

Learning and Teaching Resources for Learning English through Workplace Communication

The resources presented here are meant to be examples to show the types of activities/materials that can be designed and developed to help students to work on the various focuses of the module in the *Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) (2007)* (hereafter referred to as “SoWs”). Teachers are encouraged to adapt, modify and develop their own resources or make use of other relevant materials to suit the needs and interests of their students.

Lessons 5-7: Starting a scrapbook of a selected trade/business (please refer to SoWs pp.110-111)

Activity

Choose a topic that is relevant to the world of business/work. News cuttings on a narrow or specialised topic are likely to contain quite a lot of new vocabulary, so make sure that your topic is one that interests you and may be useful to you. Try also to ensure that it is a topic which will be in the news often enough for you to be able to find and choose without difficulty a variety of suitable articles. You can look for material in newspapers and magazines as well as on the Internet.

Examples of the sorts of topics you may wish to select:

- a particular industry (e.g. the hotel industry in Hong Kong)
- corruption and fraud in business
- a particular large company (e.g. Cathay Pacific, Google, HSBC)
- a commodity (e.g. oil)
- the property market
- a particular development
- a currency
- new hi-tech products
- “green” concerns and industry

The aim of the scrapbook is for you to develop your knowledge of a topic of interest to you and to extend your vocabulary. With this in mind, you need to browse printed material, select articles, read them carefully ensuring you understand them and check new vocabulary. Useful activities include writing brief summaries of the articles, choosing a number of words to learn and practise using, and making your own comments on the material.

Examples of scrapbook entries

Example 1

An article entitled “McDonald’s seeking star makeover” from the BBC website

(available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4655053.stm>; or a headline search can be conducted at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/>)

Summary:

McDonald’s is trying to give itself a new image, healthier and more up-to-date. For this reason it intends to create a new uniform for its staff. It plans to use a top designer for this task.

Words:

1. makeover – a set of changes to improve someone/thing
Look at her now – she has had a real makeover!
2. leading – very successful
Jimmy is our leading salesman here.
3. contemporary – modern
I don’t listen to much old music. I like the contemporary stuff.
4. franchise – the right to sell someone else’s product
If we are successful we sell franchises all around the world.

Comment:

After seeing *Super-size Me* I can understand why McDonald’s wants to improve its image and has introduced some new menu items. I like the red uniforms in Hong Kong. McDonald’s here is a friendly place where everyone goes. I don’t think they should be overly smart.

Example 2

An article entitled “Cathay Pacific releases May 2005 traffic figures” from the Cathay Pacific website

(available at:

http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_INTL/aboutus/pressroomdetails?refID=76f625318ffaa010VgnVCM22000022d21c39_____ or a headline search can be conducted at http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_INTL/aboutus)

Summary:

Despite the high price of oil and more capacity being available, Cathay Pacific managed to attract more passengers and cargo than last year. The company is pleased about this but realises its profits may still be affected by the cost of fuel.

Words:

1. year-on-year – a change from one year to the next
We are aiming for a year-on-year growth rate of 5 %.
2. freight – cargo
A lot of freight moves on rail in China.
3. load factor – average use of full capacity
What is the load factor on the Wanchai-Mongkok route? I never seem to see so many people.
4. over-capacity – too much supply
There are too many flights to Singapore. With such over-capacity profit is impossible.

Comment:

The airline industry must be very difficult. World events can change people’s plans and recently the

price of fuel has gone up and up. The new budget airlines are also challenging the big companies, but Cathay Pacific still manages to do well. It is a big employer in Hong Kong so I hope that will continue.

Lessons 23-24: Handling complaints (please refer to SoWs pp.114-115)

Activity

1. Study the notes on handling complaints on p.6.
2. In pairs, practise making and handling complaints by using one set of the role cards provided.
3. Do the role-play again by choosing another set of role cards and exchanging roles.

