COMMUNICATE IN THE WORKPLACE CERTIFICATE II IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION (PATHWAY – PARAPROFESSIONAL) BSBCMM201A

LEARNER'S GUIDE

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

BC1952

Communicate in the workplace

BSBCCMM201A

Learner's guide

Produced in partnership with

Contents

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Welcome

Welcome to the learner's guide for BSBCMM201A *Communicate in the workplace*.

The ability to communicate effectively in the workplace is essential. This unit will provide you with the knowledge and skills to help you communicate with colleagues, clients and anyone else you have contact with during your work day.

This guide will take you through the process of learning how to communicate in the workplace. Skills and knowledge will be developed in effective listening, questioning and non-verbal communication. Areas of explanation include:

- how to gather, convey and receive information
- completing routine written correspondence
- people skills
- respect, cultural differences and related legislation.

Qualification overview

This unit of competency, BSBCMM201A *Communicate in the workplace*, forms part of Certificate II in Building and Construction (Pathway – Paraprofessional) and is aimed at people who are considering a paraprofessional career in the residential building industry (as opposed to a career in the trade sector).

The course consists of 12 units of study and a period of work placement. These two components, study and work, will provide you with an introductory background to the paraprofessional side of the residential building industry.

To progress further in the industry from this introductory level, you will then need to specialise in a particular field of study such as building, estimating, scheduling, drafting or building design. Courses for these careers usually commence at Certificate IV level and progress through to diploma or even advanced diploma levels at a registered training provider who delivers these programs.

Some areas of study, such as architecture, interior design and construction management can then be studied further at degree level at university.

Unit overview

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to communicate in the workplace. It includes gathering, conveying and receiving information together with completing routine written correspondence.

Competence in this unit will be demonstrated by active participation in class exercises and discussions and an open-book written test.

Some basic information for this unit of competency is provided below. You can find the full unit details at Annex A at the back of this guide.

Unit title	Communicate in the workplace
Descriptor	This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to communicate in the workplace. It includes gathering, conveying and receiving information together with completing routine written correspondence.
	No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.
National code	BSBCMM201A
Employability skills	This unit contains employability skills.
Pre-requisite units	Nil
Application	This unit applies to individuals who perform a range of routine workplace communication tasks using a limited range of practical skills and fundamental knowledge of effective listening, questioning and non verbal communication in a defined context under direct supervision or with limited individual responsibility.

Element 1 Gather, convey and receive information and ideas	7

1.1	Collect information to achieve work responsibilities from appropriate sources
1.2	Use method/s and/or *equipment* to communicate appropriate ideas and information to the audience
1.3	Use effective listening and speaking skills in *verbal communication*
1.4	Seek input from internal and external sources to develop and refine new ideas and approaches
1.5	Respond to instructions or enquiries promptly and in accordance with *organisational requirements*

Element 2 Complete workplace documentation and correspondence

2.1	Present *written information* and ideas in clear and concise language to ensure the intended meaning of *correspondence* is understood by recipient
2.2	Draft and present correspondence within designated time lines
2.3	Ensure presentation of written information meets organisational *standards* of style, format and accuracy
2.4	Complete workplace forms and documentation in a clear, concise and easy to read format

Element 3 Communicate in a way that responds positively to individual differences

3.1	Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity
3.2	Take into consideration cultural differences in all verbal and non-verbal communication
3.3	Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence
3.4	Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers
3.5	Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols

Skills recognition and recognition of prior learning (RPL)

You are encouraged to discuss with your lecturer any previous courses or work experience in which you have participated so that it can be recognised. Evidence must be provided.

Resources

Required

Your lecturer will provide examples of some or all of the following legislation.

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cwlth)
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cwlth)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwlth)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cwlth)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cwlth)

You will need to provide the following:

- an A4 notepad
- pens, pencils, eraser
- an A4 file.

Self-checklist

As you work through this guide you should return to this checklist and record your progress. Where you understand something and think that you can perform it 'easily', congratulations. Where your response is 'with help' – revise the material in that section and/or discuss it with your lecturer or other learners in your group.

BSBCMM201A Communicate in the workplace	I understand	
Element 1 Gather, convey and receive information and ideas	**Easily**	**With help**
1.1 Collect information to achieve work responsibilities from appropriate sources		
1.2 Use method/s and/or *equipment* to communicate appropriate ideas and information to the audience		
1.3 Use effective listening and speaking skills in *verbal communication*		
1.4 Seek input from internal and external sources to develop and refine new ideas and approaches		
1.5 Respond to instructions or enquiries promptly and in accordance with *organisational requirements*		
Element 2 Complete workplace documentation and correspondence	**Easily**	**With help**
2.1 Present *written information* and ideas in clear and concise language to ensure the intended meaning of *correspondence* is understood by recipient		
2.2 Draft and present correspondence within designated time lines		
2.3 Ensure presentation of written information meets organisational *standards* of style, format and accuracy		
2.4 Complete workplace forms and documentation in a clear, concise and easy to read format		

BSBCMM201A Communicate in the workplace	I understand	
Element 3 Communicate in a way that responds positively to individual differences	**Easily**	**With help**
3.1 Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity		
3.2 Take into consideration cultural differences in all verbal and non-verbal communication		
3.3 Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence		
3.4 Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers		
3.5 Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols		

About the icons

Note that not all icons may appear in this guide.

Performance criteria

This icon indicates the performance criteria covered in a section. The performance criteria contribute to the elements of competency that you must demonstrate in your assessment.

Activity

This icon indicates that there is an activity for you to do.

Computer-based activity

This icon indicates that there is an activity for you to do on the computer.

Discussion

This icon indicates that there will be a discussion, which could be with a partner, a group or the whole class.

Research

This icon indicates that you are to do a research activity using the internet, texts, journals or other relevant sources to find out about something.

Case study

This icon indicates that there is a case study or scenario to read.

Think

This icon indicates that you should stop and think for a moment about the point being made or the question being asked.

Assessment task

This icon indicates that an activity or task is part of your assessment.
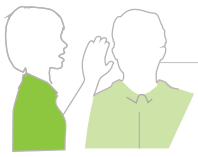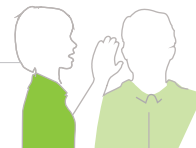
Section 1 – Communication

Introduction
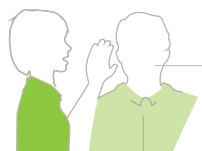
Communication is the transfer of facts, ideas, opinions, feelings and information from one person or group to another. It is how we come to know and understand everything around us. We use communication to:

- relax and entertain ourselves

- learn about the world

- learn about ourselves and others

- share ideas, knowledge, thoughts and feelings

- exchange information

- influence and persuade people

- conduct business.

Performance criteria

1.2 Use method/s and/or *equipment* to communicate appropriate ideas and information to the audience

1.3 Use effective listening and speaking skills in *verbal communication*

3.1 Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity

3.3 Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence

3.4 Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers

The communication process
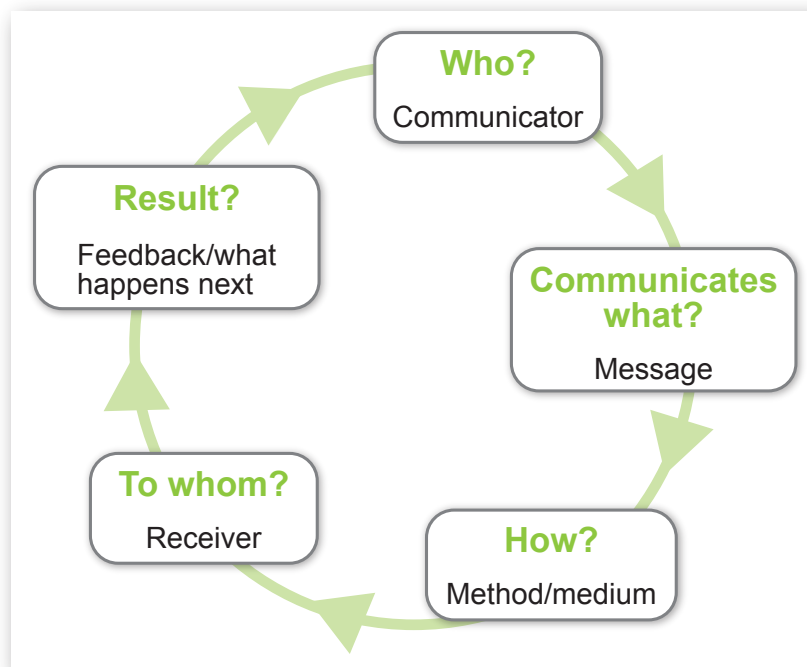
Figure 1.1: Communication process.

Communicator – the person who sends the message.

Message – the information the communicator wants to communicate.

Method/medium – how the communicator sends the message; for example, phone call, email.

Receiver – the person to whom the message is being sent.

Feedback – the way the receiver lets the communicator know they have received the message; for example, replying to the email or nodding.

Main types of communication

Communication can be grouped into four main forms – verbal, non-verbal, written and visual.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is probably the most used form of communication. It relies on sharing spoken words that the communicator and the receiver both understand.
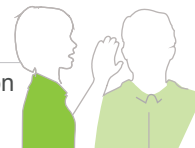
Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is when you communicate to others without the use of words. Often non-verbal communication is sent unintentionally, that is, you don't deliberately send it as part of your message, but it is still received by the other person.

Some different kinds of non-verbal communication include:

- body language
- posture
- facial expressions.

Written communication

Written communication means putting words onto a page or screen. There are many different types of written communication – some are shown in Table 1.1. Each type is more suited to some situations, audiences or purposes than others. We'll look at written communication in detail later in this unit.

Visual communication

Visual communication is all the types of communication that we see that are mainly pictorial, although there could be a few words present as well, such as on a sign or poster. Visual communication is explored in more detail later on in the unit.

Some examples of these four main types of communication are shown in Table 1.1.

Verbal	Written	Visual	Non-verbal
face-to-face conversations	letters	signs	waving
telephone conversations	emails	diagrams	crossing your arms
voice mail	texts	plans and drawings	frowning
teleconferences	reports	video	tone of voice
meetings	faxes	photos	touching
interviews	notes	symbols	dancing
lectures	notices		appearance
	instructions		facial expressions

Table 1.1: Types of communication

Each type of communication is suited to a range of communication purposes and some types are easier to use than others. Have a think about the types of communication you use by trying the activity below.

Activity 1.1 Types of communication I use

List the types of communication that you use and then tick to indicate whether you use each type at work and/or at home with your family. Some types you might use only at one place, other types at both.

For each type of communication tick whether you think you are good at it or could be better at it, and how many times a day you might use it. An example has been done for you.

Types of communication	I use this at work	I use this at home	I am good at this	I could be better at this	How often I use this each day
email	✓			✓	4

Types of verbal communication

Verbal communication can happen in many different ways between different people in different situations.

Verbal communication can:		
take place face to face		take place using some mechanical or electronic means like the telephone
be synchronous (happening at the same time, like talking with someone on the phone)	**or**	be asynchronous (a delay between one part of the communication and the next, like leaving someone a voicemail that they listen to later on)
happen between just two people		happen between a group of people
be a quick exchange of just a few words		be a long conversation or debate that lasts many days

Listening

For verbal communication to be effective, there has to be a similar amount of talking and listening. If one or both people do lots of talking but no one is listening, there's not going to be much communication happening. Good listening isn't easy. Here are some tips to help you develop better listening skills.

- Look at the speaker – not at the floor, out of the window, at your hands or phone or watch.

- Give your full attention – don't try to do something else or think about something else, multitasking is overrated. Concentrate on what is being said to you.

- Listen for main ideas – try to grasp the bigger picture, the overall meaning of what you are being told.

- Keep your personal opinion out of it – try to hear the other person's point of view and understand their message, even if you don't agree with it.

- Let them finish – interrupting, jumping in to finish sentences and changing the subject are all rude. Let the other person finish speaking before offering your opinion.

- Let them know you're listening – by doing things like nodding or smiling at appropriate moments and saying things like 'Uh huh' and 'I see.'

- Summarise or repeat often – this gives you a chance to check you have understood what the speaker said and gives the speaker a chance to correct anything that's incorrect.

If you can do most or all of these things, you are well on the way to being an effective listener, an essential role in the communication process.

Forms of non-verbal communication

Body language

Body language refers to things like gestures, facial expressions and posture. How you move your hands, the expression on your face, the way you stand or sit (posture) can tell other people a lot about what you really mean that might not be communicated by the actual words you use.

Have a look at the body language of the three people below. Which one do you think really does feel happy? And what do the other two really think?
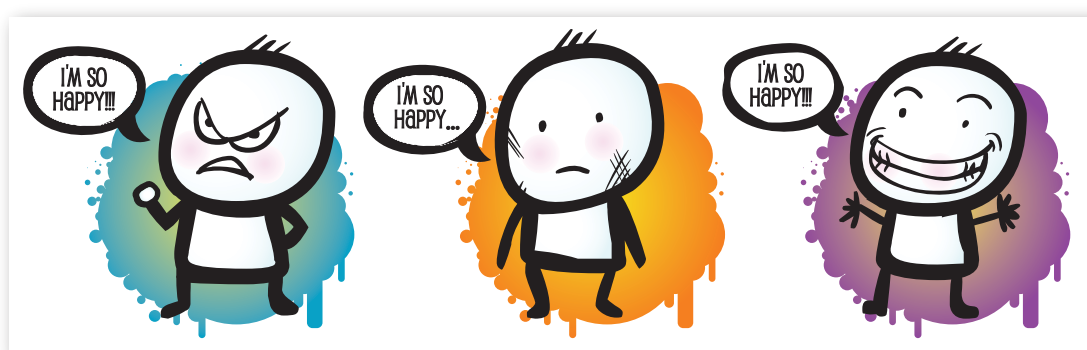
Figure 1.2: Body language.

