PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

JOAN AND ALAN BARTON
with
MIKE HEMMINGS
and
KATHERINE BENZINSKI

Illustrated by
LIAM POWELL

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The Pack

Practical Communication Skills for the Workplace aims to help students to identify, develop and record evidence of communication skills they need to use to enter the workplace, focusing in particular on the practical skills required. Activities are carefully targeted at those situations where communication through verbal and non-verbal skills is relevant to effectiveness in the workplace: listening and speaking and reading and writing, including the correct use of equipment, such as telephones, faxes and computers (e-mails) for communication purposes.

Student Suitability

The pack is designed to be used with lower and mixed ability students at Key Stage 4 and is suitable for one hour lessons. These lessons can form part of a Careers, PSHE, English or tutorial programme. However, the pack can also be delivered by teachers in other curriculum areas, as the lessons relate to and cross reference with other subjects.

Using The Pack

The worksheets in the pack are designed to be used independently, although some can be linked together to form small projects. Where this is the case, it is indicated on the appropriate worksheets. The lesson plans provided opposite each worksheet give the page aims, preparation needed, classroom management advice, curriculum links, assessment and evaluation strategies and extension activities. It is presumed that teachers have access to pens, paper and chalkboard and that students are used to working both individually and in large and small groups.

The People Involved

Joan and Alan Barton were the consultant authors for this pack. Joan Barton is a freelance consultant and trainer, ex-advisory teacher, careers officer and careers co-ordinator; Alan Barton is an experienced teacher and vocational trainer and assessor. He has worked with young people with learning and behavioural difficulties and as a consultant and trainer with a wide range of people preparing for and returning to the workplace. Mike Hemmings, the editorial mentor, is a full-time teacher. Katherine Benzinski was the writer/editor and Liam Powell the illustrator. The Chalkface format was created by Susan Quilliam.

Photocopy Laws

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How To Contact Us

The Chalkface Project, PO Box 111, Milton Keynes MK11 1XN
Tel: 0800 781 8858
Fax: 0845 458 5344
E-mail: sales@chalkface.com
Website: www.chalkface.com
Homework website: www.iamclever.com

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6 WORK TALK
Students learn some new words about work and compare ways in which people talk, and the language they use, in work situations and other settings.

8 LISTENING SKILLS
Students identify the non-verbal skills involved in active listening.

10 I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY
Students practise using listening skills in a workplace simulation and identify areas for development.

12 IT'S FOR YOU!
Students identify the ways in which using telephones in work situations differs from using them in other situations.

14 LET ME EXPLAIN
Students identify skills and approaches for giving instructions over the telephone.

16 YOU TAKE A LEFT...
Students practise giving directions over the telephone.

18 PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE
Students have the opportunity to practise leaving clear and appropriate telephone messages when required to do so.

20 WHILE YOU WERE OUT...
Students learn how they can receive and convey telephone messages that are clear and contain accurate and useable information – and the skills needed to do this.

22 LET ME GET THIS CLEAR
Students analyse the skills needed to receive and clarify instructions in the workplace.

24 GIVING INSTRUCTIONS
Students identify the need for clarity and structure when giving instructions to others.

26 YOU'RE ON FIRST
Students learn about the skills needed to produce a short presentation.

28 WRITING PRESENTATIONS
Students prepare a detailed plan for a presentation and learned how to evaluate its effectiveness.

30 YOU HAVE A MESSAGE
Students identify how memos are used in the workplace and the skills needed to write clear and concise memos.

32 DEAR MR BROWN
Students learn to identify the main components of a formal letter at work.

34 HI THERE, MIKE!
Students consider how informal letters can be used in business and how this differs from the use of formal letters.

36 YOU HAVE MAIL
Students learn the purposes and procedures for using e-mail in the workplace.

38 DON'T SHOUT!
Students identify appropriate e-mail skills and etiquette.

40 TAKE NOTE
Students practise note-taking skills in a workplace situation.

42 GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS
Students demonstrate skills analysing the messages in advertisements and produce an example of their own.

44 THIS IS ME
Students learn to recognise the main parts of a CV, plus the skills they need to produce one, and create a simple CV for themselves.

46 PLEASE PAY US
Students have the opportunity to identify different types of invoice, the ways they are used in work and demonstrate the skills involved in writing them.

48 CREDIT NOTES
Students use their skills of analysis to identify reasons for using credit notes, plus the advantages and disadvantages for customers.

50 FAX FACTS
Students have the opportunity to identify the procedures, practices, purposes and skills needed for using faxes in the workplace.
52 WRITING REPORTS
Students use a structured approach to writing a report for use in work and identify the written communication skills they need to employ to do this.

