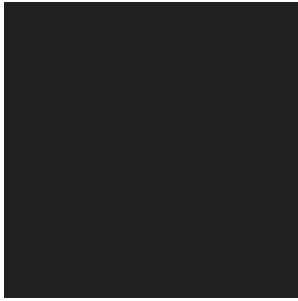
Time-Out for Filing

| Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | Unit 4 |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| ABC | Communications | | |
| Award | Harold | | |
| Awres | H. | | |
| Awres | Howard | | |
| Awres | Howard | Jason | |
| Dell | MaryKaye | | |
| Gonzalez | Maria | S | |
| Northwest | Michigan | Waste | Management |
| ODell | Jason | S | |
| ODell | Jason | Samuel | |
| Rochester | Animal | Shelter | |
| Rochester | Police | Department | |
| RodriguezGonzalez | Maria | | |

Lesson 7.3: Where's the Cash?

Petty Cash Fund

| PETTY CASH ENVELOPE | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------------|----------|----------|
| From: September 1, 2011 | | | | | | | | | |
| To: October 1, 2011 | | | | | | | | | |
| Petty Cash Fund | | | | | Distribution of Payments | | | | |
| Received | Paid Out | Date | Receipt No. | Explanation | Supplies | Postage | Miscellaneous | Delivery | Total |
| Accounting Office | | 9/1/11 | | Petty Cash Fund \$100 | | | | | \$100.00 |
| | \$12.35 | 9/6/11 | 237 | Stamps | | X | | | \$87.65 |
| Stephanie Dubay | \$4.78 | 9/7/11 | 238 | Cleaning supplies | X | | | | \$82.87 |
| | \$3.84 | 9/9/11 | 239 | Registered package | | X | | | \$79.03 |
| | \$2.75 | 9/14/11 | 240 | Delivery services | | | X | | \$76.28 |
| | \$9.00 | 9/16/11 | 241 | Cab fare / Deluca | | | X | | \$67.28 |
| | \$16.50 | 9/23/11 | 242 | Delivery services | | | X | | \$60.78 |
| | \$15.75 | 9/23/11 | 243 | Postage due | | X | | | \$35.03 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
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Handouts

Lesson 1.1: What Are Clerical Skills?

Clerical skills are those skills that help to keep an office organized and working well. In an effective organization, information can be accessed instantly, as everything has been kept in its right place at the right time. Although keeping an office organized is an important part of clerical skills, there are other skills involved that a person applying for a clerical job must also have.

The following are some of the basic skills that you will need in order to obtain an entry-level clerical position.

Data Entry – Some clerical positions require data entry skills. To complete data entry activities, you need to be computer literate. Your typing speed is important because data entry needs to be done throughout the day.

Basic Computer Knowledge – Basic computer knowledge means that you know how to use the most commonly used office programs, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. These programs are regularly used in offices to maintain records and for communication, organization, scheduling and presentations.

Web Surfing – Depending on the job, you may be required to use the Internet for a wide variety of tasks. Web surfing is the ability to use a browser to locate information.

Filing – Filing skills are required for anyone applying for a clerical position. Though it sounds easy, it really isn't. Proper filing includes organizing and arranging important documents. Generally, filing is done alphabetically for ease in locating information.

Communication Skills – Communication involves both written and spoken language. You may be responsible for answering the telephone or welcoming individuals at the reception desk. Customer service skills are an absolute necessity for success.

Most clerical positions require that you are able to word process, edit, proofread, and finalize correspondence, such as letters, reports, invoices, forms, and other documents. You may also be asked to send and receive messages and documents using fax machines or electronic mail.

Scheduling Skills – Clerical jobs often require that you schedule meetings, important events, travel, or presentations. Effective organizational skills and time management are necessary for completing these tasks.

Bookkeeping/Accounting Skills – Some offices may have clerical staff perform basic bookkeeping or accounting tasks, such as preparing invoices and bank deposit or verifying expenditure forms. You may be asked to verify if money is received by the accounts receivable department and paid on time by the accounts payable department.

Other Office Skills – Depending on the clerical position, you may be asked to photocopy and collate documents for distribution, mailing, and filing. You may also have to process incoming and outgoing mail or order office supplies and equipment. Knowing how to use office equipment is one skill necessary for all clerical jobs.

It's hard work to build effective clerical skills, but well worth the effort. Clerical jobs can be pathways to career success for those with the right motivation and the right skills.

Lesson 1.2: How Do You Use Graphics?

May 2010 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Michigan

| Occupation Code | Occupation Title | Median Hourly | Mean Hourly | Mean Annual |
|-----------------|---|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| 43-0000 | Office and Administrative Support Occupations | \$14.63 | \$15.72 | \$32,700 |
| 43-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers | \$22.22 | \$23.76 | \$49,420 |
| 43-2011 | Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service | \$12.78 | \$12.99 | \$27,020 |
| 43-2021 | Telephone Operators | \$14.42 | \$15.32 | \$31,860 |
| 43-2099 | Communications Equipment Operators, All Other | \$18.03 | \$19.37 | \$40,290 |
| 43-3011 | Bill and Account Collectors | \$16.46 | \$17.04 | \$35,430 |
| 43-3021 | Billing and Posting Clerks | \$15.44 | \$15.74 | \$32,750 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | \$16.51 | \$16.83 | \$35,000 |
| 43-3041 | Gaming Cage Workers | \$13.59 | \$14.14 | \$29,420 |
| 43-3051 | Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks | \$17.30 | \$17.41 | \$36,210 |
| 43-3061 | Procurement Clerks | \$17.54 | \$18.10 | \$37,650 |
| 43-3071 | Tellers | \$11.37 | \$11.88 | \$24,710 |
| 43-4011 | Brokerage Clerks | \$18.56 | \$18.77 | \$39,030 |
| 43-4021 | Correspondence Clerks | \$17.89 | \$18.08 | \$37,610 |
| 43-4031 | Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | \$18.03 | \$17.90 | \$37,240 |
| 43-4041 | Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks | \$14.68 | \$15.83 | \$32,930 |
| 43-4051 | Customer Service Representatives | \$14.95 | \$16.10 | \$33,480 |
| 43-4061 | Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | \$21.28 | \$20.64 | \$42,930 |
| 43-4071 | File Clerks | \$10.74 | \$11.55 | \$24,030 |
| 43-4081 | Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks | \$9.17 | \$9.69 | \$20,160 |
| 43-4111 | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | \$13.83 | \$14.25 | \$29,640 |
| 43-4121 | Library Assistants, Clerical | \$9.73 | \$10.77 | \$22,390 |
| 43-4131 | Loan Interviewers and Clerks | \$15.12 | \$15.37 | \$31,960 |
| 43-4141 | New Accounts Clerks | \$14.35 | \$14.72 | \$30,630 |
| 43-4151 | Order Clerks | \$14.46 | \$15.27 | \$31,770 |
| 43-4161 | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | \$18.09 | \$18.57 | \$38,620 |
| 43-4171 | Receptionists and Information Clerks | \$12.23 | \$12.58 | \$26,160 |
| 43-4181 | Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks | \$19.30 | \$17.97 | \$37,380 |
| 43-4199 | Information and Record Clerks, All Other | \$16.37 | \$16.42 | \$34,140 |
| 43-5011 | Cargo and Freight Agents | \$16.62 | \$17.24 | \$35,850 |
| 43-5021 | Couriers and Messengers | \$12.09 | \$12.13 | \$25,240 |
| 43-5031 | Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers | \$19.21 | \$18.99 | \$39,490 |
| 43-5032 | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | \$15.62 | \$16.69 | \$34,710 |
| 43-5041 | Meter Readers, Utilities | \$17.99 | \$17.91 | \$37,260 |
| 43-5051 | Postal Service Clerks | \$25.53 | \$25.53 | \$53,100 |
| 43-5052 | Postal Service Mail Carriers | \$25.97 | \$24.06 | \$50,040 |
| 43-5053 | Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators | \$25.52 | \$23.90 | \$49,720 |
| 43-5061 | Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks | \$19.66 | \$20.55 | \$42,750 |
| 43-5071 | Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks | \$14.60 | \$15.17 | \$31,550 |
| 43-5081 | Stock Clerks and Order Fillers | \$10.28 | \$11.54 | \$24,000 |
| 43-5111 | Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping | \$13.13 | \$13.72 | \$28,540 |
| 43-6011 | Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants | \$20.60 | \$21.04 | \$43,770 |
| 43-6012 | Legal Secretaries | \$20.42 | \$20.50 | \$42,640 |
| 43-6013 | Medical Secretaries | \$14.48 | \$14.63 | \$30,440 |
| 43-6014 | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | \$15.31 | \$15.60 | \$32,450 |