Some body language is learned as you grow up, like shaking hands when you meet someone or how close you can stand to someone when you talk with them. Other types of body language are a reflection of you as a person or how you are feeling about what's happening at that moment. Have a look at the information in Table 1.2 to find out some common body language statements.

What you do	How it is likely to be interpreted
Stand tall and straight.	You are confident and know what you are talking about.
Face the other person.	You are comfortable having an open discussion with them and have nothing to hide.
Make eye contact.	You are paying attention (but be careful not to stare; and be aware that in some cultures, making eye contact is a sign of disrespect.)
Fidget or play with things like pens or phones.	You are nervous or bored, or both.
Sit with crossed arms and legs.	You are uncomfortable with the conversation and are putting a barrier between you and the other person.

Table 1.2: Body language statements
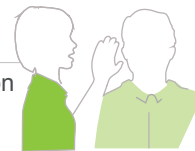
Verbal versus body language

If you ask your manager: 'Where do want these boxes stacked?', you're communicating to him or her that you want some information. The reply might be: 'Put them in the store under the window.' Now your manager has communicated with you. This sort of communication happens hundreds of times a day and we do it without thinking about it.

Non-verbal communication can be more subtle than verbal communication. Your manager might have answered your question about the boxes by rolling his or her eyes.

Activity 1.2 Using eyes to communicate

Discuss what the manager's eye-rolling might be communicating to you. Make a note of your thoughts here.

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Non-verbal answers may also be less subtle.

Activity 1.3 Using actions to communicate

Discuss what your manager might be communicating to you if he or she pushes you out of the way and puts the boxes into the store?

What if he or she had looked up to to the skies, held his or her arms out, turned around and walked away?

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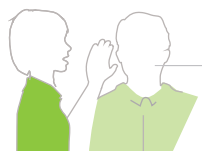
The above examples are negative communications. You're getting a message from your manager that they're not pleased. But not all non-verbal communication is negative. There are positive ways of communicating non-verbally too, such as smiling, winking, applauding, giving the thumbs-up signal and so on.

Activity 1.4 Practice using actions to communicate

Get together with a partner and think up a couple of short (ten-second) scenarios to present to the class.

One of you has to speak to the other and the second one must respond non-verbally. Your classmates then try to guess what the second person is communicating.

If you're feeling really creative, perhaps both of you could be in non-verbal mode.

Make some notes here of what you experienced in this activity.

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Appearance

Whether we like it or not, people make assumptions about us based on our appearance. Turning up to work wearing the clothes you wore to fix your bike doesn't say 'Here I am, ready to look after your clients' (unless you work in a bike repair shop).

A good rule is to dress and present yourself the way you want to be treated. If you want people to think you're a capable professional, then you need to look like one.

Some workplaces or organisations have uniforms, others have dress codes. Make sure you know what the rules are in your workplace. A good idea is to check out what other staff wear, whether they keep piercings in, or cover tattoos or tie their hair back, and then do the same yourself. If in doubt, check with your supervisor.

How did you choose the clothes you're wearing today?
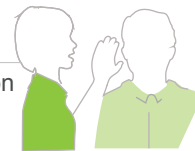
Tone of voice

The tone of your voice tells people how you are feeling, either generally or about what you are saying at that moment. Sometimes you might give out more information than you intended through the tone you use. Although tone of voice is related to verbal communication, it's actually a form of non-verbal communication.

Activity 1.5 Tone

Find a partner. Take turns to read one of the statements from the left-hand column using a tone of voice that expresses one of the feelings from the right-hand column. See if you can guess which feeling your partner chose for each statement.

Statements	Feelings
'I can do it now if you want.'	Worry
'Here comes Dannie.'	Excitement
'It's five o'clock already.'	Tiredness
'Great.'	Enthusiasm

Communication barriers

Lots of things can get in the way of good communication. Barriers to communication can include:

- the words used
- context
- history
- individual factors
- environment
- information.

How words can be a barrier

Words can be misunderstood or get in the way of communication for several reasons. They might:

- genuinely have more than one meaning

- be able to be interpreted in several ways

- be specialised or technical

- be used only in certain places, such as slang

- be offensive

- be negative.

Activity 1.6 Words as barriers

Some of these sentences aren't very clear. Read each one then write down why you think they could be misunderstood and what you think the speaker probably meant.

'You've got to be kidding!'	
'Essentially, the committee's expectations are that all inaccuracies be rectified forthwith.'	
'Put some backbone into it!'	
'Put that stuff over there.'	
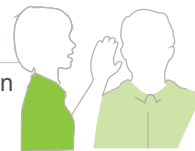
Case study – Rob

Rob is the manager of a small building company. He was showing Chad, his apprentice, how to use one of the new drills. Rob wanted to impress the youngster, so he used all the technical terms and told him in as much detail as he could. Chad listened quietly throughout the explanation.

At the end of his explanation, Rob asked Chad to show him what he'd learned by giving the drill a try on a piece of timber. Rob was surprised and disappointed when his apprentice did not use the drill properly and damaged the timber.

Activity 1.7 Misunderstandings

Why do you think Chad damaged the timber?

(Circle the reasons you think are most likely. You can choose more than one.)

A.   He is an idiot.

B.   He didn't understand Rob's explanation.

C.   Rob didn't tell him enough about using the tool.

D.   Rob's explanation was too complicated.

E.   He wasn't listening.

What should Chad have done before he used the drill? (Circle the reasons you think are most likely. You can choose more than one.)

A.   Asked Rob to tell him the whole lot again.

B.   Asked Rob some questions to clarify parts of his explanation.

C.   Nothing.

D.   Found someone else to explain it to him.

E.   Read the drill manual from cover to cover.

Discuss the answers you chose with others.

Case study – Frank

You work with a supervisor who is always putting you down. It seems as if everything you do is picked at and criticised by him and whenever you ask a question he laughs at you and says things like: 'I thought even you would know that!'.

One day, as you're helping him to collate a brochure for an important trade show, you notice that he's printed a whole section upside down.

Activity 1.8 A tricky question

Will you tell him or will you leave him to find out for himself?

Of course, the right thing to do is to tell him; but you will have to overcome the barrier he has set up between himself and you.

Do you think if you do point it out he might treat you better in the future? Or do you think something else could happen?

Discuss this with others, and make some notes here.

_____

_____

_____

Jargon

Every industry has its own jargon – words and phrases that have particular meanings in that industry and may not be used at all in other work environments. It can be a bit scary when you first start work and have to try to figure out what everyone around you is talking about, so it's important to quickly get to recognise and understand as much jargon as you can. Consider this instruction:

> Fit the workpiece onto the spur drive and tighten the live centre in the tailstock up to the other end. Reduce to 40 diameter with a roughing gouge and smooth with a skew chisel. Use callipers to set out positions of beads and coves.

Do you happen to know what is being talked about in this instruction?
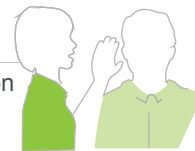
This is how the instruction would look to someone who wasn't familiar with the jargon – whole sections would be a mystery, because they just wouldn't know what the words meant.

> Fit the • • • onto the • • • and tighten the • • • in the • • • up to the other end. Reduce to 40 diameter with a • • • and smooth with a • • • . Use • • • to • • • positions of • • • and • • • .

Jargon is very useful in communication when both parties know the jargon; it saves time and effort. When used incorrectly, it can be a barrier.

Activity 1.9 Jargon as a barrier

List five examples of some of the jargon used in your workplace that might not be understood by a newcomer.

Then find someone to compare lists with and see if you can decipher each other's lists.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

How context can be a barrier

When we're talking about communication, context means what else is happening around the people who are communicating, either in their work or personal life. If someone is sad, angry or busy, they are less likely to be helpful or flexible if you approach them with a request or problem. So be aware of what's happening in the life of the people around you when you're communicating with them.

How history can be a barrier

Everyone in your workplace has done other things before; they've been students, sons or daughters, brothers or sisters, members of teams, employees, friends or enemies. This means they bring to their work all their past experiences, feelings, attitudes, values and expectations.

Case study – Jess

When Jess started her first part-time job she was full of enthusiasm. She had lots of ideas about how things could be improved and often shared them with her co-workers. After a few weeks, her manager called her aside and told her to stop telling everyone about her brilliant ideas because he didn't like them.

Jess is now a few years older, has more experience and still has lots of great ideas, but she's now very hesitant to share her ideas with workmates.

Activity 1.10 History as a barrier

Discuss what could be done to help Jess to overcome what's happened in the past so that her ideas could be shared in her current workplace.

Make some notes here of your ideas.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How individual factors can be a barrier

Individual factors can affect communication. You need to consider other people's abilities when communicating with them. To avoid miscommunication, you may need to change what you say, how you say it or how you interpret what someone else is trying to communicate to you.
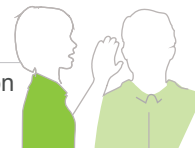
Activity 1.11 Considering individual factors

What might you do to improve the chance of effectively communicating something important to a workmate in consideration of the following individual factors.

From a non-English speaking background	
Someone who struggles to understand English	
A person with a hearing impairment	
Someone who is much older and more experienced than you	

How environment can be a barrier

The environment means what is around us. The work environment means the place we work, what goes on around us in that place and how that all interacts. When we're trying to communicate, the environment can impact how effective that communication is.

Case study – Gemma

Gemma works for an estimating company. When other staff are out on site and she is in the office by herself, she likes to put her headphones on and listen to music while she works. One day she did this, and only realised the phone was ringing after it had been going for quite a while. She hurriedly pulled her headphones off one ear and answered the phone. It was a client changing some details to an urgent quote request. Gemma quickly wrote down what she heard, hung up and put the note on the supervisor's desk.

A few days, later the supervisor called Gemma into her office and asked about the phone call she'd taken. It turned out that, not only had Gemma made mistakes in what she had written down, resulting in the quote being done incorrectly, but the client had been able to hear the music from Gemma's headphones down the phone and wasn't too impressed.

Activity 1.12 Environment

What should Gemma have done differently to ensure that the message she took was accurate? Note down four key points.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Discuss the answers you chose with other learners.

There are many other distractions at work – you might be thinking about what you're going to do at the weekend, listening to someone talking on the radio or admiring a car that's going past. If this is while the manager is explaining to you what you should do next, chances are the communication won't be getting through to you.

Activity 1.13 Environmental barriers

Some environmental communication barriers are not your fault. Can you think of any like that? Note down three that come to mind.

1.

2.

3.

How information can be a barrier

How much information you include in a communication is important. If you don't include enough, important things could be left out and mistakes could then happen. If you include too much, the other person might get confused or stop paying attention and the message still won't get through properly.

Case study – Jo

Jo was loading up the ute late one afternoon, ready for an early start the next morning. She'd put everything into the ute from the list her manager had written, except for some of the timber. She was was having a bit of trouble with that, because some of the required sizes were missing from the list. It was getting late and she really wanted to head home, so she thought about the job they were going to be doing, took a guess at what the most likely timber sizes were that they would need and put those on the ute.

On site the next day, guess what happened? You got it – some of the timber they needed was the wrong size. The whole team lost two hours of work while Jo went back to the yard to get the right-sized timber.
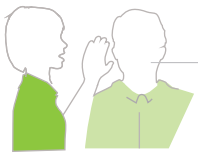
Activity 1.14 What caused the problem?

Was this communication problem caused by Jo or her manager? First, explain the reason for your choice. Then write down what you think could have been done done differently – either by Jo, or her manager.

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Checklist – avoiding communication barriers

This list summarises the communication barriers you've looked at so far.

- Words – choose words that will communicate effectively. Avoid jargon or overly complicated explanations.

- Context – make sure the person you're communicating with is in a good space, and not too busy, distracted or upset. Choose a time and place where your message is most likely to be well received.

- History – try to know a bit about the people you work with and what they've done in the past and take this into account when you communicate with them. If someone doesn't ever say anything at meetings there might be a very good reason.

- Individual factors – get to know how the people you work with operate and take this into account when you communicate with them. Knowing that someone is shy, for example, can stop you from making the mistake of thinking that they're unfriendly or avoiding you.

- Environment – make sure communication takes place in an appropriate environment, that is, one where everyone has a good chance of clearly seeing or hearing the message or conversation.

Information – include just the right amount of information to clearly communicate whatever needs to be known, not too much or too little.

Section 2 – Information and ideas

Introduction

When you're in the workplace, you'll spend a lot of time every day gathering, conveying and receiving information and ideas – all important parts of being an effective employee. This could involve:

- interacting with others
- collecting information
- sharing information
- developing and refining ideas
- giving and receiving instructions
- looking after clients.