Role cards

Set 1

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in charge of returns and refunds at a department store. • A customer wants to return a shirt that he bought last week. • The shirt is creased and has stains on it. You believe he has used it and therefore cannot be returned. • It is most unlikely that you can give him a refund, but you need to be polite to the customer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are trying to return a shirt that you bought and wore to a party where it got stained. • You found the shirt to be a bit tight and no one told you it looked nice at the party. • You decided you do not want it. You want to return it and get a refund. • You are quite an aggressive person.

Set 2

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are a sales assistant in a boutique. • Your company has an absolute policy of no returns on sale goods. • You find the person complaining rather attractive. • You are a friendly person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You bought a jumper in a sale. • There was a notice clearly saying 'No returns'. • The jumper does not fit you. • You do not give up easily. • You are a polite person.

Set 3

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your shop sells expensive brand name goods. • You are the manager. • You aim to treat your customers with great charm to keep your company image. • Goods can normally be returned up to one week after purchase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A month ago you bought a bag in an expensive shop. • You put it unopened in a cupboard for a special occasion just coming. • You have now unwrapped it and cannot understand why you bought such an unsuitable colour – you don't want the bag. • You are willing to beg.

Set 4

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are a sales assistant in a well-known shoe shop. • You can see the shoes have been worn and could not be resold. • You try to persuade the customer to keep the shoes and suggest ways to make them comfortable. • You suddenly lose your temper though you know you should not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You bought some shoes a few days ago. • You have worn them and they are slightly marked on the soles. • They aren't very comfortable and you no longer want them. • You are ready to try different ways to get a refund.

Set 5

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are new to the shop. • You are innocent. • You are afraid to give a refund. • You polish the watch and make the scratch almost invisible. • You suggest putting a new glass face on the watch free of charge. • You suddenly give in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You rashly bought a new watch that you could not afford. • You are desperate to get your money back. • You have scratched a small mark on the watch face in order to get them to take it back. • You are a determined person.

Notes on handling complaints

You must be polite when handling complaints. Take note of the following:

- listen carefully to what the customer says
- do not accuse the customer of being wrong/cheating/using the product improperly
- use words like *seems* to soften comments
- remain calm, helpful and smiling
- try to do as the customer wants
- offer something at least to give the customer face
- make it sound as if you are taking special trouble for this customer
- say you are just following company policy
- offer to bring a more senior person to hear the complaint
- use the language of apology
(e.g. “*I’m sorry...* ”, “*I’m afraid...* ”)
- use polite suggestions
(e.g. “*Maybe you could...* ”, “*Might it be an idea if...* ”)
- do not respond to insult
- avoid asking too many questions as though it is an investigation

Lessons 25-27: Planning the final project (please refer to SoWs pp.114-115)

Activity

1. In groups of 4-5, decide on a major business task or event that you would like to set for the group project. The task or event may be related to the area of business that you have been working on in this module. You may also work on a completely different trade or business if you prefer.
2. When you have decided on your project, make a list of the sub-tasks that would need to be carried out in order to complete it. These may include some of the following:
 - role play a business meeting, take notes and write minutes;
 - draw up a plan for the opening of a new shop;
 - write a report on a small business, suggesting ways to improve its image;
 - prepare advertising material for a new small business;
 - role play and record an interview board discussing which candidate to appoint to a post;
 - draw up a code of good practice for the staff of a company;
 - prepare a set of email messages inquiring about some goods, replying, negotiating over quantity, price, etc., and confirming a deal; and
 - prepare slides for a presentation on the performance of an imaginary local company; etc.
3. Decide on 2-3 sub-tasks that your group will carry out. Make plans on how to carry them out and assign roles for each of the tasks.