| | | | | |
|---------|---|---------|---------|----------|
| 43-9011 | Computer Operators | \$16.78 | \$17.32 | \$36,030 |
| 43-9021 | Data Entry Keyers | \$13.60 | \$14.04 | \$29,200 |
| 43-9022 | Word Processors and Typists | \$17.93 | \$17.23 | \$35,830 |
| 43-9031 | Desktop Publishers | \$14.94 | \$15.89 | \$33,060 |
| 43-9041 | Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks | \$16.34 | \$17.64 | \$36,700 |
| 43-9051 | Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service | \$11.31 | \$12.17 | \$25,310 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | \$12.77 | \$13.56 | \$28,210 |
| 43-9071 | Office Machine Operators, Except Computer | \$13.13 | \$13.59 | \$28,260 |
| 43-9081 | Proofreaders and Copy Markers | \$13.43 | \$14.08 | \$29,290 |
| 43-9111 | Statistical Assistants | \$19.06 | \$20.34 | \$42,300 |
| 43-9799 | Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other* | \$15.15 | \$15.90 | \$33,070 |

Bureau of Labor Statistics. United States Department of Labor.
http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_mi.htm#43-0000

Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job

Comparison Alley

Identify the similarities between both applicants' resumes and place your ideas in the "alleyway" on the form. Next, indicate differences between Delilah's and Sherene's backgrounds and experiences by noting your ideas on the appropriate lines. Use this information to create a short paragraph supporting why Delilah obtained the position instead of Sherene.

Delilah Anderson

Differences

Comparison Alley

Differences

Sherene Wiley

Similarities

Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job

Delilah Anderson

1234, West 67 Street, Dearborn, MI

Phone: (123)-456-7890

E-Mail: danderson@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To acquire an entry-level administrative assistant position in a strong, forward thinking company where I can utilize my knowledge, experience, and excellent customer service skills.

RELEVANT SKILLS

- Efficient with using computer programs, such as: Windows 7, Word 2010, PowerPoint 2010, Excel
- Proficient in using the Internet, email, and text messaging
- Experience with the creation of correspondence from given information
- Accustomed to heavy telephone usage
- Typing speed: 65 wpm
- Worked with accounts receivable
- Excellent customer relations and service
- Fluent in both English and Spanish

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Calvin Auto Parts, Dearborn, MI 2009 - Present
Clerk

- Arranged invoices to match orders of purchase for input into computers
- Sorted mail and performed general office duties
- Assisted in payroll preparation by calculating all time sheets
- Provided customer service

Medical Health Center, Mt. Pleasant, MI 2005 - 2009
Receptionist

- Accountable for record keeping of patients
- Scheduled patient appointments, check-in and check-out
- Responsible for reception area, including greeting patients and answering phones
- Provided basic office support services, such as filing, light typing, and copying

EDUCATION

Dearborn Technical Center – Computer Courses (Word 2003/2007/2010, Excel 2003/2007, PowerPoint 2003/2007, Windows 7) 2004 - Present

Williamson Business College 2003 - 2004

Mt. Pleasant Adult Center – GED Diploma 2001

Lesson 1.3: The Best Person for the Job

SHERENE WILEY

1234, WEST 67 STREET, DETROIT, MI
(000)-123-4567

OBJECTIVE

SEEKING A CAREER POSITION WITHIN A COMPANY, WHERE HARD WORK AND A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN WOULD AN ADVANTAGE.

RELEVANT SKILLS

- + MODERATE MICROSOFT WORD KNOWLEDGE
- + TYPE 35 WPM
- + EXPERIENCE WITH THE INTERNET AND EMAIL
- + CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS
- + EXCELLENT ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS
- + ACCUSTOMED TO LONG HOURS AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF TASKS
- + EXCELLENT MATH SKILLS

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

TARGET, LANSING, MI 2009 - 2010
SALES CLERK

- + DELIVERY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE
- + OPERATED CASH REGISTER
- + REPLENISHMENT OF STOCK ON SALES FLOOR
- + ACCOUNTABLE FOR CASHING OUT PROCESS FOR THE EVENING CREW
- + SUPERVISED CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK

MAERS, LANSING, MI 2007-2009
SALES CLERK

- + DELIVERY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE
- + FLOOR SALES CLERK
- + ACCOUNTABLE FOR CASHING OUT PROCESS FOR THE EVENING CREW

DEARBORN SKILLS ACADEMY, DEARBORN, MI 2004 - 2006
CLASSROOM ASSISTANT

- + RECORDED DAILY ATTENDANCE
- + ASSISTED INSTRUCTOR IN DAILY EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- + SUPERVISED STUDENTS
- + CORRECTED ASSIGNMENTS

EDUCATION

LANSING ADULT EDUCATION CENTER – COMPUTER LITERACY WORKSHOP 2004
DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADULT EDUCATION CENTER – GED DIPLOMA 2006

ACTIVITIES

PARTICIPATED IN HIGH SCHOOL TRACK TEAM, DRAMA CLUB, AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT
MEMBER OF COMMUNITY ACTION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Lesson 2.2: The Ever-Changing Workplace

Transition Words

| Words that can be used to show location : | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| behind | by | near | throughout |
| below | down | off | to the right |
| beneath | in back of | onto | under |
| beside | in front of | on top of | |
| between | inside | outside | |
| beyond | into | over | |

| Words that can be used to show time : | | | | |
|--|--------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| while | first | meanwhile | soon | then |
| after | second | today | later | next |
| at | third | tomorrow | afterward | as soon as |
| before | now | next week | about | when suddenly |
| during | until | yesterday | finally | |

| Word that can be used to compare two things: | | | |
|---|------|-----------|-----------------|
| likewise | also | while | in the same way |
| like | as | similarly | |

| Words that can be used to contrast two things: | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|-------------------|
| but | still | although | on the other hand |
| however | yet | otherwise | even though |

| Words that can be used to emphasize a point : | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|-----------------|
| again | truly | especially | for this reason |
| to repeat | in fact | to emphasize | |

| Words that can be used to conclude or summarize : | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|---------------|
| finally | as a result | to sum up | in conclusion |
| lastly | therefore | all in all | because |

| Words that can be used to add information : | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|--------------|
| again | another | for instance | for example |
| also | and | moreover | additionally |
| as well | besides | along with | other |
| next | finally | in addition | |

| Words that can be used to clarify : | | |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| that is | for instance | in other words |

Steps for Adapting to Change in the Workplace

Change in the workplace can be something that is very difficult with which to deal.

If you are able to adapt quickly, you can put yourself in a better position than any of your coworkers, who like most people, fear change and do not adapt quickly.

However, if you are able to anticipate change, adapt quickly and embrace it, then changes in the workplace can actually be positive and can propel you toward success.

Unsuccessful people hold on to the past and are often left behind when change occurs.

The first way to benefit from changes in the workplace is to anticipate these changes.

Lastly, it is important to embrace change.

Although most people do not like and may even fear change, anticipating these variations is just the first step in being able to deal with change and using it to your benefit.

If you see change as a positive experience and actually embrace it, you can turn a negative into a positive.

The second way that you can use change to your benefit is to adapt quickly when you see change coming.

As the old saying goes, “The only thing that’s constant in life is change.”

Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip

Nobody's Friend

My name is Gossip.

I have no respect for justice.

I maim without killing.

I break hearts and ruin lives.

I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.

The more I am quoted the more I am believed.

My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.

To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.

I am nobody's friend.

Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same.

I topple governments and wreck marriages.

I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartaches and indigestion. I make innocent people cry in their pillows.