Performance criteria

1.1 Collect information to achieve work responsibilities from appropriate sources

1.3 Use effective listening and speaking skills in *verbal communication*

1.4 Seek input from internal and external sources to develop and refine new ideas and approaches

1.5 Respond to instructions or enquiries promptly and in accordance with *organisational requirements*

3.1 Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity

3.3 Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence

3.5 Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols

Communicating at work

Interacting with others

Interacting with people at work is different to the way we interact with people in other parts of our lives. Usually, we choose to hang out with people we like and avoid those we don't. In families sometimes, we don't treat each other as well as we should but usually family members forgive us if we're rude to them or do something wrong. In the workplace, we don't have that luxury – we don't get to choose our workmates and we don't get to treat them badly if we're having a rough day. Being able to get along and interact positively with people at work, whether they are colleagues, supervisors or clients, is an essential skill that's highly valued by employers.

Collecting information

To collect information at work, you might have to use many forms of communication with a range of people. This could involve talking to someone face to face or on the phone, sending a letter or email, consulting a manual or code, or maybe looking something up online. Once you've found the information you were looking for, you need to share it with whoever needs to know and possibly record it for future reference. There are two essential skills to collecting information:

- active listening
- asking the right questions.

Active listening

Active listening means giving your full attention to the speaker so that you can:

- take in what they're saying
- understand their opinion
- let them know that you've understood.
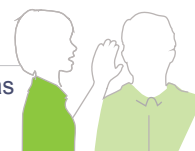
Activity 2.1 Good listening

Which of these good listening skills do you usually use? Put a tick next to the ones you use in one of the two columns – 'good at this' or 'need to work on this'.

Listening skills	Good at this	Need to work on this
I look at the person/people speaking		
I show I am listening		
I listen for main ideas		
I listen for the complete meaning		
I ignore distractions		
I avoid personal biases		
I avoid interrupting		
I reflect on what has been said		
I summarise and repeat back what I've heard		
I ask questions for clarification		
I take notes when needed		

Asking questions

Questions can be used to clarify or confirm what someone is saying to you, as we discussed in active listening. They can also be useful to keep a conversation going and get more information, especially from someone who is a reluctant communicator.

Two main types of questions are open and closed questions.

Closed questions such as 'Have you finished that job?' can be answered with just a 'yes' or 'no' response – they're good for getting a short, quick answer. However, too many closed questions can start to seem like an interrogation as they don't really give the other person the opportunity to direct the conversation at all.

Open questions require a longer answer and tend to start with words like 'why' or 'how'. They allow the other person to give more information or an opinion and are more friendly when used in conversation. If you can develop good questioning skills, you will probably find you can interact more easily and effectively with people in your workplace.

Activity 2.2 Collecting information

You will need a partner. Have a conversation with your partner. Your aim is to find out about either:

- a dream or goal they have

- a problem or difficulty they have faced recently.

Use good listening and questioning skills to find out as much as possible. Use the space below to take notes as you go.

When you're finished, tell your partner what you heard and ask them for feedback on how accurately you understood them.

_____

_____
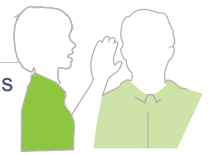
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_____

Information from other sources

There's a lot of learning to be done at work, especially when you're new to the job. To make sure you get the right information, it's important that you know who to ask.

Activity 2.3 Sources of information

In your workplace, who do you think would be the best person to talk to for information in the following situations?

- You feel unwell and need to go home.

- Your pay didn't go into the bank last week.

- You need to use a piece of equipment that you haven't used before.

When you have figured this out, talk with someone near you and find out if they would get this information from someone different in their workplace.

Written information

You may sometimes need to consult written sources of information, such as workplace policies and procedures, product information, customer information, inventories, forms and schedules or calendars.

These might be available as hard copies (documents and manuals) or electronic copies on a computer.

Recording information

If you receive information verbally, you may need to record it so that it can be accessed later or by other people. This means they need to be able to find, read and understand it. Remember to always:

- use legible handwriting

- use simple clear language

- make numbers very clear

- make sure the information is correct.

A good idea is to look over what you have written to make sure it is complete and accurate before passing it on or storing it.

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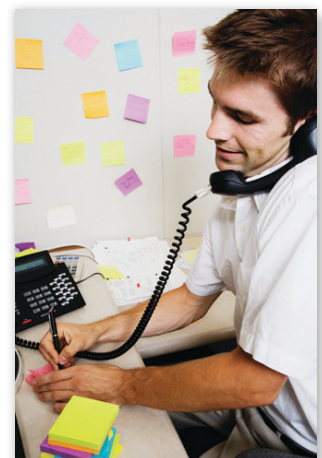
Sharing information

You'll need to share information with other people at work every day. Choosing the right method or equipment for this sharing is important to ensure your information is received and understood. The method or equipment you use will depend on what you're trying to communicate, and who you're trying to share it with.

There might be several different methods used in your workplace for particular purposes. For example, a new payroll procedure might be communicated by a group discussion at a team meeting and a follow-up email to all staff, whereas an upcoming barbeque might just get a notice on the staff noticeboard.

Which methods are used for communication purposes in your workplace?

Activity 2.4 Methods for sharing information

Get together with some classmates and work out which of these methods are used for sharing information in your workplaces and what they are used for.

Method	Used to share information about …
Email	
Notice	
Newsletter	
Face-to-face conversation	
Team meeting	
Memo	
Note	
Report	
Phone call	
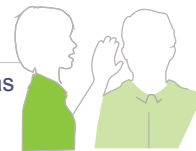
Developing and refining ideas

New ideas and ways of doing things can lead to improvements in work environments and practices. To be effective and accepted, ideas usually need to be developed and refined with input from others such as colleagues or clients. This might happen in a casual way – such as conversations at break times, or a more formal way, like as an agenda item at a team meeting. For a discussion to be effective, everyone needs to participate and contribute positively, which is not always easy or fun.

Activity 2.5 Discussion behaviours

Read through the list of discussion behaviours and decide whether each one would be a positive or negative thing to do in a discussion. Put a tick in the corresponding column.

Behaviour	Positive	Negative
Asking someone to explain something you don't understand		
Thinking about the topic before the discussion is due to happen		
Expressing your opinion on someone else's idea		
Encouraging other people to speak		
Becoming angry when someone says something you think is wrong		
Making your point briefly		
Having a whispered conversation with your neighbour during the discussion		
Keeping your opinion to yourself		
Interrupting someone else when they're speaking		

Feedback

If you want to develop and refine your ideas, you need to seek feedback. Without input or feedback from others, it is still just your idea and you don't really know if it's any good or not. Feedback can be provided in a formal way such as a planned review compiled from meetings and surveys, or it can be as simple as asking someone 'What do you think of my idea?'

However you get it, the feedback will only be any good if people feel comfortable giving it to you. They need to know it's okay to be honest, that they can disagree with your idea and offer up their own suggestions. If they're not comfortable giving you honest feedback, they'll just tell you what they think you want to hear, which isn't much help if it's not the truth.

Giving and receiving instructions

If instructions are not clear, people will get confused and things won't be done the way they should be. Giving and receiving instructions clearly is an important part of being an effective employee.

Giving instructions

To give effective instructions you need to:

• explain what is to be done, ie the task

• use easy-to-understand language

• put things into a logical sequence

• demonstrate or use pictures, if necessary

• pay extra attention to safety issues

• take enough time

• check that the other person understands.

A good way to check if someone understands is to get them, to explain back to you what you told them or get them to do what you just explained to them. They might need to have a few tries and you might need to provide some or all of the instructions again.
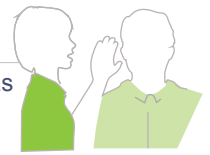
Receiving instructions

The most important thing about receiving instructions is to thoroughly understand what needs to be done. To do this you'll need to:

- listen carefully (remember all those listening skills we looked at earlier)

- ask as many questions as you need to

- check your understanding by repeating things back to the speaker

- pay extra attention to safety issues

- give some feedback

- ask for help straight away if you discover that the instructions no longer make sense when you get started on the task.

Activity 2.6 Giving and receiving instructions

You need a partner for this. Each of you draws a simple room layout with walls, a door, window/s and one fixture or fitting. Don't look at each other's drawings.

Next, decide who will instruct and who will draw. The 'drawer' has to follow the 'instructor's' instructions to draw the instructor's room without seeing their picture. Then swap roles.

When you're finished, have a look at the two drawings you and your partner produced. Are they accurate? Talk about what was easy, and what was difficult and why.

You can use the space below for your drawing.

| BC1952 39

Looking after clients

Clients are vital to any business. No clients means no business and no job for you. An essential skill for effective employees is looking after clients. You might have several opportunities to do this – before, during and after providing the product or service to the client.

More than just the minimum

Clients want good service and a good product, and they also need to feel looked after. It is important to make the client feel:

- welcome – show that you are glad to see them

- important – show that you appreciate their business

- understood – show that you understand their needs

- confident – show that you will be able to deliver what you promise

- comfortable – ensure they enjoy doing business with you.

Activity 2.7 Customer service

What sort of customer service have you experienced? Write down an example of either a good or bad experience you had for each of the following needs.

Client need	What happened?
Welcome	
Important	
Understood	
Confident	
Comfortable	
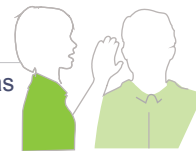
Using the telephone

The telephone is still the most widely used method of instant communication at work. You can send and receive information quickly by phone. Gathering, conveying and receiving information and ideas over the telephone requires different skills to talking with someone face to face.

Things to remember when talking on the phone
The other person wants to understand you, so speak clearly.
The person on the other end can't see you (for example, if you nod) so be sure to express verbally that you have understood or that you agree.
The other person may not know you so make sure you sound polite, helpful and knowledgeable.
The other person's time is valuable so keep your call to the point, don't ramble on.
The person you are talking to is forming an opinion of the company you work for based on the conversation they are having with you, so make sure it's a good one.

Making a call

Before you pick up the phone to make a call, make sure you are organised. You will feel more confident and sound more professional, as well as be more likely to achieve the purpose of your call. You could do the following things to prepare.

PHONE CALL PREP

1. Check you have the correct number and name for the person you want to speak to.

2. Have a pen and paper ready to take any notes.

3. Plan what you want to say or ask, maybe make a list.

4. Have any information you might need ready, for example, a quote or price list.

Leaving a message

You might have to leave a message with a person at the other end, with voice mail or an answering system. If you have prepared for the call properly and made a list of what you want to say, you should be able leave a clear message. Remember to state your name and number and why you rang, and what you want to happen next (will you call again or do you want them to call you?)

Answering a call

Your organisation might have procedures for answering phone calls, such as saying 'good morning' then the company name and then your name. Make sure you know what the procedure is and get used to using it.

When you answer a customer phone call, you need to use pretty much the same skills as when you help someone in person, including all those important listening skills. Remember that the person on the phone can't see you, so you must make sure the tone of your voice and the words you use help to convey the message you want to send.

Activity 2.8 Phone experiences

Think of a conversation you have had recently where you phoned a business to ask about something. Was it a good or a bad experience? Why?

Make some quick notes about it below then share your experience with a partner.

Good or bad experience? (circle one) What happened?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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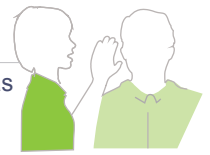
Taking a message

You will probably find yourself having to take down messages quite often, especially when you're new to a job and don't know enough to just answer the queries yourself. Here are some quick tips for taking a message.

- Write down the name of the caller and where they're from. Ask them to spell anything you're not sure of.

- Get their number.

- Take brief details.

- Tell them that someone will call them back.

- Read the message, including the phone number, back to the caller to make sure you have written it all correctly.

- Pass the message on to the right person in your workplace straightaway.
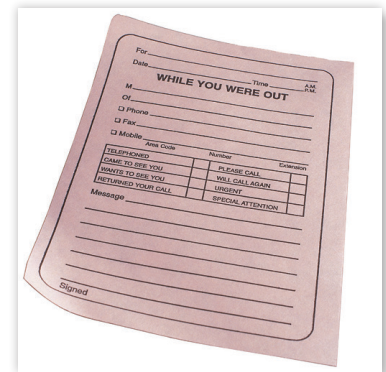
Follow-up action

Often after you have answered a call you might need to take some follow-up action. It's important that you remember this and either do it straightaway, or pass it on to someone who can.

Activity 2.9 Following up on phone calls

Here are some phone calls you might receive at work. In the 'Your action' column, write down what you would do to action each call. Remember, if your workplace has set procedures, you need to follow them..

Call	Your action
A customer asking when their order will arrive.	
A colleague phoning in sick.	
A sales rep wanting to talk to someone about a new product.	
A supplier advising that something your company has ordered is not available.	
A new customer asking for a quote.	
A colleague's boyfriend ringing for a chat.	

Activity 2.10 Phone call practice

Work in pairs. Your lecturer will provide some phone conversation scenarios for you to practice. Use what you have learned in this topic on using the telephone to participate in them.

Section 3 – Workplace documents

Introduction

There are many situations at work when you will need to communicate in writing. You might need to complete forms, write letters, take notes or send emails. The better you are able to express yourself in writing, the more effective you will be.

Good writing is clear, easy to read, easy to understand and tells the reader exactly what they need to know.