Examples of projects and sub-tasks

Example 1

Project:

To design a Valentine's dinner menu for two for a hotel restaurant

Possible sub-tasks:

- Holding a meeting to discuss the matter
- Conducting a survey to find out about people's interests and preferences
- Designing the menu
- Producing a piece of promotional material for the restaurant
- Doing a presentation highlighting the special features of the menu

Example 2

Project:

To launch a new line of skin care products

Possible sub-tasks:

- Holding a meeting to discuss packaging and promotional strategies
- Designing the packaging of the products
- Producing a plan to advertise and promote the products
- Preparing a pamphlet to introduce the products
- Planning a programme for a 3-hour promotional event at a shopping arcade

Example 3

Project:

Setting up a small gift shop

Possible sub-tasks:

- Doing research on
 - an appropriate location for the shop
 - sources of supply for various goods
- Holding a meeting to decide on the shop location and types of goods to carry
- Writing letters or email messages to potential suppliers, inquiring and negotiating about some goods over price, availability, quantity for order, etc.
- Preparing a flyer for the opening of the new shop

Other possible tasks:

Designing logos, uniforms, etc.

Lessons 28-31: Making sales presentations (please refer to SoWs pp.114-115)

Activity

1. In groups, choose a product that you are interested in. This may be:
 - a manufactured product (e.g. a line of mobile phone, a new laptop computer, a magazine);
 - a service (e.g. a bank, a caterer, cleaning service); or
 - a place (e.g. a holiday destination, a shopping mall, a new real estate development)
2. Find information about this product to help you to prepare a presentation on it for a group of potential customers.
3. Your presentation should include a clear introduction of the product, highlighting its features or explaining how it works or operates. You should also give the audience reasons why they should purchase the product. Visual aids such as slides or handouts to make your presentation more effective should be considered.

Teachers' notes

**For the more able students, teachers may include "You should be prepared to answer the audience's questions at the end of your presentation." in Step 3.*

Example

Situation

You sell beauty products for men and women. You are addressing an audience of owners of beauty shops, hair salons and spas as well as department store buyers. You wish to introduce them to your Garden of Eden skin-care range.

(The various parts of this presentation could be spoken by one person or a few.)

Hello, everyone. It's lovely to meet you all here today. For professional reasons I tend to notice people's skin. Unsurprisingly, considering your business, I can see some really healthy, soft, smooth skin here today. I am sure that you have to work hard to keep it like that. Hong Kong is not kind to skin, is it? There's the heat, strong sun, dust, pollution, salt, wind, air conditioning and so on. One long attack on the skin all day long. We need help if we are going to protect and preserve our skin in the condition we want. The product line I am going to present to you today can give you all the help you want and I hope that you will be interested in offering it to your customers.

The Garden of Eden, the beginning of life when all was sweet and innocent, a time of early perfection - this is the ideal name for our products as they are based on the herbs and fruits of nature. We have large advanced research laboratories and top dermatologists work on our products but their ingredients are pure, simple and organic, the garden's own gifts to us.

The Garden of Eden range (none of which has been tested on animals) is extensive. Our products are designed and packaged for the young and not so young, for men and women, for all skin types. They can help teenagers to avoid skin trouble, bring out the full beauty of our skin in our prime and hold off wrinkling and aging. We have lotions and creams, masks, scrubs, cleansers, moisturisers, and oils. They are delicately scented with flowers, fruits and herbs suitable for different people and different situations.

Let me show you some of our skin-care products in a little more detail.

Here is our **Green Tea Body Lotion**. It is heavenly to rub this on after a shower. The green tea extracts and a variety of fruit acids, all powerful anti-oxidants, in the lotion make a real difference to your skin as it penetrates to the lower layers, leaving your skin like silk.

Now for the **Citrus Face Mask**. The enzymes in the mask clean the skin and give it a new clarity that almost shines out. Lines are smoothed away and extra ingredients like apricot kernel and grape seed guarantee that no dirt is left anywhere in or on the skin.

Marigold Skin Care is for teenagers and is the best cure for acne and teenage skin problems we have yet seen. It gently dries out the spots leaving no marks behind and naturally disinfects the skin.