Even my name hisses. I am called Gossip.

I make headlines and headaches.

Before you repeat a story, ask yourself:

Is it true?

Is it harmless?

Is it necessary?

If it isn't, don't repeat it.

~ Author Unknown

Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip

Poetry Reading Strategies

1. **Preview** the poem by reading the title and paying attention to the poem's form: shape on the page, stanzas, number of lines and ending punctuation.
2. **Read poem aloud several times** to hear rhyme, rhythm, and the overall sound of the poem. This makes it easier to understand the poem.
3. **Visualize the images** by paying close attention to strong verbs, and comparisons in poem. Do the images remind you of anything? Let the comparisons paint a picture in your head.
4. **Clarify words and phrases** by allowing yourself to find the meaning of words or phrases that stand out, are repeated, or you do not understand the meaning. Use dictionary, context clues, teacher or peer.
5. **Evaluate the poem's theme** by asking what message is the poet trying to send or help you understand? Does it relate to your life in any way?

Lesson 2.3: Dealing with the Office Gossip

Poetry Inference Graphic Organizer

What message is the poet trying to send or help you understand?

| Details or Statements from the Poem | What I Know from My Personal Experiences | What I Can Infer About Gossip in the Workplace |
|--|---|---|
| | | |

Lesson 2.4: Ethics in the Office Place

Making Decisions in the Workplace

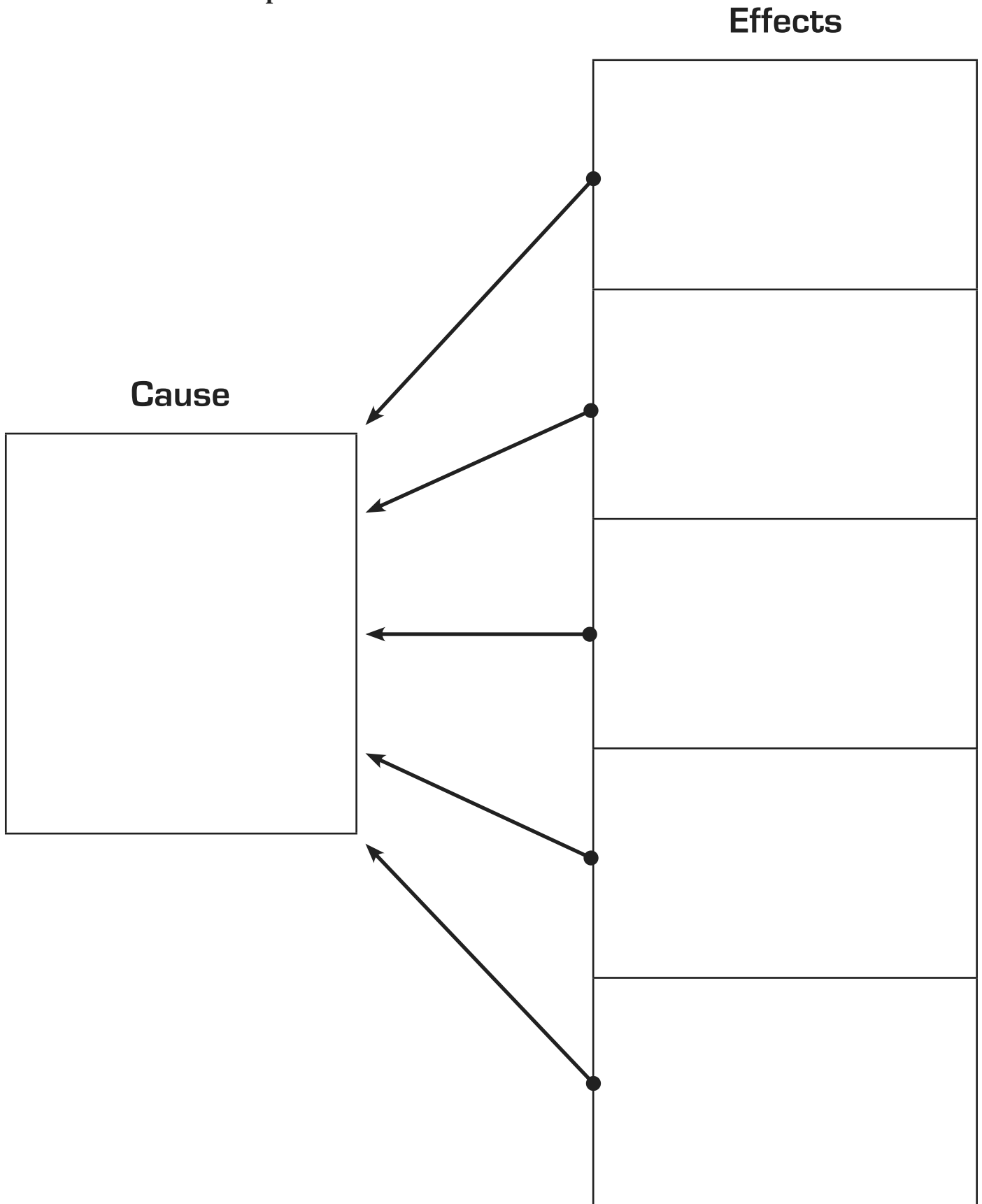
Steps for Making Ethical Decisions

1. Identify the ethical issue or problem.
2. List the facts that are important in making a decision.
3. Identify those who might be affected by your decision and how they would be affected.
4. Explain what each affected person would want you to do about the issue.
5. List three alternative actions and identify the best and worst case scenario for each of your alternatives, anyone who would be harmed by this choice, any values that would be compromised for selecting this alternative, and reasons why this alternative should not be selected (legal reasons, company policy, personal ethics, etc.)
6. Determine a course of action for solving the problem.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Making Decisions

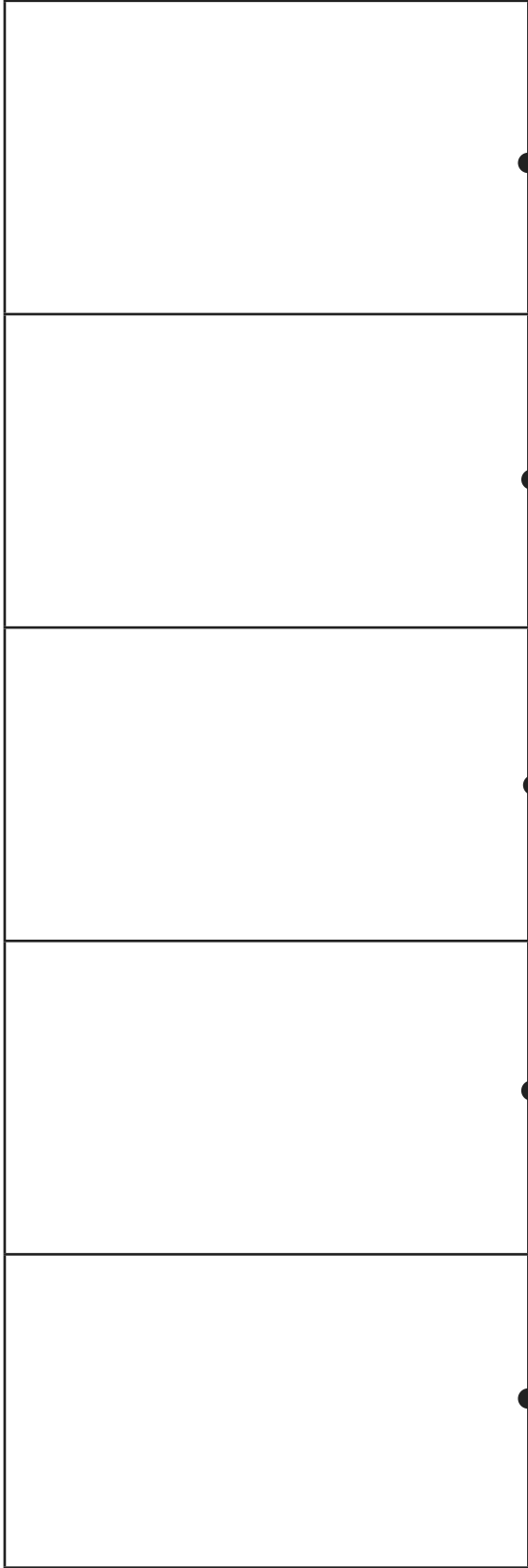
- What are the facts in the situation?
- Who will be affected by decision?
- Is it legal? Avoid doing anything that is against the law regardless of who is asking you to do it or how much it may help someone.
- How would I feel if I were the other person? Place yourself in the other person's place.
- What other solution might I choose? What are different options?
- Is there someone I can talk to about my decision who is knowledgeable about the issue?
- If my actions appeared in the newspaper or on television, would I feel right about everyone reading or watching what occurred?
- Could I proudly tell my family and friends about my actions?