Performance criteria

2.1 Present **written information** and ideas in clear and concise language to ensure the intended meaning of **correspondence** is understood by recipient
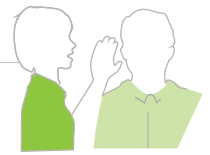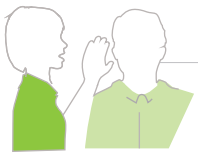
2.2 Draft and present correspondence within designated time lines

2.3 Ensure presentation of written information meets organisational **standards** of style, format and accuracy

2.4 Complete workplace forms and documentation in a clear, concise and easy to read format

3.1 Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity

3.2 Take into consideration cultural differences in all verbal and non-verbal communication

3.3 Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence

3.4 Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers

3.5 Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols

Writing effectively

To make your writing effective:

- use short sentences, because they are easier to read than long ones

- use the 'active voice', which tells the reader who does what, for example 'the driver will unload the bricks'. Using the 'passive voice' to write the same thing requires a longer and more complicated sentence, for example 'the bricks will be unloaded by the driver'

- use as few words as possible

- only include the relevant information

- use simple everyday language, and avoid technical terms (jargon) unless you are writing for a specialist in the field and you know that they will understand.

Activity 3.1 Using short sentences

This segment of a letter includes very long sentences. Rewrite it by breaking the long sentences into several shorter ones. Try to include only one idea in each sentence. You may have to rearrange or change some of the words.

Dear Mr Farris

We have identified unsatisfactory performance by your company, Stella Cleaning, in the failure to remove manufacturers' stickers from fittings throughout the Devon Road redevelopment which is a breach of the cleaning schedule and contract which specifies this will be done as part of the deep clean that your team does so your company will need to revisit the site to perform any work necessary to maintain the standard of service required under the terms of the contract that you agreed to. This must be done before the 15th June and if no action has been taken by then from your company we will take action against your company Stella Cleaning as specified in Clause 27B of your contract.

Activity 3.2 Active voice

47

This email between workmates uses the 'passive voice'. Change the email to use the 'active voice'. You may have to rearrange or change some of the words.

Hi John

This morning I was contacted by the supplier. Delivery on the week of the 2nd has now been confirmed by her. The goods will be signed for by the carpenter. Secure storage of the goods will also be the responsibility of the carpenter.

Thanks, Dean

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity 3.3 Saying only what is relevant

This message uses more words than it needs to and includes information that isn't required. Rewrite the message including only the necessary details.

Barry phoned this morning, around 9 am while you were out at the staff breakfast. He is pretty annoyed because the vehicle that arrived to pick up the bathtub could load it OK but wouldn't be able to unload it. (Apparently, he requested a crane but the vehicle was a tail-lift truck.) He wants to know: could you please call him back before 2 pm if possible because he has to leave early today for his kid's birthday in the park and won't be able to hang around?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Activity 3.4 Using simple language

Find ways to simplify the following sentences, without losing the meaning. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Utilise the hammer.	**Use** the hammer.
Ask for **assistance** when lifting.	
Be aware that overhead power lines are **in close proximity**.	
He has **proficiency** with the grinder.	
In an effort to speed up the process, use simple words.	

Activity 3.5 More simple language

Find a partner. Think of five other examples of complicated language which you have seen or heard. Discuss simpler ways of saying the same thing. Note your comments here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Using correct and complete information

You're responsible for making sure that the information you write is correct, and that it includes everything it should. That means double-checking things like names, dates, addresses and phone numbers. It might also mean asking for more information, such as reference numbers, contact details or additional explanations.

Activity 3.6 A complete message

How correct and complete do you think the following message is? Think about the details of the message and identify what other information could be included. Make a note of the sorts of questions you will need to ask to get more information.

Harry:

Helen from Auscall dropped into the offise. She wants you to check the file for the Ivy Street renovaton and let her no about the rollor doors. She thinks they miht not be standard withd.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Correct spelling and grammar are also important for communicating correct and complete information. Use a dictionary to check the spelling of words you aren't sure about. Most computers include a spelling and grammar check as part of word processing and email so make sure you switch on that option and use it.

Activity 3.7 Correct spelling

Examine the message in Activity 3.6 again. Identify the seven spelling mistakes in the message, find the correct spelling for each one using a dictionary or a spell checker and record them below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Professionalism

Being courteous

Part of being professional at work is being courteous. This means that you show respect for others, are polite, tactful and try not to offend anyone.

Be sensitive to how the reader may feel about the message you are sending, as that can affect how well they take in your message.

Try to be positive not negative, even in a difficult situation. This is more important in written communication as the reader can't see the expression on your face or hear the tone of your voice, they can only read the words you have written. As a result your message may seem more negative than you intended.
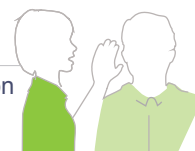
Activity 3.8 A courteous approach

Rewrite each of these sentences in a way that is more positive, tactful or polite. Be careful not to lose the meaning of the sentence. The first one has been done for you as an example.

You are the designer. We are not responsible for your failure to provide plans.	As the designer, you are responsible for providing plans.
Your account is now overdue! We sent you the invoice back on 23rd March.	
That email was missing the client contact details. That type of mistake is typical of younger employees.	
SEE ME IMMEDIATELY WHEN YOU GET INTO THE OFFICE!!!	
Our sales representative is too busy with other accounts to see you this week.	

Sending the right message

Professional behaviour is valued by employers. When you speak on the phone, participate in a meeting, write emails or create and send documents, you are representing the organisation you work for. Written communication, in particular, provides a permanent record. Most workplaces will have rules about:

- how to write

- what not to write

- who can respond to queries

- who is allowed to do certain things, such as give quotes, or provide timelines

- who is allowed to make decisions such as accepting deliveries or accepting projects.

Make sure you understand which messages you are, and are not, allowed to send. Who is allowed to say certain things? Make certain decisions? Which things should be referred to someone else? You may find this sort of information out from workmates, company policies, inductions, and company structure charts. If you're unsure, always check with your supervisor.

Case study – Julie

At Julie's workplace there is a company meeting every week to update the team about current projects. Julie works in the accounts area and in the course of a few emails finalising payment for a job, a regular client asked her to get someone to come and give a quote for another job. Julie replied that she would and mentioned that there might be a delay, due to a big new project which was beginning. She took the client's details and passed the message on to the appropriate person.

Later that day, Julie's manager told her that the client had opted to go with another company rather than wait for the job. The client hadn't realised that Julie's company had employed extra staff so there would be no delays for other clients.

Activity 3.9 Where did Julie go wrong?

Where do you think Julie went wrong? Discuss how Julie should have replied to the request instead.

Then discuss the sorts of questions which you should and should not answer and what to say when you can't answer a client's question. Make a note of your thoughts here.
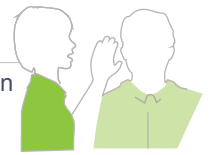
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_____

Completing documentation

Writing something down:

- makes a permanent record of it
- makes you less likely to forget the details
- means other people can refer to it
- allows you to revise the writing before you give it to anyone else.

Writing might be useful if you want to tell a large number of people about something, give complex instructions or record a process so that it can be looked at again and again. Examples of when writing something down is a good idea include:

- taking a detailed message for someone

- sending information to a client

- preparing a quote for a customer

- reporting the details of an accident

- applying for annual leave

- placing an order for some materials

- keeping track of your dealings with a person from another organisation.

Always try to include all the information that you think the reader will need to know, but avoid including unnecessary information. Try to put yourself in the reader's shoes. Will they be able to understand what you have written? Is the information correct? Is there anything else they might want to know?

Activity 3.10 What is required?

Look at the following message from 'P' and think about how useful it might be. What information do you think is missing? If you received this message, what else would you want to know?

With a partner, discuss then make a list of what other information you think should have been written down in this message.

Bob –
Some bloke phoned.
He got bit by a dog on the worksite.
Wants a call back.
From P.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
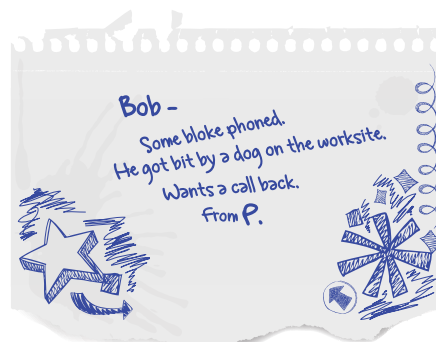
Usually when you're communicating in writing, the person you're communicating with isn't there so they can't ask you for more information or tell you if something is unclear. To help prevent information being misunderstood or lost, many organisations standardise common writing tasks. They establish policies and procedures that explain how each task should be carried out and use standard documents. For example, you might be required to:

• use a message book to pass on information and messages

• use a particular form to complete customer quotes

• use a checklist to record information

• use a company letterhead when writing a letter.

Activity 3.11 Documents I use

What types of documents do you know of that are completed in the workplace? List some below, and complete the table to describe when and why they are needed.

Document	Time frame	Requirement
Job sheet	Complete immediately	Company policy
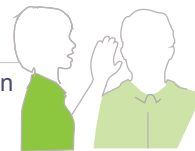
The writing process

It's important that anybody who reads information that you write is able to understand it. Your writing needs to be clear, concise and logical.

There are three main things to do:

1. plan before you write

2. draft

3. edit and check your work.

Plan before you write

Before you start writing, take a few minutes to ask yourself the following questions.

Why am I writing?

Be clear in your own mind about why you are writing. For example, requesting agenda items from workmates for a meeting, explaining to a client why there's been a delay, persuading someone to do something, or sharing good or bad news. Don't expect the reader to understand why you're writing if you don't!
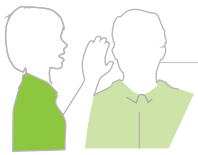
Who am I writing for?

Who you are writing for will determine how much and what type of information you provide. You might use technical language with an expert that you would not use with a client. Or you might provide a lot of detailed information when asking a supplier for product information, but only the most important details when explaining to a workmate what product will be supplied. You also need to take into account any language barriers or cultural differences which exist between you and the reader, and work to overcome them by using simple clear language, avoiding jargon and providing opportunities for the reader to request more information if necessary.

When is it required?

Being aware of time requirements allows you to prioritise and structure your time. Timing refers to when you need to have finished the task, whether it needs to be sent somewhere by a particular time and also when you would like an answer, action or result from the reader/s.

Is there an organisational standard or template required?

The format you use will be determined by the organisational standard required, and the most appropriate way to pass on the information. For example, in most companies, all quotes should be written, to provide a record of what was agreed upon. Phone messages might be emailed or handwritten and placed in an in-tray. Many organisations provide templates or forms for completing particular writing tasks. Some will also have a 'style guide' which provides a standard approach to written communication.

Activity 3.12 Planning

Read the following three pieces of writing (an email, a message and a memo). See if you can answer the questions below, which the writer would have thought about before writing each one. Then complete the table.

Email

Email   _ □ ×

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format

Janis@business.com

Cc...

Subject:

Hi Janis

Please accept my apologies for being unable to attend the staff meeting scheduled for Thursday morning. I will be attending a course at head office until May 27th. When discussing agenda item 3, please see my drawing (attached) of the proposed land use. I will have more detailed information available for the June meeting.
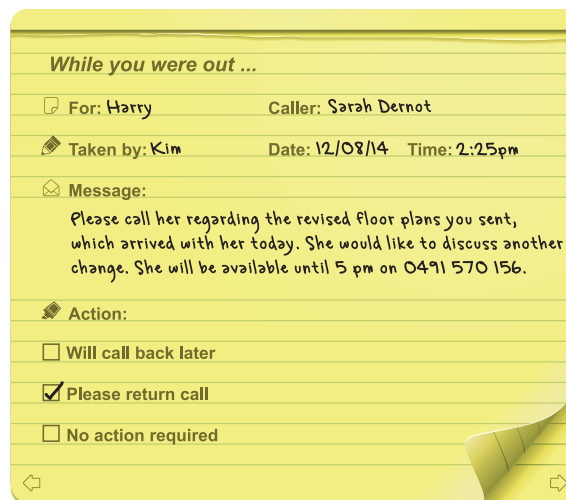
Thanks
Laurie

Message

While you were out ...

For: Harry   Caller: Sarah Dernot

Taken by: Kim   Date: 12/08/14   Time: 2:25pm

Message:
Please call her regarding the revised floor plans you sent, which arrived with her today. She would like to discuss another change. She will be available until 5 pm on 0491 570 156.

Action:

☐ Will call back later

☑ Please return call

☐ No action required

Memo

Memorandum

To: All staff and trainees

From: Jennie McWhirter
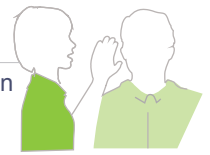
Date: 27/11/13

Subject: Christmas party 15/12/13

This year's Christmas party will be held at the Fulvale Racecourse on 15/12/13. Please RSVP to me by 03/12/13 if you wish to attend.

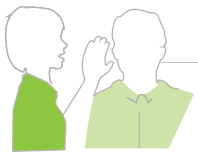Lunch and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided in a private tent. The function will last from 10 am until 3 pm. Dress is smart casual.

Drink responsibly: those employees who intend to purchase alcohol privately from the bar at the racecourse are welcome to do so and management will issue taxi vouchers on request. Contact Lee in accounts if you wish to take advantage of this offer.

Please have a safe and Merry Christmas.

	Email	Message	Memo
Why was it written?			
Who was it written for?			
When would it be required?			
Was a template or form used?			