Elderflower and Raspberry Cocktail Eye Cream keeps the area around your eyes clear and wrinkle-free. The oils from the blossoms soften the skin and lighten it. This is a really essential product for anyone who spends hours a day at a computer screen.

Papaya Anti-Aging Cream - actually this wonder cream contains the extracts of twelve herbs and ten fruits. The scent is a glorious mixture of passion fruit, pineapple, peach, mango and, well, it is more than I can describe. This is the ideal product for mature skin that needs extra help. Pine Steam Facial is for gentlemen. It is a very pleasant sensation to hold your face over this rich steam and feel the skin relaxing and the muscles settling into their natural position.

Tomato, Cucumber, Avocado and Celery Night Moisturizer is a powerful product that can repair the DNA of your skin and make it more elastic. As you sleep your face becomes younger. Aloe vera and jojoba oil are also part of the magic formula. And as I mentioned earlier all our natural ingredients are organically farmed or gathered from nature's own garden.

That was just a small sample of our products.

We have a full programme of promotion planned for Hong Kong with advertisements in all the major magazines of a high enough standard for our products. We are thrilled to tell you the major film star Gloria Chang has agreed to endorse our range and she will be appearing in our adverts. Large advertising hoardings have been booked around the major shopping areas. There will be product displays in major shopping malls.

Shops and salons that carry our products will be offered our fullest support in terms of display materials, posters, leaflets and shop visits by our beauty experts. And we are delighted to offer you, our direct customers, an amazing series of discounts so you can get used to and

explore our fabulous products.

Beauty products need beautiful packaging and I hope you agree after seeing some of our range that our designers have produced containers that one can hardly bear to throw away - so imaginative and colourful are they. For those customers with plenty of money to spend we have our luxury range with rare and precious ingredients. We urge you to stock our travel kits and gift boxes, exquisitely wrapped sets of our skin-care products, ideal for birthdays and anniversaries or St Valentine's Day.

The Garden of Eden: Adam and Eve were not supposed to eat the apples there but, I assure you, all our fruits and herbs are for your enjoyment and use. Please come and sample some now.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Teachers' notes

**This example is included here for teachers' reference. It is not meant to be representative of the work students generally produce, though they should always be encouraged and helped to produce work of high quality.*

Lessons 32-34: Promotional materials (please refer to SoWs pp.116-117)

Activity 1

1. In groups of 3, look at the advertising materials you have collected and brought to class to identify some of the salient features of these materials.
2. Make a list of these features.
3. Compare your list with that of another group, and look at examples of features that are not on your own list.
4. Then compare your list with the list on p.15.

Teachers' notes

**It would be good if students analysed a selection of promotional materials and came to their own conclusions about common characteristics of advertising language before they were given the list. To support the less able students, however, teachers might like to prepare a shorter list of advertising language features and go over it with them before they attempt the activity.*

Features of advertising language

- **Direct address to the consumer**
(e.g. *"This is the car you have always dreamed of."*)
- **Questions**
(e.g. *"Could you do better?"*)
- **Word play**
(e.g. *"Purrfect cat food"*, *"Eggscellent Omelettes"*, *"Beanz mean Heinz"*)
- **Words beginning with the same letter**
(e.g. *"tasty tangy tomato juice"*)
- **Poems/songs/rhymes**
(e.g. *"Drink some milk/Smooth as silk"*)
- **Sentence fragments**
(e.g. *"Absolutely cool!"*)
- **Commands**
(e.g. *"Buy it today!"*)
- **Apt language**
(e.g. trendy slang, beautiful old words)
- **A selling point**
(e.g. price, taste, environmental friendliness)
- **An image**
(e.g. traditional, contemporary, scientific)
- **Promises**
(e.g. *"You'll feel stronger in minutes!"*)
- **Slogans**
(e.g. *"There are noodles and there are Wongs"*)
- **Celebrity endorsement**
- **Graphics**
- **Special offers**

Activity 2

Browse the websites below and answer the questions that follow.