Cause and Effect: Multiple Effects

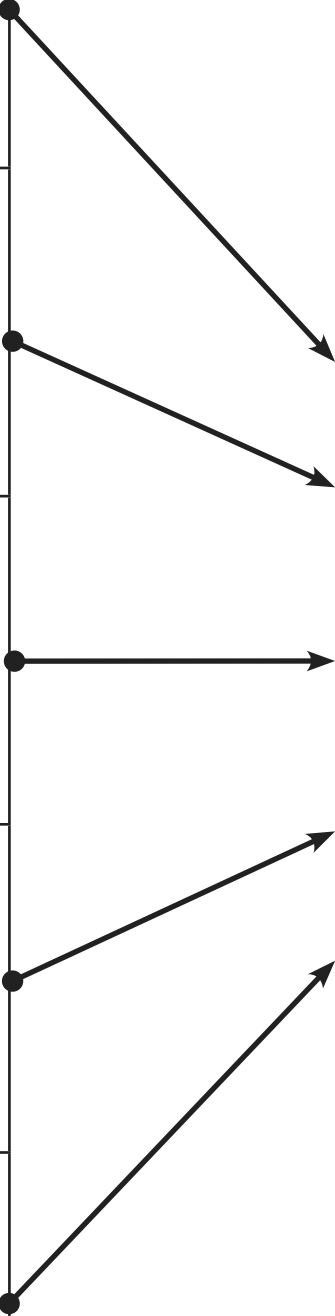
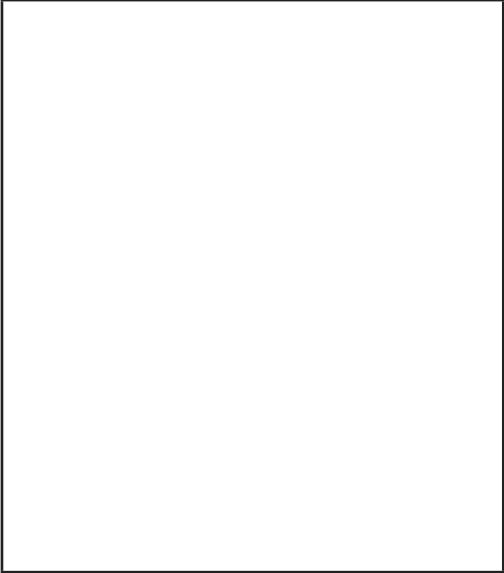


Cause and Effect: Multiple Causes

Causes



Effect



Lesson 2.4: Ethics in the Office Place

Real-World Situations — Cause and Effect

Sample Situations – Cause

You are faced with a boring job to complete.

An angry customer begins yelling at you because he is frustrated with your product.

You are asked to work ten hours overtime for the next four weeks.

Sample Situations – Effect

You work as an office administrator for a cable company and receive a pay raise.

Many of your co-workers are quitting unexpectedly.

You are scheduled to work on weekends in addition to your usual hours.

Lesson 3.1: Where Does the Time Go?

Tips for Time Management

Directions: Edit the following text for capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, and sentence fragments.

Effective time management is an essential skill in Today's workplace. People are always looking for ways to make more time in their day. One of the most important tips. In practicing good time management, are learning how to organize and prioritize. A good way to get started, in organizing your workday is to make a list. Lists is great workplace tools. Listing tasks on paper can help you see what needs to be done. Once you have listed the tasks that you needed to complete. The next step is to prioritize add corresponding deadlines so that you can identify what must be completed immediately versus the tasks that can wait until tomorrow or next week. People often think that they can remember what they need to do however, forgetting a certain task is easy. Without a task list to remind you of what needs to be accomplished.

Another Time Management Tip is to do the things you least want to do early in the day. People often procrastinate about completing a task that they doesn't like to do. If you get it done immediately you can then complete tasks that you prefer doing.

Finally, start your day out right? As soon as you get to work, take twenty minutes to plan your day. Make sure to define your top priority update your "to-do" list and check your email and phone messages. Spending a few minutes at the beginning of your workday? Can assist you in focusing on the most important things that need to be done.

Lesson 3.2: It's All About Priorities

Task Priority Matrix

| | Urgent | Less Urgent |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Important Tasks | 1st Priority – Do Now | 2nd Priority – Plan Today |
| | These are highly important and urgent tasks that must be completed first. Include those items with immediate deadlines, as well as emergencies. When planning your day, make sure that you have time for unforeseen emergencies. | These are highly important, but less urgent tasks. Include those items that need to be researched and planned in order to be completed effectively and efficiently. The more time that you spend on planning and completing these items, the fewer tasks you will have that are emergencies. |
| Less Important Tasks | 3rd Priority – Do Today | 4th Priority – Don't Forget to Do |
| | These are less important but urgent tasks that need to be managed so that they do not become more important tasks. Urgent does not always mean immediate. Ask questions to help you prioritize these items. "When is the latest I can get this to you?" That will assist you in determining whether they can be completed later today or need to be placed in Quadrant 1 or 2. | These are less important and not urgent. Include those tasks that can be done by a certain deadline or when you have time in the day. Review this list each day to determine whether a task continues to need to be done or if it can be deleted. |

Lesson 3.2: It's All About Priorities

Task Priority Matrix

| | Urgent | Less Urgent |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Important Tasks | 1st Priority - Do Now | 2nd Priority - Plan Today |
| Less Important Tasks | 3rd Priority - Do Today | 4th Priority - Don't Forget to Do |

Lesson 3.3: Help! I Can't Find My Desk

Developing Your Ideas

Topic you are writing about:

Start by listing the first three things that come to mind when you think of your topic.

1.

2.

3.

| Next, list three things that you know about your topic: | What feelings might be associated with your topic? List your ideas. |
|--|--|
| 1. 2. 3. | |
| Rewrite the three items above using interesting verbs and adjectives. | What might other people not know about your topic until you tell them |
| | |

When you have completed this activity, use these ideas to help you effectively write about your topic.

Lesson 3.3: Help! I Can't Find My Desk

A Few Tips for Organizing Your Office

- Get and use caddys and trays to organize your desk and your drawers.
- Take a few minutes each day to go through papers. Throw away those you don't need and file those you do.
- Reduce your office contents to just what you need. No one needs 50 "back-up" pens and three staplers.
- If you come across a pen that doesn't work, get rid of it immediately.
- Clear your workspace of everything but the project you're working on. Keeping multiple projects active at once will actually slow you down and increase the chances that you'll make mistakes.
- Invest in color-coded file folders and bins to organize important papers.
- Revamp your file drawers. Those in your desk should contain only files you use regularly, or which are confidential. Others should be stored in a separate filing cabinet.
- If your file folders are growing too large, use interior file folders to divide the file into smaller, more manageable pieces.
- Use organizational boxes, trays, file folders and others to your advantage. Everything you use regularly should have a designated place in your office so that you can easily find it when you need it.
- Keep the things you use most often closest to you. You should be able to reach everything you use frequently without getting up.
- Place your computer at a 90 degree angle to your desk. Keep your desk work surface clear of everything except essentials and your current project.
- Take ten minutes at the end of each day to keep your desk organized.

Lesson 4.1: To Whom Am I Speaking?

Review of Subject-Verb Agreement

Subjects and verbs must agree in number. Singular subjects take singular verbs. Plural subjects take plural verbs. Examples: Kate talks. Kate and Jeanne talk.