Draft

Once all your planning is complete, gather all the information you need and put it into a logical order. Regardless of how big or small your written item is, it will be easier to read if the information follows a logical progression. This might be from most to least important, or maybe from first to last step. Then write a first version of your document – this is called a draft. A draft is a version which is made for examining and correcting before writing the final version.

If you're drafting a long document, it will probably be best to have a beginning, which introduces the topic; a middle, which contains most of the information; and an end, that summarises and tells the reader what action is required from them.

Start by jotting down all the information you need to include. This is not just the facts but also anything the reader might need to refer to, such as an invoice or file. Make sure you include the location where the reader can find any additional information you've mentioned.
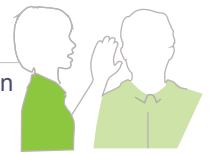
Next, look at the list you have written and cross out anything that:

- isn't relevant

- is repeated.

Group the information that remains, and then place it all in a logical order.

Sometimes you might have to write a document that you don't get to choose the content for. For example, your manager might ask you to write a letter. They might tell you the main points they want you to include, but leave it up to you to shape the content into a letter that will make sense to the recipients.

Activity 3.13 Making a draft – grouping information

This is a list of points that have been raised by different people in the office. Your manager has asked you to draft a letter to your workmates based on these points. To start drafting the letter, first cross out irrelevant or repeated information, then group the points by subject, then arrange them in a logical order.

Job files are not kept up to date.

Dishwasher is never emptied.

Information on forms sometimes missing.

There are a few housekeeping issues to be addressed in the office and the kitchen/lunchroom areas.

Handwritten forms are sometimes illegible.

Magazines left scattered around the lunchroom.

New information about jobs is left in car or on desk, not placed in job files.

Information on forms is incomplete and details not checked.

Management happy with performance in the year so far, but there are a few simple things which we could do better.

Forms are not complete.

Accurate and up-to-date job files are vital to providing good service to our clients.

Jobs not written up properly.

Old food is left in fridge which now smells.

Job files are not put away in filing cabinet after use.

Staff are urged to return items to their locations after use.

Sink area is dirty and sink has dirty plates left in it.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____
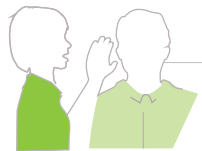
Now that you have done this grouping, you have created the basic structure for your writing. The groups will become paragraphs and individual points will become sentences. Try to limit each sentence to just one idea.

You can now use this structure to write a first draft. Sometimes you may end up writing several drafts before you are happy with the final result. Don't worry – it's time well spent. You'll get a much better result by following this process than if you hurry and send something that is unclear or missing information.

Activity 3.14 Making a draft – other important considerations

The manager asked you to write the letter but they didn't tell you why. What do you think the manager wants to see happen as a result of sending this letter?

Think about the purpose of the letter, or what the manager wants the result of people reading the letter to be, as this will determine some other important things that you need to decide and include in your draft. For example:

- how will you begin the letter?

- what sort of response will you ask for (what will you ask people to do, if anything)?

- will you specify a time for seeing the response?

- how will you end the letter?

Activity 3.15 Making a draft – putting it all together

Using the groups of points that you created in Activity 3.13 and following the decisions you made in Activity 3.14, write the letter in the space below.

Concentrate on creating logical sentences and paragraphs, remember to include a beginning, middle and end, and above all, keep in mind the purpose or aim of the letter.

_____

_____

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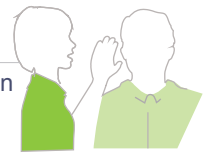
_____

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_____

Editing and checking your writing

Editing and checking gives your work a professional finish. Mistakes in written communication distract the reader and reflect badly on you and the organisation. Check that there are no spelling errors or incorrect words, that nothing is missing, and that the information flows smoothly when read. No matter what the subject is, think about whether it is polite and courteous. If necessary, ask someone else to read your work and give feedback.

The following checklist is a useful guide to editing and checking your writing.

Editing	Checklist	
This piece of writing is:	**Yes**	**No**
Clear		
I have used simple everyday language	☐	☐
The words will be familiar to the reader	☐	☐
The sentences are short	☐	☐
I have used the active rather than the passive voice	☐	☐
Concise		
The ideas are expressed simply	☐	☐
I have removed all unnecessary words and phrases	☐	☐
All the information is relevant	☐	☐
Courteous		
It is courteous	☐	☐
It is positive	☐	☐
I have checked that nothing could offend anyone	☐	☐
I have checked that none of the sentences could be misinterpreted or 'taken the wrong way'	☐	☐
Accurate and complete		
The spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct	☐	☐
All the information is accurate	☐	☐
No information is missing	☐	☐
I have checked that details, such as dates, times, phone numbers and spelling of names, are correct	☐	☐

Activity 3.16 Editing and checking

Use the editing checklist to check this first draft of a letter about a driveway.

1. Identify and underline each mistake in the first draft.

2. Write an improved final draft underneath it.

Thnk you for your letter of 30th december I was surprised and upset to hear that you were unhappy about your new driveway as my understanding was that the job is been Completed Satisfactorily for us by Pave & Drive Ltd using the Temetex Hot Pour 2000tvx technique and was looking sweet. Would you feel better if We met and at your home and talked about it?

I am only available in the mornings except for thursdays. How would monday be, would that suit you? We can meet at your home

Obviously, we consider that we are not at fawlt but we are prepared to help you find a solution to your problem that you're having.

_____

_____

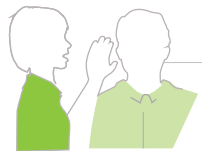_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Workplace documents and forms

There are many different types of written communication you may need to use at work and most types have a specific format. Common workplace documents and forms include:

- emails
- messages and notes
- text messages
- memorandums
- letters
- forms and checklists
- facsimiles.

Activity 3.17 Workplace documents

Think about what types of workplace documents you've seen. For example, do you know what a typical invoice looks like? A quote? A report?
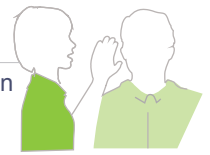
Discuss the purpose of each of the documents you thought of.

Emails at work

Emails at work are very different to personal emails. Personal emails are usually chatty and informal, very similar to talking face-to-face. At work, we need to maintain a professional approach at all times, including in emails. Remember that email creates a permanent record that can't be erased. Your workplace may have formal rules about emails, which you need to locate and read.

Emails should always include the:

- receiver's name
- sender's name
- subject
- date
- message
- email address.

It's also good practice to include at least one other way to contact the sender, apart from the email address.
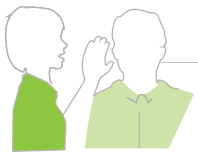
Some people receive many emails every day, so you need to make sure yours are as easy to read as possible. That means keeping them short and well written, putting the most important information first, using bullet points and numbered lists where appropriate and writing the content well. You can make the text more readable by double spacing between paragraphs.

Most workplaces also like you to include a standard signature block, which ends your email with your name, details of the workplace and contact information, like the following example.

Jane Brooke

Jane Brooke
Proprietor
Brooke's Custom Kitchens
36–38 Frederick Street, Mundijong WA 5421
T: (08) 5550 5421
E: JaneBrooke@brookeskitchens.com.au

Emails should be created the same way as any other type of written communication – they need to be planned, drafted and edited.

Activity 3.18 Write an email

Use the following information to write an email to a client.

You work for Juno Builders.

You have previously spoken to Therese from Gregor's Kitchen Designs asking her to provide you with a quote for kitchen cabinets for the McArthur job.

Today is 7 August 2013.

The letter and quotation you requested arrived yesterday.

You would like them to go ahead with the cabinets.

You have had some ideas for minor changes and would like to meet with Therese tomorrow to discuss them.

You are available at 2 pm.
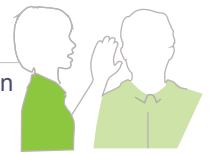
Tomorrow you will be at the city office.

If Therese can't come then, can she please suggest another time by the end of today?

You are only available in the afternoons.

Therese's email address is ThereseF@gregorkitchen.net.au

Your email address is your name, with the extension @junobuilders.com.au

---

Email _ □ ×

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format

| To: |
| From: |
| Subject: |

Messages and notes at work

Messages and notes are used in an informal way to pass on information such as:

- telephone calls
- results of conversations
- notes from meetings
- site visit notes.

Messages and notes are less formal than some other written communications but they still need to always include:

- your name
- the date and time.

Messages and notes are not always kept after they've been read, although they may be. Whether kept or thrown away, they are still an important part of communication within the organisation so you need to make sure that the person actually gets the information. For example, a telephone message might need to be placed in the receiver's in-tray, not just left on top of other papers on their desk. It's important that the right person receives the information at the right time.

The workplace might have a standard format, such as:

- a message pad for telephone messages
- a notebook for recording site visit notes.

Even if they're just written on a scrap of paper, you still need to write notes and messages effectively, follow the writing process and include all the relevant information. Since messages and notes are most often handwritten, make sure they're neat, and try not to squash everything into a small space with tiny print.

Returning your charger.

Thanks heaps,
Andy

Activity 3.19 Take a message

Work in pairs to play out a phone conversation. Have one person take a message from the other, using the template provided here. Then review the message together and discuss whether there were any other details that could have been included.

MESSAGE

To: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

While you were out …

Caller's name: _____

Caller's company: _____

Phone number: _____

☐ Returned your call ☐ Wants to meet with you

☐ Please return call ☐ Dropped by

☐ Will call again ☐ Urgent

Message: _____

_____

_____

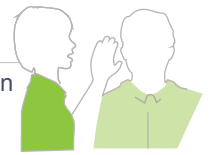_____

_____

Taken by: _____

Date: _____

Text messages at work

Text messages are becoming a more common part of workplace communications. If texting is a part of your workplace communications, keep them professional. Some good rules to follow are:

- don't use emoticons (smileys) – they are too informal

- avoid abbreviations as much as possible

- don't use internet slang, such as LOL

- punctuate your message

- use correct spelling.

Only use text messaging if you know it is acceptable in your workplace. If you aren't sure, check first.

Activity 3.20 Keep text messages professional

Here are some partial text messages. Rewrite them to look more professional.

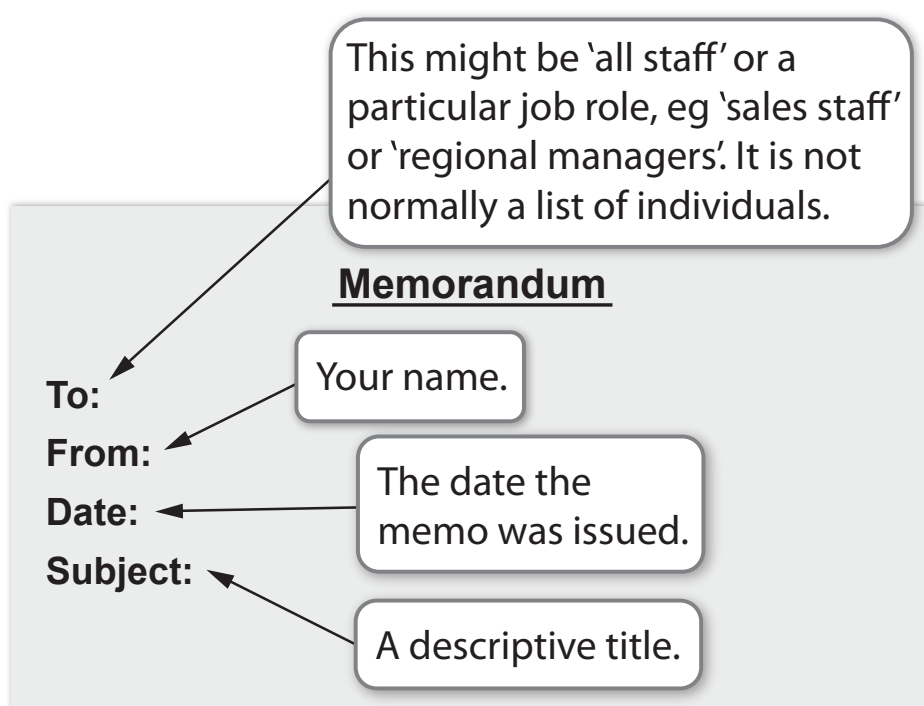| Text message	More professional version
tx 4 info	
thanks for nu address details LOL	
Meeting tmrw OK	
I'll be there. ;) ;) ;)	
Running late. Epic fail!!!!!!	

Memorandums

A memorandum, or memo for short, is a way of communicating something to a lot of people within an organisation at once. It may be sent as an email or printed out and distributed.

Although memos might be seen by many people and may also be kept on file, they are less formal than a letter, so they don't normally include a letterhead, address, salutation or signature. Your workplace may have a specific memo template. Word-processing programs also have a standard template that you can use.

Headings that should be included at the top of a memo are:

> This might be 'all staff' or a particular job role, eg 'sales staff' or 'regional managers'. It is not normally a list of individuals.

Memorandum

To:

From: — Your name.

Date: — The date the memo was issued.

Subject: — A descriptive title.

Letters

Letters are a formal type of written communication. Common types of letters include:

- inquiries
- replies to letters
- responses to sales queries
- orders
- complaints
- job applications.

A letter is a permanent record that will often be kept. It will sometimes be the first contact that you have with clients and suppliers. Therefore, it's important that your letter is well written and communicates your message clearly and effectively.