54 WRITING INSTRUCTIONS
Students learn the importance of being clear and concise when writing instructions.

56 THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT
Students identify and practise skills for writing instructions – and checking them for clarity by asking someone else to follow those instructions.

58 STRONG WORDS
Students identify the different aspects of verbal communication skills used when being assertive.

60 HOW AM I DOING?
Students list and evidence the practical communication skills they have identified through the worksheet activities and then produce development action points.

APPENDICES

62 (1) TEACHER PLANNING GRID
For use with the whole pack.

63 (2) STUDENT PORTFOLIO TRACKING SHEET
For use with any of the pages.

64 (3) PHOTOCOPY INSTRUCTIONS
For use with I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY, pages 10/11.

65 (4) BURGER BAR
For use with I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY, pages 10/11.

66 (5) TELEPHONE MESSAGES
For use with WHILE YOU WERE OUT…, pages 20/21.

67 (6) FINISH THE DRAWINGS
For use with GIVING INSTRUCTIONS, pages 24/25.

68 (7) PRESENTATION PLANNER
For use with YOU’RE ON FIRST, pages 26/27 and WRITING PRESENTATIONS, pages 28/29.

69 (8) MEMO MESSAGES
For use with YOU HAVE A MESSAGE, page 30/31.

70 (9) MEMO FORMATS
For use with YOU HAVE A MESSAGE, page 30/31.

71 (10) CUSTOMER ENQUIRY
For use with DEAR MR BROWN, pages 32/33.

72 (11) WHO’S AT THE MEETING?
For use with TAKE NOTE, pages 40/41.

73 (12) CV FORMAT GUIDE
For use with THIS IS ME, pages 44/45.

74 (13) PAYMENT DUE!
For use with PLEASE PAY US, pages 46/47.
Guidelines for using this pack

The Lesson Plans opposite each page support the use of each specific page. These more general guidelines give advice on using the whole pack and could form the basis of in-service training prior to using it. Please remember to photocopy both the relevant lesson plan and these general guidelines if you are copying worksheets for a supply teacher to use.

Preparing for the lesson

- Specific preparation requirements are in the ‘Preparation required’ section of the lesson plan. You should always have available copies of the worksheet, pens, pencils and chalkboard or equivalent.
- Allow approximately an hour’s lesson for each worksheet.
- You can link worksheets to make a double lesson or a project over a number of sessions or an event in your school; linked pages are indicated under heading ‘Links to other worksheets’.
- Possible classroom management challenges that may be created by the page and any issues of a sensitive nature are brought to your attention in the lesson plan under the heading ‘Points to be aware of’. You will probably want to check whether these are relevant to your class.
- The Teacher Planning Grid, Appendix 1, page 62, is included for you to plan for the most effective use of the activities and evidence provided by students to link with your own recording processes and the contribution of the evidence to other curriculum areas, learning outcomes and students’ progress files.
- The Student Portfolio Tracking Sheet, Appendix 2, page 63, is included for you to use with your students. They will be able to use this to record evidence of learning, which could contribute to assessments in other curriculum areas and their progress files.

During the lesson

Each activity aims to encourage students to identify and record evidence of communication skills. It is important that you emphasise both the skills aspects of each activity and ways of wording evidence for the Student Portfolio Tracking Sheet (see above).

Activities are worded so that you can choose how to manage each in the classroom. However, as a general guideline, we suggest that you move from ‘introductory chat’ to individual work, through paired or small group discussion, then to pooling ideas as a class. Where a specific approach is required that differs from this, it is indicated in the lesson plan. Each sheet contains a number of activities. These fall into several basic formats:

- Thought starters
- Written work
- Reading
- Oral work
- Brainstorming
- Working in role or imagine exercises
- Research.

Where relevant, you may choose to allow students with poor writing skills to work on the sheet and mark, underline or colour to show understanding. Where extended writing or copying is required, you could modify the task and set a precise target for students who work very slowly, inaccurately or untidily. You may find it useful to mark sections which you expect students to complete with a fluorescent pen. Where a different approach might be more appropriate for less able or more able students, this is highlighted in the ‘Differentiation’ section of the lesson plan.

Following up on the lesson

The lesson plan includes suggestions for Extension Activities. These are usually designed to carry the topic into a double lesson, or to provide the opportunity for out-of-classroom work.

Web-based homework

In this pack we have included on-line homework activities at our website, www.iamclever.org. Each homework has the same title as the worksheet. If you have access to the web either at home or at school you can take advantage or our web-based homework activities. Students work on-line and send their work directly to your personal homepage on our website. The system is secure, easy to use and has been shown to be very motivating for the students.