Don't become confused by the words that come between the subject and verb; they do not affect agreement. Example: Mary, who is the administrative assistant, is very helpful.

Prepositional phrases between the subject and verb do not affect agreement. Example: The colors of the office furniture are beautiful.

When sentences start with *there* or *here*, the subject is placed after the verb so identify it correctly. Example: There is a problem with the balance sheet. Here are the papers that you requested.

If two subjects are joined by *and*, they usually require a plural verb form. Example: The computers and the desks are new.

If the word *each*, *every*, or *no* comes before the subject, the verb is singular. Example: No smoking or drinking is allowed in the computer lab.

If the subjects are both singular and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, or *not only/but also*, the verb is singular. Example: Neither Jessica nor Dean is available.

If the subjects are both plural and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, or *not only/but also*, the verb is plural. Example: Neither the computers nor the chairs need to be moved.

If one subject is singular and one plural and the words are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, or *not only/but also*, you use the verb form of the subject that is nearest the verb. Example: Neither the office assistants nor Mrs. Smith is available. Neither Mrs. Smith nor the office assistants are available.

Lesson 4.2: Too Many Lines

Take the Message

Joan Delray, a sales supervisor, calls the office at 12:15 p.m. Joan says, “I won’t be able to make it to this afternoon’s meeting. My son’s school called, and I need to pick him up because he is ill. Let Mr. Haliz know that the materials for the meeting are on my desk. If anyone needs me, they can reach me on my cell at 333-876-0023. I plan on being back in the office in the morning.”

A client, Karl Mendez, calls for Eli Straub, a sales representative who is out of the office. Mr. Mendez says, “Please have Eli call me immediately. I’m interested in property M37 and need to talk to him about a counter-offer. He can reach me either at my office number, 372-484-7777 or on my cell, 372-484-6666. It’s already 12:45 so hopefully he can call me back before 2:00. It’s really important.”

Lynn, a coworker, calls for Liza. Lynn tells you, “I’ll be coming by the office today around 1:30 to pick up the red file folder that contains all of the new marketing materials that need to go to the printer. Please make sure that Liza has it ready because I have no time to waste. I have a lunch meeting with Mr. Haliz and then I have another appointment at 2:00. I know that it’s already 12:45, but I really need Liza to make sure that everything is in the correct order as I will be dropping it off on the way to my other appointment. I’m on my cell, 333-877-0033, if Liza has any questions”

“Allie, please leave a message for Kharim and let him know that I have a contract to review this afternoon. It’s almost 1:00, and I’m about 30 minutes away from the office. I should be able to have the contract in his office no later than 2:00. Please let him know that the client will be waiting for an answer later this afternoon. By the way, this is Maria. I don’t have my cell with me, but will let Kharim know if I can’t make it by 2:00.”

“I am calling for Jacob and need him to call me at 333-891-4890. No, I don’t want to leave a message, just please have him call me right away. It’s already 1:00 so I hope to hear from him soon. It’s really urgent.”

Message Pad

PHONE CALL

Ann Arbor Electronics

To _____ Date _____ Time _____ am/pm _____

From _____

Company _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Message _____

Signed _____

- TELEPHONED
- RETURNED YOUR CALL
- PLEASE CALL
- WILL CALL AGAIN
- CAME TO SEE YOU
- WANTS TO SEE YOU

Lesson 4.3: It's Jamming Again

Making That Perfect Copy!

1. **Make sure the copier is plugged in and is on.** If there is a switch, then switch it on (if the switch has a line and a circle, the line means the machine is on.). There should be a power button which says power, on/off, or a line and most of a circle.
2. **Put in your personal identification number (if required by your office).** Some offices provide staff with a personal identification number in order to track the amount of copying completed by each person or department.
3. **Select the right paper for the job.** General copies are often printed on 20 lb. paper, whereas 24 lb. paper may be used for more professional types of jobs.
4. **Stack and neaten the papers to be copied with your hands and check that there are not edges sticking out, folded, stapled, torn, or loosely taped.** Smooth paper feeds more easily through a machine and has less chance of getting jammed or damaged.
5. **Place the copies in the top feeder (usually face/print side up) or place the document on the glass (face/print side down) beside the arrow.** There should be paper size guides on the sides of the feeder to assist you. Adjust the tray to your size paper. If the item to be copied is small, place a white sheet behind the item to avoid using excess ink or getting gray or black shadows on the copies.
6. **Choose the correct drawer/tray of paper.** Most copiers use letter (8.5 x 11), legal (8.5 x 14), or ledger (11 x 17) size. There is generally a side feeder tray for heavy-weight paper, such as glossy photo paper or card stock. Do not place this type of paper in the bottom trays as paper may jam and could damage the machine. Special types of paper must be run through slowly and on a heavyweight, glossy, or card stock setting.
7. **Select the lightness or darkness by pressing a button.** Newsprint, color to black and white, or photos will need to be lightened. Light text, light colors, or pencil drawings need to be darkened to show up well.
8. **Some copiers print either in color or black and white.** Select the correct setting for the printing job. Remember, it is more expensive to print in color.
9. **Some copiers will automatically collate, staple, or hole punch.** Check the appropriate setting for what you need.
10. **To avoid spots or smudges on copies, clean the glass and ensure that the original is a clean copy.**
11. **Select the number of copies or sets that you need.** A set is multiple pages that need to be copied, such as a manual or a document with multiple pages.



12. **Press the large copy button (usually green).** If something goes wrong, there is usually a red stop button, but it may take the machine a few seconds to stop. If the machine requires more information, an error message will appear on the screen. If paper has become jammed, the machine will show you the area of the jam and may have steps to follow to clear the trapped paper and continue the printing job.
13. **Check the first copy.** Adjust the settings in the machine if the copy is what you needed. Complete the copying task.
14. **Complete copying.** Make sure to take all copies and the original with you when you have finished.

Lesson 4.5: How Difficult Could It Be?

Ergonomics in the Workplace

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, ergonomics is the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the capabilities of the working population. In other words, ergonomics is simply the term used to describe the fit among people, the tools that they use, and the physical setting in which they work.

Effective and successful “fits” assure high productivity, avoidance of illness and injury risks, and increased satisfaction among the workforce. In other words, the easier it is to do a job, the more productive and happy the worker will be.

As an office professional, you will spend many hours each day using your computer to complete your tasks. Continuous keyboard and mouse actions can cause what is known as repetitive strain injuries or RSIs. One common type of RSI is carpal tunnel syndrome. Carpal tunnel syndrome results in a feeling of numbness or burning in the thumb and fingers. Position your keyboard and mouse next to each other so that they are easy to access. When working with a computer mouse, don't just move the mouse with your wrist. Use your entire arm and shoulder. You may also wish to use an ergonomic keyboard and a trackball to reduce stress in your wrists and arms.

Another type of injury which occurs as a result of sitting at the computer for long periods of time is computer vision syndrome where your vision may be blurry, and you have frequent headaches. One work habit that can help is to use the 20/20/20 rule where every 20 minutes you take 20 seconds and look 20 feet away. If you find your computer monitor is too low or too far away, adjust it so that the first line of text on the screen is just slightly below eye level. Your monitor should be positioned so that it is easy to see without moving your head up or down. You may also wish to use glare screens on your computer to protect your eyes.

Frequent neck, shoulder, and back pain are often caused by sitting hunched over your computer keyboard. When typing, keep your wrists straight, your shoulders perpendicular to the floor, and your forearms parallel to the floor. Keep your body straight when sitting, with your head and neck upright and looking forward, not to the side. It is important not to lean forward or slouch. Make sure that your chair is adjusted for your height.

As an office professional, it is important to use ergonomically sound computer equipment and furniture. By using the correct equipment and sound working habits, you can avoid the stresses that often cause an office professional so much pain and discomfort.

Lesson 4.8: Data, Data, Data

Recognizing a Scam

Trying to recognize data entry work-at-home scams from legitimate data entry jobs takes careful research and common sense. Common sense tells you that data entry jobs that promise extremely high salaries are generally scams. Entry-level positions never pay top wages. Careful research will help you locate legitimate work at home opportunities by eliminating these and other scams.