If you're writing a letter on a blank piece of paper, you should use the format below. However, your workplace will most likely have standard printed stationery with a letterhead for you to use. If it does, you can leave out your business address, because the letterhead will already contain this.

Brooke's Custom Kitchens
36-38 Frederick Street
Mundijong WA 5421
Tel: (08) 5550 5421
Fax: (08) 7010 5421
Email: sales@brookeskitchens.com.au

— Your address.

30 April 2012 — Date.

Mr Terry Eddie
Eddie's Building Company
15 Astor Way
Madderley WA 5425

— The receiver's name and address.

Dear Mr Eddie — Salutation.
RE: Second-storey extension — Heading explaining what your letter is about.

As discussed in our phone conversation … — Body of letter.

Yours sincerely — Complimentary close.

Jane Brooke — Name of writer.
Proprietor — Position title.

Forms and checklists

Everyone has to fill out forms now and again. Applications for membership of a club or association, tax returns, medical fund claims, timesheets – they all require you write information on a prepared form.
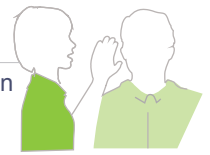
Workplaces may use a variety of forms and checklists to help collect information. These may be kept as a permanent record, or used as a guide for writing some other document.

It's important to complete each part of the form or checklist, as it's been designed to ensure consistency and completeness of a task. Follow the instructions and fill in every section and if there is a reason not to fill in one section, write 'not applicable' or 'n/a' so that anyone looking at it later knows that you didn't just forget or miss that part.

The information on a workplace form or checklist may be needed much later, when you aren't there to explain anything that's unclear or illegible. There are a few simple rules for filling in forms:

- print neatly

- use a pen, not a pencil

- spell correctly

- use correct grammar

- avoid slang and abbreviations

- read right through the form before starting to fill it out as sometimes you'll find that what you thought was suitable for a certain section should be written in a more appropriate section further on

- read all those boring instruction bits as people who design forms want you to fill them in correctly so they usually put information in them to guide you as you go

- that also applies to 'tick boxes' – read whether you're supposed to tick them, cross them, number them, write 'yes' or 'no' in them, etc

- some parts of the form may not apply to you or what you are doing so leave them blank or write 'n/a' which is short for 'not applicable'

- a form will usually have printed on it what you should do with it when you've finished filling it in, for example, 'post to the manager, PO Box 123 …' or 'applications can be submitted to any post office …' etc

- if the form asks you to, make sure you sign it

- don't put false information in a form. Many forms require you to sign that 'The information in this form is true and correct'. If you sign a form with false information in it you could be in trouble later. For instance, if you knowingly give false information to an insurance company, you may find that they won't pay out when you make a claim.

Activity 3.21 Filling in a form

Your lecturer has a sample form for you to fill out. While you're doing it, remember the points we've just discussed.

When you've finished, check with your lecturer's sample form and see if you've filled everything in correctly.
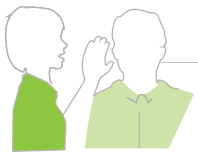
Facsimiles

A facsimile, or 'fax' for short, is a quick way to send photos, documents with signatures or handwritten information. However, faxes can sometimes be blurred or smudged, so the end result may not be perfect. Faxes are good for sending information quickly but not so good if the quality of the document is important.

Faxes can be handwritten or typed and are usually sent with a cover sheet, so the people at the receiving end know who the information is from and who should be receiving it. If your message is short, it can just be included on the cover sheet instead of a separate page.

Your workplace will probably have a special cover sheet to ensure that all the important information, including the company letterhead and contact information is included. Word-processing programs also have a standard template that you can use.

Cover sheets will generally include the following headings.

Heading	Description
To:	Company name.
Attention:	Person receiving the fax.
Fax number:	Their fax number.
From:	Your name.
Sender fax number:	Your fax number.
Subject	What your fax is about.
Date	The date when the fax is sent.
Number of pages	Total number of pages, including the fax cover sheet.

Activity 3.22 Workplace documents

Check what you've learned about memos, faxes and letters by identifying what type of workplace document each of the following statements is referring to.

1. This type of document usually has a cover sheet.

    _____

2. This type of document should include the name and address of the sender and the receiver.

    _____

3. If you use this type of communication you won't need to include the sender's address.

    _____

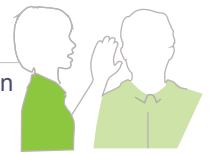4. This type of document does not need a salutation or signature.

    _____

Communicating visually

Communication that's seen rather than heard or read is called visual communication. You probably see examples of visual communication every day – in signs, diagrams, plans, drawings, slogans on T-shirts and stickers on cars. Photos, videos and symbols are also types of visual communication.
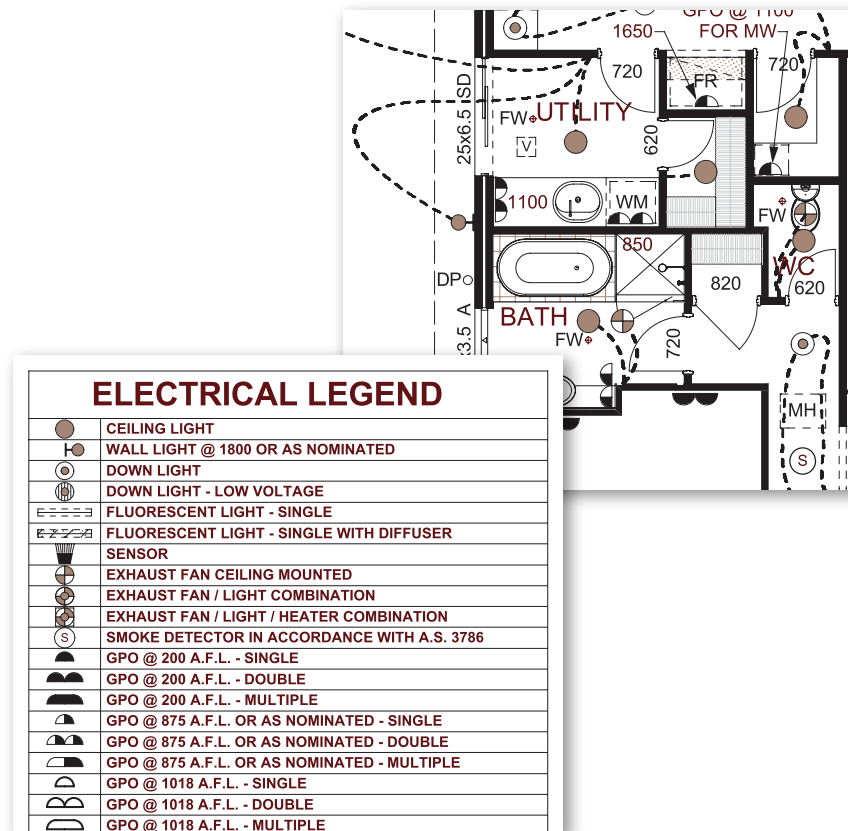
Visual messages might be combined with written or verbal communication, or be effective completely on their own.

Here are some signs that are visual only. Can you guess what they mean?

Now look at the following electrical plan and the written information (legend) that accompanies it.

ELECTRICAL LEGEND

	CEILING LIGHT
	WALL LIGHT @ 1800 OR AS NOMINATED
	DOWN LIGHT
	DOWN LIGHT - LOW VOLTAGE
	FLUORESCENT LIGHT - SINGLE
	FLUORESCENT LIGHT - SINGLE WITH DIFFUSER
	SENSOR
	EXHAUST FAN CEILING MOUNTED
	EXHAUST FAN / LIGHT COMBINATION
	EXHAUST FAN / LIGHT / HEATER COMBINATION
	SMOKE DETECTOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH A.S. 3786
	GPO @ 200 A.F.L. - SINGLE
	GPO @ 200 A.F.L. - DOUBLE
	GPO @ 200 A.F.L. - MULTIPLE
	GPO @ 875 A.F.L. OR AS NOMINATED - SINGLE
	GPO @ 875 A.F.L. OR AS NOMINATED - DOUBLE
	GPO @ 875 A.F.L. OR AS NOMINATED - MULTIPLE
	GPO @ 1018 A.F.L. - SINGLE
	GPO @ 1018 A.F.L. - DOUBLE
	GPO @ 1018 A.F.L. - MULTIPLE

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In the above example, visual and written information work together to provide more information than either one could provide on its own.
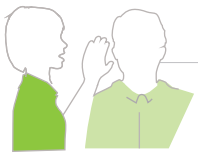
Think – why is the plan effective?

How well do you think the information could be explained without the plan, using words only?

How useful do you think the plan would be if there wasn't a legend to explain what the symbols mean?

Visual communication can be very effective for explaining complex situations, especially if explaining in words would take a long time or be inaccurate. It can also be useful if there is a language barrier between the sender and receiver. For example, safety information is sometimes provided in pictures or diagrams, for the benefit of people who do not read well or who speak a language other than the one the sign is written in, eg foreign tourists.

75

Think about the following warning signs. Even though you don't know what the words say, do you feel that you could guess something about the potential danger from the one with the image?
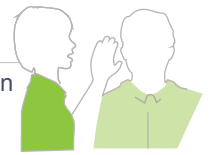

Using visual communication can help overcome a language barrier to a certain extent, but the message may still not be clear. When using visual communication, be aware that obstacles can exist. For it to be effective, the receiver must:

1. recognise the image

2. understand any other information that is associated with it

3. understand how to apply the knowledge.

What does this sign mean to you?

A person who had never seen a kangaroo or a photo of one might not have a clue! Someone who recognised the shape of the animal but didn't know anything about kangaroos or warning signs might not interpret it to mean much more than 'you might see a kangaroo nearby'.

Most people who live in Australia are familiar with the kangaroo warning road sign and know what it means. However, there is a lot of information that the sign does not tell us, we just 'know'.

Activity 3.23 What do we assume?
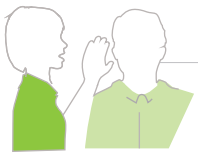
Discuss what someone driving past this sign must already know to fully understand the sign.

Activity 3.24 Effective signs

In the space below, design and draw a sign that might work better to alert someone recently arrived in Australia to the dangers of kangaroos to vehicle drivers.

Be prepared to explain your design to the class (why you included the things you did, why you chose the shape or colours, etc)

Other reasons that visual communication may not be effective include:

- inability to see the complete image, for example, if someone is colour blind and the message relies on colour

- cultural misunderstanding, for example, if an image illustrates a play on words which is culturally specific, for instance 'flat out like a lizard drinking', or uses colours that have a particular meaning in some cultures but not others

- personal differences, because different people may interpret images and colours in different ways

- visual clutter, if there are so many visual clues that the message gets lost in among other information.

Can you think of any other situations when visual communication might be ineffective?

We will explore differences and how they can affect communication in the next section.
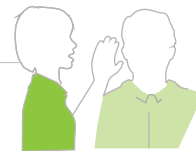
Section 4 – Individual differences

Introduction

It's been said that if everyone was the same, the world would be a dull place. That may be true, but it would make communication a lot simpler!

So many arguments, disputes, fights and even wars occur because people don't treat other people with the same respect and courtesy that they expect for themselves.
In this section, we'll look at how we can get on with different people in the workplace.

Performance criteria

3.1   Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity

3.2   Take into consideration cultural differences in all verbal and non-verbal communication

3.3   Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence

3.4   Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers

3.5   Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols

Respect

> 'Treat others as you would have them treat you.'

This is a very old saying that goes to the core of the idea of respect. Most people will respond in kind – if you treat people with politeness, courtesy and respect, they'll do the same to you.

Here are some useful points to remember.

- Encourage workmates to express ideas and opinions.
- Listen to what others have to say before putting across your viewpoint. Never speak over, butt in, or cut off another person.

79

- Never insult people, name call, belittle or put down people or their ideas.

- Don't nit-pick or constantly criticise over little things, judge, demean or patronise. A series of seemingly trivial actions, added up over time, constitutes bullying.

- Treat people the same, no matter their race, gender, religion, appearance, age, or country of origin. Treating people differently can constitute harassment.

Activity 4.1 People you respect

Write down the names of three people you know and respect.

Next to each name write why you respect them.

Are any of them people who don't respect you in return?

Choose one or two that you are comfortable to discuss with a partner.
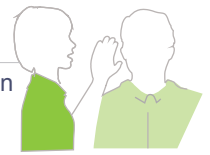
1.
2.
3.

Courtesy

Courtesy is speaking and behaving politely when you interact with others and it's extremely important in the workplace. Most businesses rely on clients to either return for more, or spread the word to other prospective clients. Every time you interact with one of your company's clients, you play a part in whether he or she will be 'repeat business'.

You should give people the same courtesy you'd like to receive from them. Here are some helpful tips for behaving courteously.

- Watch your language. Crude language and insensitive comments don't belong in the workplace. If you think something might not be safe to say, it probably isn't.

- Stay cool. Take a deep breath, collect your thoughts and control your temper before responding to a difficult colleague or an annoying situation. If you get a reputation for losing your temper, no one will want to work with you.
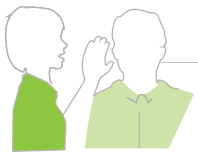
- Don't criticise or complain in public. Trashing a colleague, client or manager where others can hear, makes you look unprofessional and petty. If you have a problem, deal with it in private.