Every UK Secondary school is already registered on the system. All you have to do is add yourself as a teacher so that your students can send work to you. Simply go to our main website, www.chalkface.com, click the ‘log in’ button and follow the instructions from there. The whole process takes about two minutes.
## LESSON PLAN – WORK TALK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcome</th>
<th>By the end of this lesson, students will have had the opportunity to learn some new words about work and compare ways in which people talk and the language they use, in work situations and other settings.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation required</td>
<td>Prepare enough worksheets for students to be able to use in pairs or groups. Make up word cards for students for the Extension Activity (below), or provide students with the materials to create the board game described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points to be aware of</td>
<td>It might be useful to provide students with dictionaries or alternative definitions of the words to choose from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 1: Timing</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>Individuals or pairs, then whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Encourage students to share their ideas with class and clarify the meaning of the words they are unsure of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 2: Timing</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>Small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Ask students to think about the ways in which they address adults now. When might they use first names, for instance, and how might this relate to the people they meet at work? What does the way in which they address someone tell them about their relationship with that person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 3: Timing</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>Working in groups, followed by feedback and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Make sure that the discussion includes comparisons between how you would speak to people at work and how you would speak to people outside of work, for example when with family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation strategy for low ability students</td>
<td>You might want to spend more time on the meanings of words listed and ask students to produce some ideas of their own, linked to jobs that you suggest, or that interest them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation strategy for high ability students</td>
<td>Ask more able students to produce a ten minute presentation that demonstrates how language at work relates to the relative positions of younger and older staff, clients and customers, and the communication skills that young people need to develop to use language correctly in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension activities for low ability students</td>
<td>Less able students could play a ‘Words for Work’ card game, matching relevant words to their meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension activities for high ability students</td>
<td>Ask students to produce a board game (in the style of Snakes and Ladders), which sets challenges related to new words and ways of speaking to different people in work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based homework</td>
<td>There is an on-line homework activity available for this lesson. You will need to register on <a href="http://www.iamclever.org">www.iamclever.org</a> and then send students to the site to find PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE, WORK TALK. For this homework, students complete the following: Show the new words you have learned in this lesson to two adults in work. What would their definitions be? Can they add more words to your list? Try to find six more words and e-mail these, with their meanings, to your teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment/evaluation</td>
<td>Portfolio evidence; review of portfolio evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-curricular links</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoS/references</td>
<td>Learning Outcomes from Careers Education and Guidance KS4: Plan for the next transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORK TALK

LEARNING OUTCOME: YOU WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY SOME NEW WORDS YOU MIGHT COME ACROSS AT WORK AND UNDERSTAND HOW TALKING AT WORK CAN DIFFER FROM OTHER SITUATIONS.

The words to find:
• EMPLOYEE
• EMPLOYER
• PAY-SLIP
• SALARY
• SHIFT WORK
• QUALITY CONTROL
• DOCUMENT
• SELF-SERVICE
• CHECKOUT
• BONUS
• ROTA
• ACCOUNT
• A QUOTE
• CUSTOMER SERVICE
• DEDUCTIONS
• CREDIT NOTE

1 When you start work, you will come across new words. Look at the words in the box, far left. Find them in the word search.

What do each of these words mean?

2 You will talk to different people at work. Make a list of the different kinds of people you might talk to.

Use the illustration to give you some ideas.

How would you address the following people:
• a customer
• your boss
• a young colleague?

Why would you use different ways to speak to them?

3 Think about the things you would NOT do when speaking to people at work. Would you use slang, swear, or shout, for example?

How would an employer expect you to behave when talking to people at work?

Using ideas from your first list, think of a job that interests you and decide on a new list of people you are likely to talk to in that particular job, describing how you would need to speak to each of them.
LENSON PLAN – LISTENING SKILLS

Learning outcome
By the end of this lesson, students will have had the opportunity to identify the non-verbal skills involved in active listening.

Links to other worksheets
This page could be used in conjunction with I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY, page 10/11.

Preparation required
Students will need instructions for Activity 2 (see Teacher strategy, below).

Points to be aware of
You might wish to choose a different topic for the listening activity.

ACTIVITY 1: Timing
15 minutes
Whole class
Teacher strategy
Brainstorm ideas from students, emphasising the importance of being aware of non-verbal signs they give and receive.

ACTIVITY 2: Timing
25 minutes
In pairs, then in fours to share ideas; then feed back ideas to the whole class
Give roles to each student in a pair: ‘speaker’ and ‘listener’. Help the students to keep to the times in the instructions and stress the need for the listeners not to speak. You will need to give SECRET instruction to the listeners: that they should listen carefully to what their partners are saying for the first two minutes and show they are doing so by the way they sit, look at their partners, smile and nod. After that time, they should then start to look away, fidget, look at their watches, read something, stare out of the window, and so on (to show that they are no longer listening). Ask the ‘speakers’ from the pairs to reflect on how they knew they were being listened to (or not) – and how this made them feel. Make notes of the clues they spotted. (You may find that some conversations dried up completely in the second stage).