Data entry scams are really no different from many other typical work-at-home scams. They can be pyramid schemes or even fake certifications for resources available for free elsewhere. Data entry scams often ask for a small fee to “show that you are serious.” These are all signs of a possible work at home scam.

So, to find the legitimate work at home jobs and to avoid the scams, follow these tips:

Use common sense. Think about the logic of an opportunity from a different perspective. How would the promoters of the opportunity make money if they are paying you so much for so little work? Also, if a company’s marketing strategy is primarily based on appearing legitimate, that is likely because it is offering a work at home scam or at the very least a poor money-making opportunity. If you see “legitimate work at home job,” most likely it is a scam.

Do your homework. *Never send money* to an organization without thoroughly checking it out. Keep in mind that most legitimate companies do not charge job applicants and that business opportunities are never risk-free.

Know how to spot a work-at-home scam. One tricky scam technique is to set up a whole website dedicated to revealing work at home scams and then funnel people to the few “legitimate” work at home jobs, which, of course, are not legitimate.

Know the **typical work-at-home scams.** While the work-at-home scammers are always coming up with new schemes, a few things to avoid are:

- Business start-up kits
- Anything involving cashing checks or wiring money
- Home assembly/envelope stuffing
- Products that require you to become a wholesaler or re-seller
- Online surveys
- Data entry/call centers – Although some of these may be legitimate, many sell start-up kits and certification training
- Job opportunities that advertise on search engines

Always remember that companies hiring for legitimate work-at-home jobs, like any other employer, are looking for qualified, reliable people to do the work. Screening applicants is a time-consuming process, so legitimate companies don’t have time to screen thousands of applicants that apply because they saw an advertisement on a popular search engine.

Don’t pay for opportunities. In the real-world workplace, employers don’t charge employees to work for them. Remember, a real home business is developed over time with careful planning. It is not purchased online sight unseen.

As a savvy consumer, if you suspect that you have been scammed, report it immediately. Contact your bank if you’ve given out financial information and report it to your Better Business Bureau and your state attorney’s office.

Lesson 4.9: Fax It Immediately!

Sample Fax Cover

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|----------------|
| FAX | | HOTEL MILLENIAL 555 Water Lane Ypsilanti, Michigan 719-111-2000 salvries@millenial.com | |
| Comfort Away from Home | | | |
| To: | Jennifer Jackson | From: | Sharon DeVries |
| Fax: | 719-123-4567 | Pages: | 12 |
| Phone: | 719-321-7654 | Date: | 11/16/2011 |
| Re: | Banquet Event Orders 12/4/2011 | cc: | Dean Jackson |
| Comments: | | | |
| Dear Jennifer, | | | |
| Attached are the BEOs for your event on 12/4/2011. Please check them for accuracy, sign, and return them to me at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions, please contact me at 719-111-2222. | | | |
| Sincerely, | | | |
| Sharon | | | |

Lesson 4.9: Fax It Immediately!

It's Your Turn!

You work at the Kalamazoo Country Club as the manager's administrative assistant. A customer, Samuel Best, wants a copy of the different events at the club. The document is 8 pages in length and includes the events through 2012. However, there will be events added throughout the year. Send Mr. Best a fax that includes the document. His information is as follows: fax number - 000-111-2222; phone number -111-222-3333. Complete the following fax cover sheet. You may create additional addresses as necessary to complete the form.

| | | | |
|------------|--|--------|--|
| FAX | | | |
| | | | |
| To: | | From: | |
| Fax: | | Pages: | |
| Phone: | | Date: | |
| Re: | | cc: | |
| | | | |

Skimming and Scanning

Instructions:

- Prepare to read the selected text by completing the chart below.
- After you have completed the chart, read the text carefully.
- Adjust your predictions as you read.
- Share with the class how skimming and scanning assisted you in reading workplace text.

| Skimming: What do you notice about the text? | | Predictions: What is the text about? What do you want to know? |
|--|--|---|
| Text Features: List any headings, subheadings, bolded words, or graphics that you notice as you skim the text. | | |
| Scanning: Unfamiliar Words | | Predictions: What do you think these words might mean? |
| List any unfamiliar words you spot on the page. | | |

Lesson 5.1: Routine Writing in the Workplace: Emails

Tips for Writing Professional-Looking Emails

Email has become an important way of communicating in today's business world. Although email is often viewed as a less formal way to communicate than an office memo or business letter, the following guidelines should be followed:

- **Include a salutation.** It is preferable to use the person's name in the salutation. If you generally use the person's first name, you may omit the formal salutation or you may simply say *Dear Terri*.
- **Create a subject line.** Make sure that the subject line is descriptive and meaningful. Your message is competing with many emails so you want to ensure that the person to whom you're sending the email will read it.
- **Write an attention-getting opening.** Like most text, the first line or two determines whether the reader will continue reading the message or will delete the email. Keep your email messages simple and easy to read. Email messages should not be longer than one screen in length.
- **Write about one topic or subject.** If you have numerous subjects to discuss, write multiple emails. Often emails are filed by subject. Two or more subjects in the same email tend to be lost.
- **Format messages simply and in a business style.** Single space your message and use a format appropriate for the workplace. Avoid fancy backgrounds, fonts, animated messages, emoticons, and pictures. Fancy formats are for personal use, not for the workplace.
- **Avoid flaming.** Flaming is expressing a strong opinion or anger. For example: keying your email message in capital letters means you are yelling at the recipient. If you find yourself upset or angry, take a break before you send an email message.
- **Proofread all messages.** An email message should never contain misspelled words or incorrect grammar usage. Always use complete sentences. Most email programs have a grammar and spell check. However, these tools may not catch all errors, so make sure to double check.
- **Don't break the email thread.** When an email is sent the first time, the person responding should reply specifically to this email. By responding to emails sent regarding the same subject, it is easier to follow what has been previously stated.
- **Use the cc box sparingly.** Make sure this box is empty unless you want someone to receive a copy of the email.

Homophones in the Workplace

| Homophones | Definitions | My Sentences |
|------------|--|--------------|
| Accept | <p><i>Accept</i> is a verb meaning to receive.</p> <p>Example: I will accept all of the packages.</p> | |
| Except | <p><i>Except</i> is usually a preposition meaning excluding.</p> <p>Example: I will accept all of the packages except that one.</p> | |
| Affect | <p><i>Affect</i> is usually a verb meaning to influence.</p> <p>Example: The new virus software did not affect the computer's efficiency.</p> | |
| Effect | <p><i>Effect</i> is usually a noun meaning result.</p> <p>Example: The new software has a positive effect on productivity.</p> | |
| All ready | <p><i>All ready</i> means complete or prepared.</p> <p>Example: He was certain that the report was all ready for review by the supervisor.</p> | |
| Already | <p><i>Already</i> means previously or by this time.</p> <p>Example: The report was already on the supervisor's desk.</p> | |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| <p>Its</p> | <p><i>Its</i> is a possessive; something belongs to "it".</p> <p>Example: I know that its result will be positive.</p> | |
| <p>It's</p> | <p><i>It's</i> is a contraction of it is.</p> <p>Example: It's payday tomorrow.</p> | |
| <p>Know</p> | <p><i>Know</i> is to understand something.</p> <p>Example: I know how to email an attachment.</p> | |
| <p>No</p> | <p><i>No</i> is a negative answer; the opposite of the word yes.</p> <p>Example: No, I cannot complete the task.</p> | |
| <p>Right</p> | <p><i>Right</i> means correct or opposite of left.</p> <p>Example: That's the right way to complete the task.</p> | |
| <p>Rite</p> | <p><i>Rite</i> means a ceremony.</p> <p>Example: It was a rite of passage.</p> | |
| <p>Wright</p> | <p><i>Wright</i> means to create or build.</p> <p>Example: She's a playwright for the theatre.</p> | |
| <p>Write</p> | <p><i>Write</i> means to record.</p> <p>Example: Please write the notes for the meeting.</p> | |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| Who's | <p><i>Who's</i> is a contraction of "who is, who was, or who has."</p> <p>Example: Who's going to deliver the mail?</p> | |
| Whose | <p><i>Whose</i> means belonging to someone.</p> <p>Example: Whose files are those?</p> | |
| Your | <p><i>Your</i> means that it belongs to you.</p> <p>Example: It is your assignment.</p> | |
| You're | <p><i>You're</i> is a contraction of "you are."</p> <p>Example: You're in line for the next promotion.</p> | |