- Use technology appropriately. While email helps avoid face-to-face confrontations, it's still important to maintain a civil tone in your communications. Think twice before you hit the send button and use the 'reply to all' feature sparingly. If you want to forward jokes or celebrity gossip, make sure the recipient doesn't mind that sort of thing cluttering up their inbox and that you're allowed to do that on your work email.

- Minimise interruptions to others. Ask: 'Can I interrupt you for a moment?' or 'Is this a good time for a question?' If someone barges into your office when you are especially busy, politely ask when you can get back to them.

- Respond as quickly as possible to requests and questions. Making colleagues wait for answers unnecessarily upsets their schedules. If someone is relying on you for information, be cooperative.

- Leave a signed note when leaving something on a co-worker's desk. Leave a note when borrowing items too. Be sure to return items when you finish with them.

- Remember to say 'please' and 'thank you.' So basic, but so important.

- Respect each other. Leave paper in the copy machine. Clean up after yourself in the lunch room. Don't pry into personal information. Beware of office gossip!

Trust

Trust is believing or having confidence that someone will behave in a particular way. You trust your family to look after you. They trust you to be honest and to do the right thing. At school, your classmates trust you to do your share of the work and not leave all of it for them. Your friends trust you to keep secrets.

Trust is important in the workplace too. You trust your manager to pay you at the end of the week, and your manager trusts you to still do your job when he or she's out.
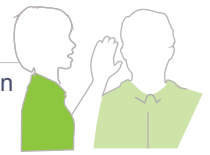
Activity 4.2 Trust

Write down some things you're trusted to do in your workplace (or at home if you don't work).

Then write down what would happen if you didn't do them (apart from perhaps losing your job).

I'm trusted to …	If I didn't …

Individual differences

Australia has long had a policy of encouraging people from other countries to make it their home. The people doing this course with you right now mostly likely have a variety of cultural backgrounds, and in most workplaces you're probably going to be working with (or dealing with) people who either came from another country, or who have grown up in a household with a different culture to your own.

Being aware of the differences between cultures can help you to act sensitively and courteously to everyone. Here are some interesting points to consider.

- Customs – some cultures can or can't have specific foods and drinks, or may have rules about how food is prepared.

- Social values – ideas about appropriate social and sexual behaviour, work ethics, wealth and personal growth vary between cultures.

- Dress – some cultures have specific clothing, such as headscarves or turbans, that are worn at all times.

- Family obligations – some cultures have high family priorities which may sometimes conflict with work.

- Religious practices – some religions require time during work each day for prayer, or time off for special religious days.

- Non-verbal behaviour – eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures and how people interpret them, can vary between cultures.

Activity 4.3 Cultural differences

Think of a person or family you know who has some different cultural values to you and your family. Write down some of these differences.
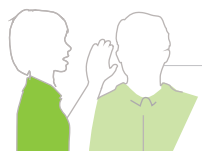
Discuss with the class how these differences affect you (or not).

Are there any that you wish your family had?

Another family …	My family …

Prejudice and discrimination

Prejudice literally means to pre-judge.
That is, you form an opinion or make up your mind about someone or something without knowing all the facts.

Prejudices are usually negative and relate to differences in lifestyle, language, gender, religion, age, abilities, race or culture.
These opinions are often based on stereotyped and generalised images, and can easily create a divide between people.

It's important that you recognise prejudice as an attitude. When that attitude is translated into action against an individual, or group, based on gender, sexuality, age, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, it becomes discrimination.

Believing that all members of a particular group are inferior to yours (or another's) in some way, constitutes prejudice; translating that prejudice into the action of treating that group with less respect, courtesy or workplace equality, constitutes discrimination.

There are laws in place in Australia designed to protect people from discrimination. Currently the federal laws are:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

Additionally, your workplace will most likely have its own policy and guidelines on discrimination. Read the following case studies and decide which anti-discrimination law applies to each one.

Case study – Harry

Harry's workmates gave him a racially offensive nickname. He asked them not to use it but they continued, so he complained to the manager.
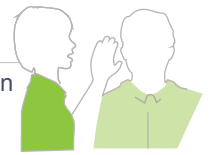
After that his colleagues refused to work with him and eventually the manager asked him to leave.

Activity 4.4 Harry

Which law protects Harry?

_____

_____

Case study – Houda

Houda has mobility difficulties and often uses a walking stick. She can get into and around the office easily but when the company built a new outdoor lunch area which could only be accessed using stairs, she was unable to join her workmates for lunch.

Houda feels isolated and left out, but the manager doesn't seem to be hearing her concerns.

Activity 4.5 Houda

Which law is in place to help Houda in this situation?

_____

Case study – Sarah

Sarah would like to become an estimator. She begins a work experience placement but she finds that her workmate repeatedly asks her to go on a date with him and asks a lot of personal questions about her love life, which she doesn't want to answer.

When Sarah asks him to stop, he reminds her that he will have to write the review about her work placement so she should try to stay on his good side.
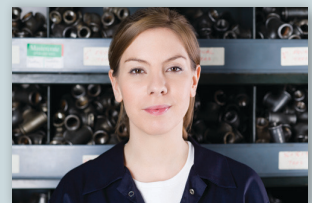
Activity 4.6 Sarah

Which law is in place to make sure that Sarah gets a fair go?

_____

Case study – Tom

Tom is in his 40s and has been a casual employee with his company for over three years. This year, Tom was told that he would no longer be required.

He later discovered that a 17-year-old had been employed to do the same job but for less pay.

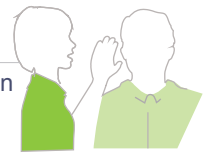## Activity 4.7 Tom

Which law relates to Tom's situation?

_____

Harassment and bullying

Under federal and state legislation, unlawful harassment occurs when someone is made to feel intimidated, insulted or humiliated because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex; disability; sexual preference; or some other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation. It can also happen if someone is working in a hostile, or intimidating, environment.

The terms 'harassment' and 'bullying' are often used to describe the same types of behaviour. Examples of harassment and bullying behaviour include:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails
- displaying offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's race or religion
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including their sex life
- repeated trivial criticism or false accusations about poor work
- repeated 'jokes' or 'pranks' which upset or injure.

Harassing behaviour can range from serious to less serious levels. However, one-off incidents can still constitute harassment. Also, where continued, such behaviour can undermine the standard of conduct within a work area, which may erode the wellbeing of the individual or group being targeted and lead to lower overall staff performance.

Absence of complaints is not necessarily an indication that no harassment or discrimination is occurring. The person subjected to harassing or discriminating behaviour does not always complain. This is not necessarily because the act is trivial but because the person may lack the confidence to speak up on their own behalf, or feel too intimidated or embarrassed to complain.

Interpersonal communication

The conversations that you have with others will actively create and develop your view of the world. How you view the world is not absorbed by some strange osmosis, but through the interpersonal conversations that you have with those around you.

In fact, when you have a conversation with another person, you are really carrying out two simultaneous conversations. The first one is with yourself, this is called an intrapersonal conversation and is a conversation about how you can behave, could behave, should behave towards the other person. The interpersonal conversation is the one that you actually have with the other person.

Activity 4.8 Points of view

Think about a conversation you've had with someone recently where you didn't share the same points of view or the same values.

What was your point of view? Write it here.

_____

_____

_____

What conversations did you have in your head, with yourself, during this conversation? List them here.

_____

_____

_____

Did you find yourself trying to take on board the other person's point of view and rationalising it in your head with your own views, or did you find yourself getting angry or annoyed with the other person and thinking about how you should reply?

_____

_____

_____

Overcoming language barriers

When you're speaking with someone who is obviously struggling a bit to understand English, try reversing the situation. Imagine yourself overseas in a country where you don't speak the language. What might people be able to do to make it easier for you to communicate?

Adjusting your speaking techniques

Here are some ideas of helpful things you could do to make it easier for someone who does not understand English well.

- Use language that suits the listener. If you know the comprehension level of your listener, you can adjust your speech to match their ability to understand. The person you are speaking to will understand you better and appreciate your effort. However, you need to be very careful not to change, or lose, any of the meaning.

- Pronounce all words carefully. English speakers tend to shorten some words, run words together, speak quickly and sometimes speak unclearly. So speak clearly and try to speak slightly slower than normal to give the listener extra time to understand.

- Use only plain language. Try to avoid slang, jargon, abbreviations or buzzwords. Using clear, simple words and sentence structures will allow the listener to concentrate on understanding the meaning.

Use visual and non-verbal communication to add more information to your message. Visual aids such as sketches, pictures, and videos can help you communicate more effectively. Non-verbal communication such as tone, gestures, pointing and demonstrating can also give more information.

Activity 4.9

Igor has just been employed by his company to work as an electrician. Recently arrived from Moscow, his English language skills are very basic. Discuss with a partner, making notes, what strategies you might use to overcome the language barrier.
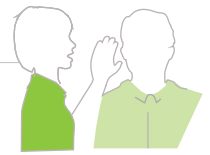
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Annex A – Unit details

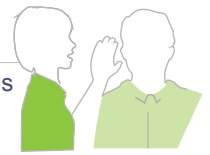| Unit title	Communicate in the workplace
Descriptor	This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to communicate in the workplace. It includes gathering, conveying and receiving information together with completing routine written correspondence. No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.
National code	BSBCMM201A
Employability skills	This unit contains employability skills.
Pre-requisite units	Nil
Application	This unit applies to individuals who perform a range of routine workplace communication tasks using a limited range of practical skills and fundamental knowledge of effective listening, questioning and non-verbal communication in a defined context under direct supervision or with limited individual responsibility.

Element 1 Gather, convey and receive information and ideas
1.1   Collect information to achieve work responsibilities from appropriate sources
1.2   Use method/s and/or *equipment* to communicate appropriate ideas and information to the audience
1.3   Use effective listening and speaking skills in *verbal communication*
1.4   Seek input from internal and external sources to develop and refine new ideas and approaches
1.5   Respond to instructions or enquiries promptly and in accordance with *organisational requirements*

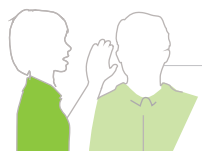| **Element 2 Complete workplace documentation and correspondence** |
|---|
| 2.1 Present *written information* and ideas in clear and concise language to ensure the intended meaning of *correspondence* is understood by recipient |
| 2.2 Draft and present correspondence within designated time lines |
| 2.3 Ensure presentation of written information meets organisational *standards* of style, format and accuracy |
| 2.4 Complete workplace forms and documentation in a clear, concise and easy to read format |
| **Element 3 Communicate in a way that responds positively to individual differences** |
| 3.1 Value all individuals and treat them with respect, courtesy and sensitivity |
| 3.2 Take into consideration cultural differences in all verbal and non-verbal communication |
| 3.3 Use communication to develop and maintain positive relationships, mutual trust and confidence |
| 3.4 Make efforts to use basic strategies to overcome language barriers |
| 3.5 Ensure that behaviour is consistent with legislative requirements, enterprise guidelines and/or social protocols |

Required skills and knowledge

Required skills

- communication skills to request advice, to receive feedback and to work with a team
- culturally appropriate communication skills to relate to people from diverse backgrounds and people with diverse abilities
- literacy skills to identify work requirements, and to understand and process basic workplace documentation
- organisational skills to plan work priorities and arrangements
- technology skills to select and use technology appropriate to communication tasks

Required knowledge

- key provisions of relevant legislation from all forms of government that may affect aspects of business operations, such as:
  - anti-discrimination legislation
  - ethical principles
  - codes of practice
  - privacy laws
  - occupational health and safety (OHS)
- organisational policies, plans and procedures, especially style guide
- spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Evidence guide

The Evidence Guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.

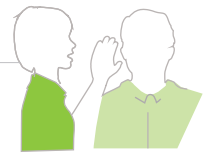| Overview of assessment	
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	Evidence of the following is essential: • using communication methods appropriate to the audience • producing clear, concise and correct written communication • providing prompt responses to requests for information • knowledge of relevant legislation.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	Assessment must ensure: • access to an actual workplace or simulated environment • access to office equipment and resources • examples of workplace documents, including policies and procedures relating to communication.
Method of assessment	A range of assessment methods should be used to assess practical skills and knowledge. The following examples are appropriate for this unit: • direct questioning combined with review of portfolios of evidence and third party workplace reports of on-the-job performance by the candidate • review of written information and ideas • demonstration of techniques • observation of presentations • review of correspondence and completed workplace forms and documentation • assessment of presentation of written information.
Guidance information for assessment	Holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is recommended, for example: • other general administration units.
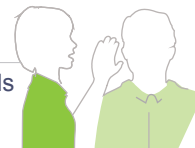
Range statement

The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.

Communication *equipment* may include:	• facsimile machines • information technology components including hardware, software and communication packages • keyboard equipment including mouse, touchpad, keyboard • network systems • pens, pencils • telephones
Verbal communication may include:	• answering enquiries from clients • answering telephone calls • informal discussions • requests from colleagues • use of voice mail
Organisational requirements may include:	• access and equity principles and practice • business and performance plans • defined resource parameters • ethical standards • goals, objectives, plans, systems and processes • legal and organisational policies, guidelines and requirements • OHS policies, procedures and programs • quality and continuous improvement processes and standards • quality assurance and/or procedures manual

Written information may include:	• briefing notes
	• electronic mail
	• facsimiles
	• general correspondence
	• handwritten and printed materials
	• internal memos
	• telephone messages
Correspondence may include:	• emails
	• memorandums
	• messages
	• proformas
	• standard/form letters
Standards may include:	• Australian Standards
	• legislation
	• organisational policies and procedures
	• specified work standards
	• standards set by workgroup

Annex B – Learning plan

> **Note:** Sessions are nominally two hours.