ACTIVITY 3: Timing
20 minutes
In groups and whole-class feedback and discussion
Ask students to consider the times they felt that someone was really listening to them; the ways that they see TV interviewers behave and how teachers behave – to give them ideas about the positive aspects of listening.

Differentiation strategy for low ability students
The listening activity could be done by the teacher or another adult, to demonstrate the behaviours, if students might find the roleplay difficult.

Differentiation strategy for high ability students
Using clips from TV, ask students to analyse the different ways in which interviewers and debating forums demonstrate good listening skills. Ask them to nominate those who show the most – and the least – effective listening skills.

Extension activities for low ability students
Ask students to draw people with expressions (and body language, if they can) to show a range of feelings.

Extension activities for high ability students
Ask students to explore the role of body language in different situations – friendship, conflict, explaining a task at work, anger, assertiveness. They could roleplay some of the situations, in preparation for going on work experience.

Web-based homework
There is an on-line homework activity available for this lesson. You will need to register on www.iamclever.org and then send students to the site to find PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE, LISTENING SKILLS. For this homework, students complete the following:
Try to spot the non-verbal signs that people give you – at home, on the bus, in the shops, and so on. Make a list of the ways in which people show you they have been listening. E-mail your findings to your teacher.

Assessment/evaluation
Portfolio evidence; review of portfolio evidence.

Cross-curricular links
English – Drama; PSHE (1c)4I

PoS/references
Learning Outcomes from Careers Education and Guidance KS4:
Plan for the next transition
LEARNING OUTCOME: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE WHEN SOMEONE IS LISTENING TO YOU.

1. How do you know if someone is listening to you? List the signs.

2. What is happening in the illustrations? How can you tell which people are listening and which are not?

   What does it feel like when you are not being listened to?

   You and your partner are going to be given roles.

   SPEAKER: Talk to your partner for six minutes about **one** of the following subjects:

   - What I like to do most at weekends.
   - What I would like to do for my work experience and why this interests me.
   - What I did for my work experience and what I liked and disliked about it.
   - My favourite pop group and why I like them.

   LISTENER: Do **not speak**. You need to listen to your partner, in the way that you have been instructed by your teacher.

   Report back on how your speaking/listening exercise went.

3. Think about a job interview situation. Prepare a ‘Hints and Tips’ sheet for active listening, setting out the sort of things an interviewer might look for in the person being interviewed, to check that he or she was listening attentively.

   Share your ideas with your class.
**LESSON PLAN – I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcome</th>
<th>By the end of this lesson, students will have had the opportunity to practise using listening skills in a workplace simulation and have identified areas for development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link to previous lesson</td>
<td>This page could be used in conjunction with LISTENING SKILLS, page 8/9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation required</td>
<td>Prepare copies of instructions for Activity 2 – Appendices 3 and 4, ‘Photocopy instructions’ and ‘Burger bar’, pages 64 and 65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 1: Timing</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Explain that the activity is a quick starter about their listening skills. The accuracy of the feedback will give them an idea of how well listening skills were being used. Ask the class to share their experience and identify how their partners did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 2: Timing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Give each of the student pairs one of the sets of instructions. Ask the students to feedback details on how well they thought each listened and the skills they thought they used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY 3: Timing</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher strategy</td>
<td>Encourage students to think about how they could practise listening and repeating to improve their skills, how important it is to focus on what is being said and ensure they are not letting their thoughts wander. Take feedback on ideas to share these with the rest of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation strategy for low ability students</td>
<td>If there are students with lower reading abilities, you could use a simpler approach, by taking three points at a time and checking their understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation strategy for high ability students</td>
<td>Use more complicated instructions, with words students would not necessarily be familiar with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension activities for low ability students</td>
<td>Students could try some ‘Chinese Whispers’ activities to help their skills development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension activities for high ability students</td>
<td>‘I hear and I forget, I write and I remember, I do and I understand’ is a well-known saying. Ask students how they can overcome this when being given information verbally – and encourage them to explore the skills needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based homework</td>
<td>There is an on-line homework activity available for this lesson. You will need to register on <a href="http://www.iamclever.org">www.iamclever.org</a> and then send students to the site to find PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE, I HEAR WHAT YOU SAY. For this homework, students complete the following: Choose a friend and give each other a message over the telephone. Make it about three sentences long. Write your own message down, but not the one you are given. Try to remember what was said to you, then e-mail each other back with what you thought you heard. How well did each of you listen? E-mail a note to your teacher saying which listening skills you think you are able to use well.</td>
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</table>