Lesson 5.3: Writing Business Letters

Business Letter Format

| Parts of a Business Letter | Sample |
|---|---------------|
| Letterhead | |
| Date | |
| Inside address | |
| Salutation | |
| Body | |
| Complimentary close | |
| Writer's signature | |
| Writer's name and title | |
| Reference initials (person word processing the letter, such as the administrative assistant – usually lower case letters of the person's first and last name. Example: Jonathon Delay would be jd.) | |
| Enclosure (if an enclosure is included) | |
| Copy notation (cc as necessary) | |

Lesson 5.3: Writing Business Letters

Writing an Effective Business Letter

The most widely used format for business letters is “block style,” where the text of the entire letter is justified left. The text is single spaced, except for double spaces between paragraphs. Typically margins are about 1 inch (25.4 mm) on all sides of the document, which is the default setting for most word-processing programs.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Date | Use month, day, year format, e.g., August 15, 2011. |
| Sender’s Address | It is a good idea to include the sender’s email and url, if available. Don’t include this information if it’s already incorporated into the letterhead design. |
| Inside Address | Use the full name of the person to whom you’re writing. |
| Salutation | Be sure to use a colon at the end of the name, not a comma as in personal letters. |
| Body Text | The body is where you write the content of the letter; the paragraphs should be single spaced with a skipped line between each paragraph. Skip a line between the end of the body and the closing. |
| Closing | Let’s the reader know that you are finished with your letter; usually ends with Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Thank you, and so on. Note that there is a comma after the end of the closing and only the first word in the closing is capitalized. Skip 3-4 lines between the closing and the printed name, so that there is room for the signature. |
| Signature Block | Sign your letter in blue or black ink. |
| Printed Name | The printed version of your name, and if desired your title or position. Skip a line between the printed name and the enclosure. |
| Enclosures | If the letter contains other document other than the letter itself, your letter will include the word “Enclosure.” If there is more than one you would type, “Enclosures (#)” with the # being the number of other documents enclosed that doesn’t include the letter itself. |
| Copy notation | If you are sending a copy to additional person(s), indicate by a cc: with the name(s) following. |
| Reference Initials | If someone other than yourself typed the letter, include your initials in capital letters followed by the typist’s initials in lower case: AG/gs or AG:gs. |

Lesson 5.5: Getting Out the Mail

List of State Abbreviations

| Name | Abbreviation | Name | Abbreviation |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Alabama | AL | Montana | MT |
| Alaska | AK | Nebraska | NE |
| Arizona | AZ | Nevada | NV |
| Arkansas | AR | New Hampshire | NH |
| California | CA | New Jersey | NJ |
| Colorado | CO | New Mexico | NM |
| Connecticut | CT | New York | NY |
| Delaware | DE | North Carolina | NC |
| Florida | FL | North Dakota | ND |
| Georgia | GA | Ohio | OH |
| Hawaii | HI | Oklahoma | OK |
| Idaho | ID | Oregon | OR |
| Illinois | IL | Pennsylvania | PA |
| Indiana | IN | Rhode Island | RI |
| Iowa | IA | South Carolina | SC |
| Kansas | KS | South Dakota | SD |
| Kentucky | KY | Tennessee | TN |
| Louisiana | LA | Texas | TX |
| Maine | ME | Utah | UT |
| Maryland | MD | Vermont | VT |
| Massachusetts | MA | Virginia | VA |
| Michigan | MI | Washington | WA |
| Minnesota | MN | West Virginia | WV |
| Mississippi | MS | Wisconsin | WI |
| Missouri | MO | Wyoming | WY |

Lesson 6.1: It's All About Customer Service

Checking Out My Customer Service Skills

Use the following checklist to rate your personal customer service skills.
Check each box that describes your skills.

I always greet customers with a smile and a warm welcome.

I call the customer by name.

I listen courteously to customer comments, questions, and complaints.

I give customers my full attention.

I maintain an appropriate interpersonal distance when talking.

I am knowledgeable about my organization and the products or services provided.

I use a friendly and professional vocal tone.

I respond to customer emails in a timely and professional fashion.

I answer phone calls promptly with a smile.

I do not place customers on hold for long periods of time.

I take accurate phone messages.

Lesson 6.2: Customer Service Is Everyone's Job

Words of Wisdom on Customer Service

The customer is boss. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else. *Sam Walton*

He profits most who serves best. *Arthur F. Sheldon*

Be everywhere, do everything, and never fail to astonish the customer. *Macy's Motto*

Treat your customers like gold. *Unknown*

People expect good service but few are willing to give it. *Robert Gately*

Biggest question: Isn't it really 'customer helping' rather than customer service? And wouldn't you deliver better service if you thought of it that way? *Jeffrey Gitomer*

Customer complaints are the schoolbooks from which we learn. *Author Unknown*

Here is a simple but powerful rule -always give people more than what they expect to get. *Nelson Boswell*

The customer is king. *Unknown*

There are no traffic jams along the extra mile. *Roger Staubach*

If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell 6 friends.

If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000 friends. *Jeff Bezos*

Treat every customer as if they sign your paycheck, because they do. *Unknown*

When the customer comes first, the customer will last. *Robert Last*

Good leaders are like good coaches, they give their team the tools they need and ask for as well as the encouragement, and compliments to stay in the game. *Gary Hudson*

It helps a ton when you learn people's names and don't butcher them when trying to pronounce them. *Jerry Yang*

Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten. *Gucci Family Slogan*

Lesson 6.2: Customer Service Is Everyone's Job

Figurative Language Chart

| Term | Definition | Example |
|-----------|--|--|
| Analogy | Compares two different things by explaining points they have in common/ used to help clarify a concept or make a concept easier to understand. | A good book is a friend. It provides entertainment and insight. It keeps you company at night. |
| Metaphor | Compares two unlike things by stating that one thing is the other. | A good book is a friend. |
| Simile | Compares two unlike things by stating that one thing is similar to the other and by using the words "like" or "as". | A good book is like a friend. |
| Hyperbole | An exaggerated statement used to make a point; often humorous. | I could eat a horse! |
| Idiom | Peculiar expressions or sayings that are common to native speakers of a particular language. | You can't teach an old dog new tricks. |

Lesson 6.3: The Difficult Customer

Steps for Dealing with Difficult Customers

Every workplace deals with difficult people at some point in time. The following is a six-step process to use when faced with working with a customer who is difficult.

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Let the customer vent. | When customers are upset, they want two things. They want to express their feelings, and they want their problem solved. Allow customers to first vent their feelings. While they are venting, remember to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nod your head frequently• Say uh-huh from time to time• Maintain eye contact• Not take what is being said personally |
| 2. Avoid getting trapped in a negative cycle. | Avoid a negative attitude towards a customer by keeping the following question in mind: "What does this customer need and how can I provide it?" |
| 3. Express empathy to the customer. | Once a customer has had a chance to vent, convey that you understand his/her situation, as opposed to always agreeing with what has been said. The following are sample "I-messages" that show empathy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I see what you mean.• That must be very upsetting.• I recognize why you feel that way.• I understand how frustrating this must be.• I apologize for the inconvenience this has caused you. |
| 4. Begin active problem solving. | Ask questions that clarify the cause of the customer's problem so that you can begin to actively solve the problem. Be sure to listen to everything that is said and not jump to conclusions. Remember, upset customers don't always present all of the facts. You may need to summarize your understanding of what a customer tells you and have the customer verify whether or not you "got it right." |
| 5. Mutually agree on the solution. | After you have gathered all of the facts, work with the customer to come up with a solution. Explain the steps that you will take to implement the solution and check that this meets the customer's needs. Remember, don't promise what you can't deliver. Be honest and realistic when telling a customer what you will do. |
| 6. Follow up. | Follow up with customers by phone, email, or letter to check that the solution worked. If the customer is not satisfied, continue to look for another workable solution to the problem. |

Lesson 6.4: Did You Hear What I Said?