A. <http://www.oldorchardjuice.com/>

1. Old Orchard is a brand of fruit juice. What image do they wish to give with their name?
2. “The power of pomegranates” – What do you notice about the sound of this phrase?
3. “Drink to your health.” Grammatically this phrase is a _____. Explain its meaning.

B. <http://www.accelerade.com/index2.php>

1. Comment on the name of the sports drink Accelerade.
2. “Accelerade. It’s what’s next.” This is an example of a _____.
3. Explain the phrase “Are you accelerated?”.

C. <http://www.speedstick.com/app/Speedstick/US/HomePage.cvsp>

1. Comment on the name of this male deodorant.
2. “Micro-technology for maximum protection” – What image is the product aiming for?
3. “Think you know a rod?” – Who is the advertisement speaking to?
4. Why is there a picture of “Alex Rodriguez, Baseball MVP Speed Stick Team Member” in the advertisement?

Suggested answers:

Activity 2

- A.
1. Tradition, reliability
 2. The repetition of the *po* sound
 3. Command. Usually you drink someone else’s health – wishing them good health – but here if you drink their juice you will increase your own health. Word play is being used.
- B.
1. Soft drinks often end in *ade* (*lemonade*); *accelerate* is a strong sporting word. Word play joins the two ideas.
 2. Slogan.
 3. More word play, treating the trade name as a real verb.
- C.
1. Deodorant often comes in the form of a *stick*; *speed* is a word that appeals to the sporty type, and *it* also means speed in restoring freshness. The name matches the image that the product is trying to create.
 2. The product’s desired image is sport and speed. There is a danger boys will think a deodorant feminine so a strong male image is needed.
 3. The target consumer (given the picture of a sportsman, probably a teenage boy).
 4. To attract the target consumer and show the product has been endorsed by people he respects.

Lessons 35-40: Holding meetings and preparing minutes (please refer to SoWs pp.116-117)

Role-play (1)

Situation:

You are members of the Students Association. You hold meetings regularly to plan and organise student activities, and review student affairs. It is the end of the school year and the association has to make an annual plan for student activities in the next school year.

Task:

Your group is going to start a meeting.

The chairperson/head prefect will call the meeting to order, enquire about the minutes and confirm them, then lead a discussion on what activities the Association should organise for fellow students in the next school year (item 3 on the agenda below). After the meeting, your group has to write up and submit the minutes.

Agenda

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Annual plan for student activities (20XX-20XX)
4. A.O.B.

Roles:

Chairperson/head prefect

What to do:

- Get members' attention and start the meeting
- Check with members if there are any questions about the minutes of the previous meeting
- Confirm the minutes
- Explain the purpose of the meeting and lead discussion on activities to be organised by the Association for the next school year (agenda item 3):
 - different types of activities that would be of interest to students
 - when these activities should be carried out
 - how they could be organised

Secretary

- Refer members to the school calendar for next year whenever necessary to make sure that the plan is feasible in terms of time schedule
- Remind members of similar activities conducted in the past and whether they were successful or popular – to help members to make a decision for next year's plan

- Member/teacher adviser
- Suggest activities as well as give your views and advice on the various activities suggested by members
 - Help to work out an annual plan for student activities to be organised by the Association
- Member(s)/student(s)
- Give your views and suggestions on
 - different types of activities that you think will be of interest to your fellow schoolmates
 - when these activities should be carried out
 - how they could be organised

Role-play (2)**Situation:**

You are members of the School Canteen Committee. You hold meetings half-yearly to review matters related to the catering services provided by the School Canteen. Recently, the Committee has received several complaints about the quality of food and services provided by the Canteen.

Task:

Your group is going to start a meeting.

The chairperson/teacher will call the meeting to order, enquire about the minutes and confirm them. The secretary will report on some follow-up work carried out in accordance to what was suggested in the previous meeting regarding cleanliness and the general environment of the canteen. The chairperson then reports the complaint cases and leads a brief discussion (item 3 on the agenda below) on how the school canteen could improve on the services and quality of food they provide. After the meeting, your group has to write up and submit the minutes.