Session	Performance criteria	Guide	Resources
1	1.2, 1.3 3.1, 3.3, 3.4	Section 1 – Communication Introduction The communication process Main types of communication	Learner's guide
2	1.2, 1.3 3.1, 3.3, 3.4	Continue Section 1 Listening Communication barriers	Learner's guide
3	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5	Section 2 – Information and ideas Communicating at work Interacting with others Collecting information Sharing information	Learner's guide
4	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 3.1, 3.3, 3.5	Continue Section 2 Developing and refining ideas Giving and receiving instructions	Learner's guide
5	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 3.1, 3.3, 3.5	Continue Section 2 Looking after clients	Learner's guide
6	2.1, 2.3 3.1,3.3,3.5	Section 3 – Workplace documentation Writing effectively Professionalism	Learner's guide
7	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	Continue Section 3 Completing documentation The writing process	Learner's guide
8	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	Continue Section 3 The writing process (continued)	Learner's guide

Session	Performance criteria	Guide	Resources
9	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Continue Section 3 Workplace documents and forms	Learner's guide
10	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Continue Section 3 Forms and checklists Facsimiles	Learner's guide
11	2.1 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Continue Section 3 Communicating visually	Learner's guide
12	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Section 4 – Individual differences	Learner's guide
13	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Continue Section 4 Individual differences	Learner's guide
14	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Continue Section 4 Interpersonal communication Overcoming language barriers **Assessment 1 due** Review and prepare for Assessment 2	Learner's guide
15	All	**Assessment 2 due**	Learner's guide
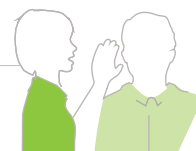
Annex C – Assessment plan

The assessments for this unit are designed to assess your competency in the elements as listed in the unit details in Annex A to this guide. There are two components to the assessment.

| Due	Assessment	Elements
Sessions 1 to 14	**Assessment 1 – Portfolio of activities** This assessment involves active participation in the class exercises and discussions. Your lecturer will assess your ability to interact and communicate effectively with others during the activities described throughout this guide.	1 and 2
Session 15	**Assessment 2 – Written open-book test** This is a written open-book test to reinforce the learning you've participated in.	All

Individual learning and assessment needs

Learners have different learning styles and needs. Please let your lecturer know if there is anything that may have an effect on your learning.
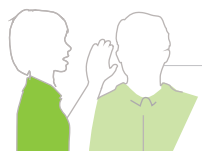
Results and appeals

There is a process to be followed should you wish to appeal the result of your assessment. Please ask your lecturer for more information about this.
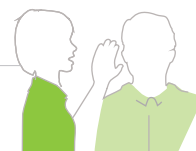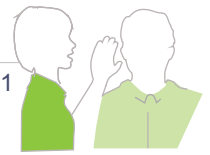
Annex D – Assessments

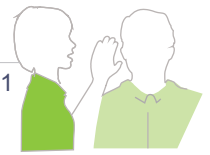# Assessment 1 – Portfolio of activities

Introduction

This assessment involves the completion and submission of a portfolio of in-class activities.

Requirements

You are required to complete all the prescribed in-class activities and submit them as a portfolio. All responses must be typed, to demonstrate the use of technology in communication.

| BC1952 | Annex D | 3

BSBCMM201A

Communicate in the workplace
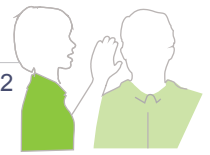
Assessment 1 – Portfolio of in-class activities

Name _____   Date _____

I have received feedback on this assessment.

Signature _____   Date _____

Assessor's initials

Assessment 2 – Written open-book test

Introduction

This assessment is designed to assess your ability across all elements in this unit of competency.

Requirements and format

Your responses to Assessment 2 will be in short answer format. You are required to answer a series of questions related to the course material.
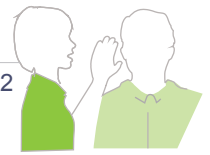
Your lecturer will explain the marking criteria.

Materials and equipment

To attempt this assessment you will need:

- pens, pencils etc
- the assessment paper
- this guide

BSBCMM201A

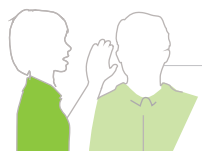## Communicate in the workplace
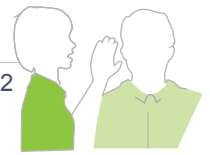
Assessment 2 – Written open-book test

Name _____ Date _____

I have received feedback on this assessment.

Signature _____ Date _____

Assessor's initials

Assessment 2 – Written open-book test

Instructions

- This assessment requires you to write short answers in the spaces provided.

- It is an open-book assessment so you may look inside your learner's guide to help you to answer the questions.

- Collaboration with others in your class is not permitted. However, you may seek guidance from your lecturer.

- Read each question carefully.

- Attempt all questions.

- Remember to put your name on the cover page.

- Return the assessment booklet to your lecturer when you're finished.

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. Briefly describe what is meant by 'feedback' in the context of the communication process.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Give three examples of each of the following:

   Verbal communication

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

   Written communication

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

   Visual communication

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

Non-verbal communication

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. List three ways you might be able to tell whether the person you are talking to is really listening to you or not.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. Give three examples of what could be described as non-verbal communication in a face-to-face exchange.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

5. Give two examples of jargon. Make them from something you know well but that others might not – maybe from a sport you enjoy, a hobby you're into or a computer game you play.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____
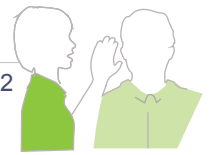
6. Darren is a new trainee site clerk (straight out of school) and it's his very first day on the job. The foreman gives him the following instructions:

    > 'Go and see Smithy and ask him if he's got enough snap ties to finish the job. Then see how many two-metre form pans are behind the Block Three plant room and if there's not enough, ring up and order some more.'

    List all the things you think are wrong with the foreman's instructions (in other words, what should he have made clearer to Darren?).

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. Give three examples of how the environment (where you are) can be a barrier when communication is taking place.

    1. _____

        _____

    2. _____

        _____

    3. _____

        _____

8. Write an example of an open question and a closed question.

    Open question: _____

    _____

    _____

    Closed question: _____

    _____

    _____

9.   Which do you think are better, open or closed questions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10.   List three things to remember when writing a message down.

1.   _____

2.   _____

3.   _____

11.   You work in a builder's office. Below are three pieces of information that need to be shared. For each one, write what you consider to be the best and most efficient way of getting the information to the receivers. You must include the use of technology in your answer.
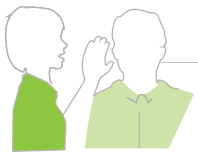
Information	Best shared using . . .
A request to two colleagues in your office to attend a meeting at a certain place, day and time.	
Advise others in your office that you have a second-hand motorbike to sell.	
Advise your manager that you've had a phone call to say that an angry client is on his way to see her.	
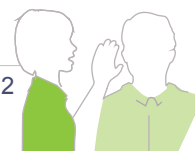
12. Giving instructions well is not as easy as it may sound. Below are the steps needed to replace a flat tyre on a car.

In the boxes next to the steps, write the order in which you think each step should be done. You will probably need to do some crossing out as you go so make sure your final answer is clear.

Step	Step number
Finish lowering the jack and put it in the boot.	
Place the jack under the car.	
Get the spare tyre from the boot.	
Lower the jack till the replacement tyre just touches the ground.	
Remove the wheel nuts from the mounting studs.	
Get the jack and wheel brace from the boot.	
Tighten the wheel nuts.	
Place the spare wheel onto the mounting studs.	
Put the wheel with the flat tyre in the boot.	
Put the wheel nuts back on the studs.	
Slightly loosen the wheel nuts while the car's weight will stop the wheel from turning.	
Give the wheel nuts a final tighten to bed in the wheel.	
Operate the jack to raise the car.	
Remove the wheel with the flat tyre.	
Make sure the handbrake is on.	

13. List three things to keep in mind when you're speaking on the phone.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

14. List three things to remember to do when you're about to make a business phone call.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

15. You left the following written message on your manager's desk after you took a phone call for him while he was at lunch.

> Mrs Allen rang. She says you won't know her but she wants you to ring her about a quote. She's going out but will be back later. The job's near the post office, apparently.

Now he's come to see you and he seems a bit angry about the message. Below, write why this might be.

_____

_____

_____

_____

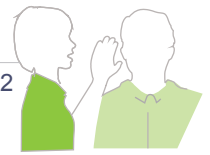16. Written information in the workplace needs to be clear and concise.

The following notice is above the photocopier in your office. In the space below, rewrite it so that its message is clearer and more concise.

> Attention all employees of this establishment.
>
> It has come to the attention of the management that some employees are being less than efficient in the matter of their consumption of copy paper in this establishment and so there is therefore considerable wastage of same.
>
> Employees are requested from this point in time on to reduce their wastage of copy paper by making sure that they only print documents that must be printed and that all other documents aren't printed. This will help the environment, reduce costs and at the same time use less paper.
>
> Your help in this matter will be of assistance in aiding the company to lower its operating costs.

_____

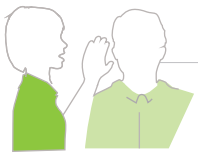_____

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_____

17. Business correspondence should always be courteous even when you're unhappy about something. Rewrite the following three paragraphs (from company emails) so that they sound more courteous.

(To a client) I can assure you that the paint colour in the kitchen is the one you chose and it will cost you to change it.	

(To an architect) I waited for you on site and when you didn't front after ten minutes I came back here because I'm very busy.	

(To a supplier) We ordered jarrah and you supplied pine. How about teaching the wally in your despatch department that there's a difference!	

18. Your manager (Ted Short) has rung and left the following voice mail for you.

> Can you email the Duncans and tell them that they won't be able to move in till the 15th.
>
> Tell them the stove's been held up. Plus the electrician's still waiting for them to choose the bathroom lights.
>
> Tell them I'll meet them on-site if they want.
>
> Have they decided whether they want the gutters painted or not?
>
> The stove should arrive Monday.
>
> Oh, and they haven't picked out the ensuite lights either.

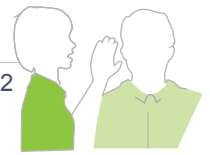Rewrite the information so that it's in a form suitable for emailing to the clients.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. List three things to keep in mind when you're filling in a form.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

20. Below is a timesheet for a company whose pay week runs from Wednesday to Tuesday. You must fill it in to enable the pay clerk to calculate your pay for the week. Fill it in using the following information:

> Your payroll number is 00107. You worked on job number 773 from Wednesday to Friday from 07.00 to 15.30 (less half an hour for lunch at 12.00).
>
> On Saturday you worked from 07.00 to 11.30 on job number 771 (which is behind schedule).
>
> Monday saw you back on job 773 from 07.00 to 15.30. On Tuesday you had to go to job 775 for the day but you were absent from 11.15 to 13.30 for a doctor's appointment. You also worked through to 17.00 on Tuesday.

Name				Payroll no.	
	Job no.	**AM**		**PM**	
		Start	**Finish**	**Start**	**Finish**
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					
Monday					
Tuesday					

21. Give two reasons why, in some situations, visual communication can be better than written.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

22. List three things to remember about treating others in the workplace with courtesy.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

23. List three things that might seem to make a workplace colleague different from you in terms of cultural background.

    _____

    _____

    _____

24. List three things that can be classified as harassment in the workplace.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

25. List three ways that language barriers can be minimised in the workplace.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

26. Explain your understanding of an organisation's style guide, why it exists and when you would use it.

    _____

    _____

    _____

27. Explain why it is important that spelling, grammar and punctuation is correct in all business documents and communication.

    _____

    _____

    _____

End of Assessment 2

COMMUNICATE IN THE WORKPLACE
CERTIFICATE II IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION (PATHWAY – PARAPROFESSIONAL)
BSBCMM201A

LEARNER'S GUIDE

DESCRIPTION

This learner's guide will help you gain the skills and knowledge to communicate with colleagues, clients, tradespeople and anyone else you have contact with during your work. It contains a mix of content and hands-on activities that support the unit BSBCMM201A *Communicate in the workplace* from Certificate II in Building and Construction (Pathway – Paraprofessional). The course, and this guide, focus on the skills and knowledge required to get your career started as a paraprofessional in the residential building industry.

The topics covered in this guide include:

- effective listening and questioning
- verbal and non-verbal communication
- gathering, receiving and conveying information
- completing written correspondence
- working within company policies and procedures.

You will also look at the importance of communicating respectfully and considering cultural differences in the workplace. Assessment activities are also included.

EDITION

Edition 1, 2012

TRAINING PACKAGE

Construction, Plumbing and Services – CPC08
Business Services – BSB07

COURSE/QUALIFICATION

Certificate II in Building and Construction (Pathway – Paraprofessional)

UNIT

BSBCMM201A *Communicate in the workplace*

RELATED PRODUCTS

This resource is one of a series that covers all 12 units of the Certificate II in Building and Construction (Pathway – Paraprofessional) qualification. Please refer to our product catalogue for more information.