Listening-Skill Questionnaire

It takes concentration and skills to effectively listen. Complete the following questionnaire by indicating which listening skills you use well and which you need improvement.

- ___ I am good at knowing when to speak and when to listen.
- ___ I make eye contact.
- ___ I use comfortable and accepting body language.
- ___ I listen for the other person's feelings, not just to the words they say.
- ___ I am sensitive to the speaker's unstated feelings as well as to what the speaker says explicitly.
- ___ I take notes when listening in order to remember information or better understand a complex or important idea.
- ___ I paraphrase what other people say to me.
- ___ I don't interrupt when someone is speaking.
- ___ I listen openly when others disagree with me or have different ideas. I may not accept what they say, but I'm willing to consider their opinions.
- ___ I remember important ideas of others.
- ___ I am willing to express my feelings.
- ___ I don't complete other people's sentences even when I think I know what they are going to say next.
- ___ I don't think of what I'm going to say next while the other person is talking.
- ___ I ask the person questions in order to get more information and show that I am interested in what she/he is saying.
- ___ I let others know when I'm confused about what they are saying instead of pretending that I understand when I really don't.
- ___ I am aware of the body language of others.
- ___ I am comfortable with silence.
- ___ I help others find solutions to problems by listening and being able to offer ideas.

Lesson 6.4: Did You Hear What I Said?

How Do Good Listeners View the World?

People who are good listeners have a certain way of looking at the world around them.

1. Good listeners believe that listening to others is important. They take the time to listen to others. People trust them and usually openly share their problems and concerns with them. Because they take the time to listen, they make valuable employees and superior executives.
2. Good listeners believe that everyone has something valuable to say. These listeners don't just listen to people who are in higher positions, they also listen to people who are just starting out.
3. Good listeners believe that feelings are as important as facts. When they listen to you, they not only pay attention to the words you say, but also to the words that you are not saying. They pay close attention to your body language and tone of voice. If you said that you were happy with your job, but looked down and didn't seem happy, the good listener would ask you more questions in order to be sure of what you were really saying.
4. Good listeners believe that when they really listen to someone, they help to increase that person's self-esteem. They believe that people feel cared for, valued and important when they are listened to.
5. Good listeners let the speaker control the conversation. They don't interrupt in order to change the topic of conversation.
6. Good listeners believe that people are capable of solving their own problems. They don't try to solve other people's problems, or tell them what to do. They realize that the more people talk about a problem, the more likely they will come up with their own solutions to that problem.

Integrated Curriculum for Achieving Necessary Skills. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.literacynet.org/icans/chapter05/howdo.html>.

Lesson 6.5: It's Only a Voice or Is It?

It's All in How You Say It

How you handle yourself on the phone reflects not only on you, but also the business for which you work. Read each of the following sample phrases and create an alternative phrase that provides a friendlier, more customer-service oriented tone.

| Instead of . . . | Say . . . |
|---|-----------|
| Hold on. | |
| Who is this? | |
| We can't do that. | |
| I can take a message. | |
| Someone else is responsible for that. | |
| Like I told you before. | |
| No one in this office would have told you that. | |
| If you would just listen for a moment. | |
| I don't know. | |
| Just a second. | |

Lesson 6.5: It's Only a Voice or Is It?

Self Check for Telephone Customer Service

- ___ I always have a smile on my face when I answer a call.
- ___ I answer calls promptly – on the first ring if possible and certainly by the third ring.
- ___ I identify myself and my company.
- ___ I listen carefully to the caller.
- ___ I use correct English when answering a call and when making one.
- ___ I take messages completely and accurately.
- ___ I indicate my respect for the caller by using his/her name.
- ___ I explain the reason and/or ask permission before I transfer a call.
- ___ I request permission before I put a call on hold.
- ___ I follow through on promises I make to callers.

Lesson 7.1: A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started

General Alphabetizing Rules

1. Alphabetize by comparing names unit by unit and letter by letter. When first units are identical, move on to compare the second units; when the second units are identical, move on to compare the third units, etc.
2. Nothing comes before something. If a name is missing a third unit, it comes before one that does.

Examples:

| Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 |
|---------|----------|---------|
| James | Robert | |
| James | Robert | Allen |
| Lansing | Bus | Depot |
| Lansing | Business | College |

3. All punctuation marks, special characters, and diacritical marks should be ignored when indexing, such as punctuation marks found in names including periods, apostrophes, quotation marks, hyphens, dashes, and accent marks.

4. Numbers Arabic (1, 2, 3) and Roman (I, II, III) numbers are filed sequentially before alphabetic characters. Arabic numerals precede all Roman numerals

Rules for Filing Personal Names

Rule 1: Personal Names

The last name is the first filing unit, followed by the first name or initial, and then the middle name or initial. Initials, such as M, are filed before a name, such as Martha. This is often termed the nothing comes before something rule.

| As Written | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| M. Smith | Smith | M | |
| Mary Smith | Smith | Mary | |
| Mary A Smith | Smith | Mary | A |
| Mary Anne Smith | Smith | Mary | Anne |

Rule 2: Personal Names with Prefixes

Last names that include a prefix are filed as one unit, even if a space or punctuation follows the prefix. Examples are St., O', Van, etc.

| As Written | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 |
|-------------------|----------|--------|--------|
| James J. McDaniel | McDaniel | James | J |

Rule 3: Hyphenated Names

Remove the hyphen, combine the names, and file as one unit.

| As Written | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Mary-Kaye Smith | Smith | MaryKaye | |
| Deland Smith-Vos | SmithVos | Deland | |

Rules for Businesses and Organizations

Names of businesses and organizations are indexed in a similar fashion to names of individuals. However, the names of businesses and organizations should be indexed in the order used by the business or organization.

Note: When the name of a business or organization begins with “The”, place that word at the end as the last indexing unit.

Examples:

| As Written | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | Unit 4 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| A-1 Restaurant Services | A-1 | Restaurant | Services | |
| The Central Trust Company | Central | Trust | Company | The |
| Deland Pizza | Deland | Pizza | | |
| Michigan Power | Michigan | Power | | |
| Michigan Power and Light | Michigan | Power | and | Light |

Lesson 7.1: A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started

Time-Out for Filing

Alphabetize the following names of individuals and companies using the rules from the A Few Filing Rules to Get You Started handout.

As Written

Maria Rodriguez-Gonzalez

Rochester Animal Shelter

Harold Award

Jason S. O'Dell

Howard Awres

Irene Dale-Scott

Northwest Michigan Waste Management

ABC Communications

Howard Jason Awres

Maria S. Gonzalez

Jason Samuel O'Dell

H. Awres

Rochester Police Department

Lesson 7.4: Payroll

Payroll Deductions

Payroll deductions are mandatory federal or state deductions from an employee's income, or voluntary deductions authorized by the employees. These mandatory deductions include: payroll, state and sales, state income, federal income, and FICA taxes.

Payroll Taxes

Federal and state law requires employers to deduct from the employee's income, payroll taxes such as federal income taxes, social security, Medicare, and state income tax or municipal income taxes where applicable. Michigan is among the states that do not use a tax bracket system for their state income tax. Instead, Michigan applies a flat tax rate to all incomes. You can calculate what you'll owe in state income tax by applying the rate to your taxable income.

Federal Income Taxes

Federal income taxes are mandatory deductions from employee's salaries and wages. These are paid to the federal government to assist with expenditures such as building interstate highways and national defense.

Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA)

FICA requires employers to pay 15.3 percent to the federal government, shared equally (7.65%) between employer and employee. These contributions are paid for social security (retirement income) and Medicare (health insurance). Self-employed persons pay 15.3 percent.

Voluntary Deductions

These deductions, authorized by the employee, include deferred compensation plans, tax deferred annuities, dependent care, insurance plans, and flexible spending.

Read more about **Types of Payroll Deductions** at eHow.com: http://www.ehow.com/facts_5374065_types-payroll-deductions.html#ixzz12HEXIXY6