<p><u>Agenda</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting 2. Matters arising from the minutes 3. Improvement on services and food quality 4. A.O.B.
--

Roles:

Chairperson/school teacher

What to do:

- Get members' attention and start the meeting
- Check with members if there are any questions about the minutes of the previous meeting
- Confirm the minutes
- Ask the secretary to report on follow-up work since the previous meeting
- Provide details about the complaint cases and lead discussion on actions to be taken (agenda item 3)

Secretary

- Report on some follow-up work done to improve the cleanliness and general environment of the canteen

Member/Canteen caterer

- Discuss the complaint cases
- Give your views and suggestions on how the canteen can improve its services and food quality

Member(s)/student(s)

- Discuss the complaint cases
- Give your views and suggestions on how the canteen can improve its services and food quality

Role-play (3)**Situation:**

You are senior employees of a cleaning company that is hired by other companies to keep their offices clean. You hold weekly meetings to review recent developments.

Task:

Your group is going to start a meeting.

The chairperson/manager will call the meeting to order, enquire about the minutes, accept one change, ask the secretary to report on some follow-up work carried out on the environmental impact of cleaning products the company has used, and then lead a brief discussion (item 3 on the agenda below) on developing a “green policy” for the company. After the meeting, your group has to write up and submit the minutes.

<u>Agenda</u>
1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Development of a “green policy” for the company
4. A.O.B.

Roles:

Chairperson/manager

What to do:

- Get members’ attention and start the meeting
- Check with members if there are any questions about the minutes of the previous meeting
 - accept a change suggested by a member
- Ask the secretary to report on some follow-up on your cleaning products
- Lead discussion on agenda item 3

Secretary

- Report on some follow-up work carried out on the environmental impact of the cleaning products used by your company

Member/supervisor

- Raise a point from the minutes of the previous meeting which needs to be changed
- Give your views and suggestions on the development of a “green policy” for the company

Member(s)/team leader(s)

- Give your views and suggestions on the development of a “green policy” for the company

Teachers' notes

**The situations for the role-plays in this activity are of different levels of difficulty, drawing on students' varied background knowledge and personal experience. Teachers might like to select a situation according to students' interests and abilities.*

Lessons 41-44: Preparing for job interviews (please refer to SoWs pp.116-117)

Activity

1. Read some job advertisements and select one or two jobs that you are most interested in.
2. Form groups with classmates who are interested in the same job(s).
3. In groups, discuss and write notes on the following:
 - What sort of person is the company looking for?
 - What questions would be asked at an interview to find out if the applicant is a suitable person?
 - What answers to these questions would impress the interviewer(s)? What answers would discourage them?
 - What do you need to bring along to the job interview?
 - How should you present yourself at the interview?
 - What else do you need to pay attention to?
4. Hand in the notes you have written to your teacher for feedback. Refine your questions and answers based on the comments provided.
5. Making use of your revised notes, role-play the interview. Each group member should take turns to be the interviewer and interviewee. Attention should be also given to non-verbal matters during the interview.

Lessons 47-48: Sharing ideas on business ethics (please refer to SoWs pp.118-119)

Activity

In groups, select a topic/question from the following list, research for relevant information, and prepare for an oral report in class. Your report should not last for more than 5 minutes.

Topics/Questions to consider:

- How can a company be environmentally responsible?
- Should a business have a socially responsible hiring policy?
- What is the duty of business in relation to charities/the local community?
- Is it right for companies to make cold calls or send SMS to sell their products?
- What should a company's attitude towards corruption in places other than Hong Kong be?
- What should be a company's highest priority?
- Is it a company's duty to worry about the practices of its suppliers?
- What is a reasonable profit?
- Is it wrong to sell tobacco products?
- Should a company treat its employees better than the law demands? (Should minimum wage be set?)
- Should a business make decisions based on concern for employees' welfare or on profitability?